



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Statement of Context and Purpose

Volunteers are a valuable part of the Huntingtower community and volunteer work assists us to provide an extensive educational and co-curricular program. The nature of volunteer work at the School often involves work and interaction with children or young people. To this end, there are a range of obligations and responsibilities that must be embraced and championed by our volunteers.

The School appreciates the time commitment to help in our School community, and as such needs to ensure that its volunteers and staff understand their responsibilities and obligations to becoming a Huntingtower volunteer. Should a volunteer have any questions please reach out to:

- The Human Resource Department
- The Head of School; or
- The supervising person who is overseeing the volunteering role

Huntingtower is committed to Child Safety and this Volunteer Policy provides a framework around supporting volunteer participation to ensure their safety and the safety of our students.

Application

This Policy applies to all staff and volunteers at Huntingtower.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Huntingtower has a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Huntingtower is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive child safety and wellbeing culture designed to keep children safe.

It is important that all volunteers read and understand Huntingtower's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Codes of Conduct as it provides clear guidelines as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards children in our community.

Purpose

Huntingtower recognises the value of volunteers in contributing to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. Volunteers may have a wide range of interests, skills and abilities that are able to complement our programs, thus giving a wider range of interactions and experiences to our students.

Scope

Volunteers and Volunteer Activities

A volunteer is an individual who works for the School without receiving any financial reward. Volunteers can be parents, guardians or carers of students at the School, School alumni or members of the broader School or local community. This policy applies to any individual who wishes to volunteer their time and skills in any area of the school. This may include, but is not limited to classroom support, administration support, fundraising and assisting with school events, camps or excursions.

It is our policy to:

- Welcome the involvement of community members in providing assistance within the School
- Provide all volunteers with a safe working environment
- Publicise volunteer opportunities throughout the wider school community so as to provide all interested people with the opportunity to volunteer
- Ensure that the contribution of volunteers aligns with the School's mission and values
- Provide appropriate support and/or instruction to volunteers to help them carry out their tasks at the School
- Meet the requirements of all relevant legislation, particularly legislation that pertains to matters of workplace safety and child protection; and
- Publicly recognise the contribution of volunteers within the School

Types of Volunteer Activities

Given the potential diversity of volunteer activities as well as the risks associated with these activities, we categorise volunteers as either "Direct Contact Volunteers" or "Indirect Contact Volunteers". Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Principal as to how a particular volunteer activity is categorised.

The distinction between the types of volunteer activities is important as it determines the level of screening, induction and supervision that is required to be undertaken by the School. Huntingtower staff should distinguish between Direct and Indirect contact volunteers.

Direct Contact Volunteers

Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers that are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and may have some unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service. Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers assisting in learning activities, excursions, camps and sporting activities. The activities may be short-term, and irregular or longer term and frequent.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. Indirect Contact Volunteers are not responsible for supervising students and would not have "unsupervised" contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service. Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include, but not limited to assisting with school functions, assisting with fundraising barbeques.

Working with Children Clearance (WWCC)

It is a requirement for all volunteers to obtain and provide evidence of a current WWCC. A WWCC is not legally required if the person qualifies for an exemption (e.g., Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teacher or police officer). In all other cases, a WWCC is required.

General Guidelines for all Volunteers

Volunteers are required to:

- Complete the volunteer's register and induction training
- Be committed to Huntingtower's Mission, Purpose and Values
- Maintain a current Working with Children Clearance
- Carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including the maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure they don't adversely affect the health and safety of others
- Carry out tasks within the role assigned and not to perform duties they do not have the skills to undertake
- Cooperate with the reasonable policies, procedures and instructions given by the School including the Child Safety and Parent Codes of Conduct
- Refer all student concerns or behavioural issues to the Principal's Delegate
- Notify the School as early as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteer commitment; and
- Report all workplace safety incidents or injuries to the School and comply with the Health and Safety policy and guidelines

Volunteers must not:

- Work unsupervised with students unless they have been screened in accordance with the *procedures for dealing with Direct Contact Volunteers* set out below
- Be involved in toileting students or assisting with change rooms/sickrooms, unless it's your own child/grandchild
- Encourage affection from or dependency in student (e.g., giving presents, having intimate physical contact or intimate personal contact through written or electronic means such as email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms); or
- Display bullying or intimidating behaviours towards students
- Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time

Procedures for dealing with Indirect Contact Volunteers

Given that Indirect Contact Volunteer Activities (such as those assisting at a school function) are often arranged informally through teachers, class parents or team managers it is not practical to provide these volunteers with a detailed induction. To minimise risks associated with activities undertaken by Indirect Contact Volunteers, the School:

- Publishes a Parent Code of Conduct on the School's website and promotes the code through the School's bulletins
- Provides supervision and instruction for any activities that are not considered to present a low safety hazard
- Prior to commencement of volunteer work all approved Indirect Contact Volunteers are required to:
 - Complete the Volunteers Register
 - Provide a copy of their Working with Children Clearance

Procedures for dealing with Direct Contact Volunteers

Given the potential risks associated with Direct Contact Volunteers the School has developed the following procedures:

- Huntingtower staff must not offer or permit volunteer opportunities without following these procedures. The School screens all Direct Contact Volunteers by:
 - Requesting appropriate background information, including details of relevant skills and experience where necessary
 - Verifying the information provided including undertaking reference/referee check; and Working with Children Clearance as required by the Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC)

- Prior to commencement of volunteer work all approved Direct Contact Volunteers are required to:
 - Complete the Volunteers Register
 - Provide a copy of their Working with Children’s Clearance
 - Undergo induction training; and
 - Be assigned a supervising teacher who will be available to discuss volunteer concerns as they arise

Cessation of Volunteers

The volunteer program and services delivered are at the sole discretion of the School, and at any time the School may cease volunteer engagement at any time without notice.

Record Keeping

The School shall at minimum maintain the following records:

- The name, address and contact details of the volunteer
- A copy of the background information provided by the volunteer including details of reference checks completed by the school
- A copy of this policy signed and dated by the volunteer
- A copy of the Volunteer’s Working with Children Clearance
- A photo of the volunteer via photo identification
- The name of the volunteer’s supervisor
- A copy of any complaints that have been raised against the volunteer; and
- The work undertaken by the volunteer including details of any unscheduled activities and off-site excursions where practicable to do so

Volunteer Health and Safety

Huntingtower Personal Accident Insurance Cover is in place for volunteers.

Staff Responsibility

All staff are expected to:

- Follow these policy guidelines
- Not permit a volunteer to perform volunteer activities unless the volunteer has been approved in accordance with this Volunteer Policy
- Provide induction training to Direct Contact Volunteers where requested to do so; and
- Immediately report any matters of concern relating to volunteers

Implementation

This policy has been implemented through:

- Staff training
- Volunteer supervisors
- Access to relevant policies on the Parent and Staff portal including the School Child Safety Policies
- Induction training and supervision
- Effective complaints handling procedures
- Effective incident notification procedures

Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Huntingtower may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal.

Where a Volunteer breaches the Codes of Conduct or this policy, the school may ban the individual concerned from engaging in further volunteer activity on behalf of the School.

Related documents

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy

Communication

This Policy is available to Volunteers via the School's website. In addition, relevant aspects of this Policy will be raised and discussed at parent meetings and in the School bulletin.

Evaluation

The Principal is primarily responsible for monitoring Huntingtower's overall compliance with this Policy. This Policy will be reviewed as part of Huntingtower's review cycle (and otherwise as and when required).

Authorisation

This Policy was authorised by the Principal August 2022
Date of next review August 2024