



**WORKING WITH
CHILDREN
& YOUNG PEOPLE
- VOLUNTEERING -**

**INFORMATION PACK
FOR VOLUNTEERS**

June 2003

Information for Volunteers

The ACT Government formally recognises the valuable contribution made by members of the community, on a voluntary basis, in the delivery of departmental services. The following arrangements for volunteering apply in ACT Government schools.

🗨️ Which volunteers are covered by this policy?

All volunteers who support educational programs either through direct contact with students or through school activities without financial gain or reward.

🗨️ How do I volunteer to support educational programs?

Volunteers are a valued resource in ACT Government schools. The principal of each school oversees the educational programs in the school so initial contact needs to be made at the school.

You will be requested to complete the *Volunteer Nomination Form* which records your contact details. You should not sign this form if you have serious charges or convictions that would preclude you from working with children and young people.

Minor charges or convictions do not prevent a volunteer from working with children and young people.

Further details are found on the *Information Sheet for Volunteers Completing the Volunteer Nomination Form*. For clarification on issues about charges or convictions the volunteer should contact the principal or Workplace & Legal Support on 620 59149.

Supervisors will remind volunteers that this form should be completed before commencing volunteer activities. The form initiates the insurance arrangements for volunteers. It should be noted that the principal may refuse the services of the volunteer if the form is not completed.

🗨️ How often do I complete this form?

Each school will require a copy of the *Volunteer Nomination Form* when first volunteering in the school or when enrolling students (if applicable). A volunteer will need to provide an updated form when personal details change.

To assist volunteers who work in a number of schools, the form may be copied and used in other schools. Copied forms cannot be used in subsequent years.

🗨️ Can I volunteer if I have charges or convictions against me?

Charges or convictions **do not** prevent a volunteer from working with students. You should read the *Information Sheet for Volunteers Completing the Volunteer Nomination Form* then seek clarification from the principal or Workplace & Legal Support on 620 59149. This must be done before you sign the Volunteer Nomination form or assist as a volunteer. Each case will be assessed on its merits.

If the screening report identifies convictions, the volunteer will be given the opportunity to discuss their relevance with Workplace & Legal Support staff before a decision is made.

🗨 **Do volunteers need to sign in?**

The *Daily Sign In Form* records the date, start and finish time of each volunteer session and gives a brief summary of the task and the location. The forms will be located in the front office of the school and at other locations decided by school. The supervising teacher will have copies of the form available for volunteers assisting with excursions, sporting carnivals, camps and other activities which occur away from the school campus.

🗨 **Does the Department's policy require that all volunteers are screened?**

NO. Most volunteers assist with educational programs in close proximity to supervising staff. It is not the intention of the departmental policy that these volunteers be screened.

🗨 **Are some volunteers required to undertake a screening check?**

The only volunteers required by the departmental policy to undertake screening are those who assist in educational programs with limited teacher supervision or the duty of care responsibilities require that the volunteer be screened. It is expected that fewer than 5% of volunteers will be screened with costs covered by the central office. For clarification on issues about screening the volunteer should contact Workplace & Legal Support on 620 59149.

Some schools may modify volunteer tasks/activities to increase the level of teacher supervision so that no volunteer requires screening.

🗨 **Are employment based screening checks suitable for schools?**

Volunteers who have been screened for employment purposes will usually require confirmation screening by the department. It should be noted that screening reports for working with children and young people are more rigorous than those obtained for other employers or purposes.

🗨 **Will a screening check be valid for volunteering in other schools?**

Yes. To confirm that screened volunteers are approved for working with students, the department will issue an identification card. This card will be valid for 3 years and may be presented at any ACT Government school.

🗨 **Will orientation and training be provided for volunteers?**

Yes. Schools and the department are committed to support volunteers by providing orientation and training on school specific issues. Please enquire about this at the school when you offer your support as a volunteer in an educational program.

🗨️ **Do volunteers have a role in school decision making?**

Each school has a school board representing the parents, students and the community. Some aspects of the implementation of this policy and its procedures may involve the school board through its role in the approval of educational policies.

The inclusion of volunteers in the decision making or other aspects of the policy will be a matter for school management and questions may be directed to the school.

🗨️ **Who can clarify issues or respond if I have a complaint?**

Where volunteers have a query or a matter of concern they need to; first, raise the issue with the relevant staff member and then, if unresolved, raise the matter with the principal. If a matter remains a concern, the volunteer should contact Workplace & Legal Support on 620 59149.

🗨️ **What insurance is available for volunteers?**

Volunteers who support school education programs will be covered by limited personal accident cover. In addition, arrangements have been put in place to protect volunteers where a volunteer may accidentally incur legal liability for third party injury and/or damage to third party property. The *Daily Sign in Form* and the *Volunteer Nomination Form* will meet the data input needs for ACT Insurance Authority.

Professional coaches should have their own public and professional liability and personal accident insurance, either from their professional association or the body they represent.

Volunteers may also wish to consider whether they need to take out any additional form of insurance, eg. the ACT Government does not insure clothing, personal effects or other property volunteers own or are responsible for.

🗨️ **I am worried about privacy issues.**

Information provided on these forms will be maintained in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*. The information will not be disclosed to anyone outside of the ACT Department of Education, Youth & Family Services and will not be used for any other purpose unless statutory or other legal obligations require otherwise.

🗨️ **Will the policy be reviewed?**

Yes. The policy will be evaluated with the data included in regular policy reviews. Schools are advised to monitor volunteers' involvement in school programs and implement strategies to encourage the use of volunteers in Government schools.

For **further information** please contact the Workplace & Legal Support section by telephone on: 620 59149 or by e-mail at wls.hotline@act.gov.au



Australian Capital Territory

EDUCATION, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - VOLUNTEERING

Roles and Responsibilities

- Schools -

Establish an environment that welcomes and encourages volunteers in ACT Government schools and educational programs.

Assess tasks and manage the supervision of educational programs and volunteers

Establish roles, responsibilities and procedures for staff and volunteers that reflect the specific needs of the school and its environment.

Provide support to volunteers including school specific induction or training for staff and volunteers on their roles and responsibilities.

Monitor the involvement and appropriate use of volunteers in schools

School based administration will include:

- *Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Insurance Arrangements for Volunteers* information sheets – annual distribution
- *Volunteer Nomination Forms* - distribution, collection and storage *Note: Principals may assist volunteers decide with information about whether incidents or convictions are relevant to the range of tasks/activities.*
- *Daily Sign in Form* - administration and secure storage
- Consent for screening forms and principal's letter - forward to Central Office
- Apply the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* with respect to all personal information.



Australian Capital Territory

EDUCATION, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - VOLUNTEERING

Roles and Responsibilities

- Central Office -

Clarify and interpret aspects of this policy for principals and volunteers

Process screening documents and provide opportunity for volunteers to discuss convictions.

Issue departmental identification cards for volunteers with approval to support educational programs for children and young people.

Train staff who coordinate support for volunteers.

Apply the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* to all personal information including screening documents and reports.



Australian Capital Territory

EDUCATION, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - VOLUNTEERING

Roles and Responsibilities

- Volunteers -

Complete the *Volunteer Nomination Form* and present to the school prior to involvement in educational programs.

Comply with the *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*.

Complete the *Daily Sign in Form* on each volunteering visit.

Comply with the school's procedures for visitors to schools.

Follow the directions of principal/supervisor and comply with all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines.

Notify the principal/supervisor of any incidents/injuries that occurred while volunteering.