

# Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy and Procedure

Quality Area 7

## Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at the Service, while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

## Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities at the Service.

## Background

Students may occasionally participate in programs and activities at the service, including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by the Service wherever appropriate and possible.

The Service values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and their voluntary contribution to the education and care of their own and other children. "In genuine partnerships families and educators value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making" (*Early Years Learning Framework*).

The Service aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers and students to participate in programs and activities while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with staff, and other adults and children at the service.

The role that volunteers play in education and care services varies and can include working with groups of children, preparing materials or food, assisting with administrative tasks or working with individual children. The service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times and will not be left alone with children at any time.

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, the Service will not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave or to fill a vacant position.

Volunteers must **not** be asked to perform tasks:

- that they are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
- that put the children or themselves in a vulnerable or potentially unsafe situation
- where there is a conflict of interest.

Before participation at the service, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must have a current Working with Children (WWC) Clearance.

## Principles

The Service is committed to:

- supporting connections with educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to undertake practicum placements as part of their studies
- building relationships with community members and providing suitable opportunities to engage volunteers to contribute to the programs and activities of the service

- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the service through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.

## Roles and responsibilities

### **The approved provider and persons with management or control are responsible for:**

- developing guidelines for accepting applications from volunteers and students to work at the service in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators which are aligned with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Environment Policy
- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor
- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times
- checking the status of the Working with Children (WWC) Clearance of volunteers and students where required, and ensuring that the details are recorded in the service register
- ensuring that the staff record contains the name, address and date of birth of volunteers and students attending the service
- keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that the nominated supervisor, educators and other staff, volunteers and students on placement at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor or educators under the law
- developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- developing an induction checklist for volunteers and students attending the service in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators.

### **The nominated supervisor and persons in day to day charge are responsible for:**

- assisting the approved provider to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to work at the service and which are aligned with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- assisting the approved provider with decisions in relation to accepting/rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time
- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times
- ensuring that, where required, that volunteers/students only commence at the service with a Working with Children's Clearance, and that details are included on the staff record
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times when participating at the service and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the approved provider, nominated supervisor or educators under the law
- ensuring strategies are in place to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*

- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- ensuring that volunteers and students have completed the induction checklist and have been provided with a copy of the staff handbook, if applicable.

**Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff are responsible for:**

- assisting the approved provider and nominated supervisor to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to participate at the service and are aligned with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times
- providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the safety, health and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- enabling parents/guardians of children attending the service to access the service premises at any time the child is being educated and cared for except where this poses a risk to the safety of children and/or staff
- encouraging the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- assisting the approved provider and nominated supervisor to develop an induction checklist for volunteers and students at the service
- assisting volunteers and students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service.

**Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for:**

- ensuring they have provided all details required to complete the staff record
- undertaking a WWC Check
- understanding and acknowledging the requirement for confidentiality of all information relating to educators and families within the service
- complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while at the service
- undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist prior to commencement at the service
- following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- providing information for the staff record as required
- complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures
- following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

## Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible by service staff via the intranet and by families via the website. A hard copy of the policy will be available through the Service. Nominated supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff access to the policy and any supporting documents and undertake induction training prior to the policy being implemented. All service staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy and ongoing training will be provided using a range of learning platforms.

## Monitoring, evaluation and review

Monitoring of compliance with this policy and the related procedure will be overseen by the policy owner. The review process for this policy will begin eight (8) weeks prior to the scheduled review date and include a consultation period with families, educators, compliance team and any other relevant stakeholders and will be facilitated by the Policy Officer.

All service staff will receive communication about any changes in or review of the policy or procedure. Training will be provided where required to ensure an understanding of the changes. Families will be notified of any changes 14 days prior to the implementation. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the MACSEYE Code of Conduct.

## Related policies

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy  
 Code of Conduct Policy  
 Dealing with Complaints Policy  
 Delivery and Collection of Children Policy  
 Responsible Person Policy  
 Interacting with Children Policy  
 Occupational Health and Safety Policy  
 Privacy Policy  
 Staffing Arrangements Policy  
 Supervision Policy

## Legislative requirements

### NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership
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### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW ACT

Section 170	Offence relating to unauthorised persons on education and care service premises
Section 175	Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents

### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS

Regulation 83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation 120	Educators who are under the age of 18 to be supervised
Regulation 145	Staff Records
Regulation 149	Volunteers and Students
Regulation 168	Policies and Procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

### RELATED LEGISLATIONS

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

# Definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Approved provider</b>	Approved Provider is a person who holds a provider approval. A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one of more service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions.
<b>Child-related work</b>	In relation to the WWC Check, child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	refers to an interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of the volunteer, or may impair their independence or loyalty to the service. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the volunteer, but also their relatives, friends or business associates
<b>MACSEYE</b>	Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Early Years Education Ltd, a subsidiary of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd established to conduct early childhood education and care services.
<b>Staff record</b>	A record which the approved provider of a centre-based service must keep containing information about the nominated supervisor, the Educational Leader, staff, volunteers, students and the responsible person at a service
<b>Student</b>	A person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised early childhood qualification. This student will be supported by an educational institution in the completion of their placement.
<b>Volunteer</b>	A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include child-related work, administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.
<b>Working with Children (WWC) Check</b>	The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work in Victoria and is a measure to help protect children from harm arising as a result of physical or sexual abuse. The Department of Justice assesses a person's suitability to work with children by examining relevant serious sexual, physical and drug offences in a person's national criminal history and, where appropriate, their professional history.
<b>Working with Children (WWC) Clearance</b>	A WWC Clearance is granted to a person under Worker Screening legislation if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>they have been assessed as suitable to work with children</li> <li>there has been no information that, if the person worked with children, they would pose a risk to those children</li> <li>they are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.</li> </ul>

# Policy information

Policy information			
<b>Policy title:</b>	Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy	<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Authorised Executive:</b>	Director, Service Delivery	<b>Responsible Manager:</b>	Director, Service Delivery
<b>Approving authority:</b>	Managing Director	<b>Approval date:</b>	6/9/2024
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Version control		
Version	Date	Changes
1.0	6/9/2024	Policy developed