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**VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS IN SCHOOLS**

**GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPALS AND STAFF**

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These procedures must be read in conjunction with the *Volunteers and Visitors in Schools - Policy and Procedures.*

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### Introduction

The *Volunteers and Visitors in Schools – Policy* provides a framework for the involvement of volunteers and visitors in schools to support the delivery of educational programs and other activities for students, whilst protecting the rights of students to learn in a safe and well-organised environment, and ensuring compliance with [*Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011*](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-44/) (WWVP Act) obligations. Volunteers and visitors bring benefits and enrichment to educational programs and other supporting activities directed to and in support of students which are valued by schools. These guidelines support the implementation of the policy and should be read in conjunction with the *Volunteers and Visitors Policy* and *Procedures.*

### Action Plan

Schools are encouraged to develop a school-based arrangement (i.e. local action plan) for volunteers and visitors to better assist the recruitment and use of volunteers and visitors to support school programs and students’ learning. The action plan may include processes and resources that guide and monitor the effective use and support of volunteers and visitors in school programs and activities. A ‘plan-do-check-act’ model may be applied to the design, management and continuous improvement of the program. See Volunteers and Visitors Program Management Checklist at Attachment A of this guide.

As with all school-based arrangements, the volunteers and visitors action plan must be approved by the school board. It should be reviewed at least annually to maintain currency, or as the need arises if circumstances change.

### Requirements

Volunteers and visitors in schools must complete and submit their Nomination Form annually to ensure that information retained by schools is correct and up to date, the Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) registration remains current for the duration of the activity, and as a regular reminder to the volunteer or visitor of the code of conduct and insurance arrangements. Changes to a volunteer’s or visitor’s activities throughout the year may be annotated on the original nomination form or a new or additional form completed.

The requirements for schools to undertake in relation to visitors and volunteers are set out in the Volunteers and Visitors Induction Checklist at Attachment B of this guide.

The checklist must be completed for each volunteer or visitor and retained on file with the signed Nomination Form. It must be re-done when the need arises, for example if the type of volunteering activity changes.

For some visitors, their activities may also be underpinned by a contractual arrangement.

### School protocols

Before engaging volunteers and visitors, schools must set out protocols to protect the right of students to learn in a safe and positive environment and to provide a good practice framework for the delivery of programs and activities. To enable consistent application of the Volunteer and Visitor Policy, schools are encouraged to designate a volunteer coordinator role within the school.

School protocols **must** include:

**Identification** – All volunteers and visitors must carry a recognised form of identification including, if required, a current and appropriate WWVP card. The school should provide a form of identification, such as a card or sticker, and keep a proper record of its issue. Identification cards must be returned to the school at the end of the visit. Schools must store identification cards securely when they are not in use and ensure that visitors and volunteers are aware of the requirements to have the identification prominently displayed, for example attached to a lanyard that is worn around the neck, or a sticker attached to the person’s clothing at chest height.

**Daily sign-in** – Volunteers and visitors must sign-in/out for each visit, recording the date, start and finish times and the tasks undertaken. Schools may use a paper-based form or an electronic system for recording purposes.

Forms/recording systems will be located:

* in the front office of each school and preschool
* at other locations as determined by the Principal, and
* with staff supervising off-site activities such as excursions, sporting carnivals, camps and other activities which occur away from the school campus.

Template forms are available on the Directorate’s policy webpage for use with volunteers and visitors registered under the WWVP Act, and those who have applied or are not required to be registered.

For those volunteers and visitors that are not registered they must identify if they:

1. have applied for registration and their application is current but their card has not yet been issued or
2. are covered by one of the exemption provisions in the Act and are not required to be registered.

Volunteers and visitors who are claiming the ‘frequency exemption’ must declare on each visit they have not exceeded the permitted number of visits to schools in the statutory period (three days in the past 28 days, and seven days in the past 12-months), noting that a day includes part of a day and that the exemption does not apply to overnight camps.

### Monitoring Compliance

Schools should have arrangements in place to ensure volunteers and visitors are aware of the need for compliance with the requirements of the WWVP Act. This may include:

* Access Canberra information at the Front Office and adjacent to sign-in forms, and
* a system to review volunteer and visitor participation.

### Duty of care

**Duty of care** is the responsibility to exercise reasonable care to protect the safety of students against injury that should reasonably have been foreseen. This duty exists whenever a student/teacher relationship exists, while students are on school premises during hours when the school is open and while on school-based activities taking place elsewhere.

The supervision and management of educational programs involving volunteers and visitors is an important aspect of the daily function of school staff and is integral to the duty of care responsibilities of staff.

With respect to all tasks identified for the volunteer and visitor, the supervisor will clearly:

* ensure the volunteer or visitor has a current registration where necessary with Access Canberra;
* state the type of activity to be undertaken by the volunteer or visitor and any limitations relevant to the activity;
* ensure the volunteer or visitor is suitable for the activity and tasks including considering any relevant qualifications, expertise and experience needed;
* define the location for the tasks to be undertaken and any relevant boundaries; and
* define the role of the volunteer or visitor and that of the supervisor with relevant contingencies described.

Volunteers and visitors, working directly with students who have applied for a WWVP card but it has not yet been issued, are under 18 years of age, or are exempt from holding a WWVP card must be supervised at all times by a school staff member.

### The Principal and duty of care

The Principal is primarily responsible for making and administering arrangements for adequate school and student supervision and ensuring that the duty of care responsibility is met. The qualifications and experience of staff members combined with their knowledge of the students and their behaviour are important factors to consider when assessing duty of care and reviewing educational programs supported by volunteers or visitors.

### Volunteers and Visitors in School - Code of Conduct

To assist schools in providing a safe and positive educational environment, volunteers and visitors must agree to comply with the Volunteers and Visitors in Schools - Code of Conduct, which clarifies the conduct expected from volunteers and visitors when participating in programs and activities supporting students in ACT public schools.

### Volunteer and Visitor Nomination Forms

The Volunteers and Visitors in Schools - Nomination Form (the Nomination Form) records details of the nominating volunteer or visitor and may only be signed by a person who:

* has a current WWVP card issued by Access Canberra under the WWVP Act;
* has applied for a WWVP card under the WWVP Act and the application is current but the card has not yet been issued. Until their card is issued, they must work with a school staff member person at all times; and
* is not required to be registered by under the WWVP Act. The volunteer or visitor must declare that there are no serious convictions, circumstances or reasons that might preclude them from working with or near children and young people, and that they are required to apply for a WWVP card if the number of visits is expected to exceed the statutory thresholds of more than three days in the past 28 days, or seven days in the past 12 months. While they do not hold WWVP registration, they must work with a school staff member person at all times.

The Nomination Form requires all volunteers and visitors to certify that they:

* have read the General Information included with the form;
* have signed and agree to abide by the Volunteers and Visitors - Code of Conduct;
* have read the Volunteers and Visitors - Insurance Arrangements;
* understand they are required to sign in and out each time they visit the school, and to report any incidents or injuries;
* understand that, if they are claiming an exemption of limited frequency under the WWVP Act*,* that they need to declare at each visit that they have not exceeded the thresholds of more than three days in the past 28 days, or seven days in the past 12 months;
* are aware of the requirements for handling sensitive and/or personal information; and
* are aware that they should inform the principal of any health or medical issues that might affect their capacity to undertake visiting or volunteering activities.

### Insurance

Insurance arrangements and requirements for volunteers, visitors and volunteers through organisations are outlined in the Volunteers and Visitors in schools – Insurance Arrangements document (00023/11).

### Outside school hours users of premises

Organisations and tutors that use school facilities for programs outside of school hours, such as after school music lessons or martial arts instruction, are responsible for ensuring that WWVP Act requirements are met.

### Overseas excursions

Information about the involvement of volunteers in overseas excursions is addressed in the [Overseas Excursions Policy and Manual](https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/school-activities/excursions/overseas-excursions-policy).

### The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

For visitors to schools under the auspices of the NDIS, please refer to information relating to the scheme on the [Directorate website](https://www.education.act.gov.au/support-for-our-students/students-with-disability/the-national-disability-insurance-scheme).

### Attachment A - Volunteers and Visitors Program Management Checklist

*Apply a Plan – Do – Check – Act approach to the design, management and continuous improvement of the volunteers and visitors program*

*This form should be completed when a program is established and reviewed at least annually.*

| **Requirements to be checked** | **Completed** | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Establish a school-based arrangement (Board to approve) for volunteers and visitors that reflects the specific needs of the school and its environment (Plan), including |  | |
| * 1. Document the range of types of volunteers and visitors to the school and the processes to be applied for each group | 🗌 | |
| * 1. Assess the appropriate means for distribution of information and support for volunteers and visitors including assistance to complete relevant documentation | 🗌 | |
| * 1. Establish roles and responsibilities for all groups/individuals involved with volunteers and visitors including a volunteer coordinator role as appropriate | 🗌 | |
| 1. Ensure activities and educational programs involving volunteers and visitors are appropriately supervised and supported (Do)   *Note:*  *(i) all volunteers and visitors that do not hold a WWVP card in circumstances where they are exempt or awaiting a decision on their WWVP application must be directly supervised by a school staff member*  *(ii) all volunteers and visitors that are under 18 years of age must be directly supervised by a school staff member, regardless of whether they hold a WWVP card*. | 🗌 | |
| 1. Ensure proper administration of the program and requirements (Do) |  | |
| * 1. Ensure volunteers and visitors are adequately introduced to the school site and activity, including any limitations | 🗌 | |
| * 1. Ensure volunteers and visitors are informed of school-based arrangements | 🗌 | |
| * 1. Provide appropriate identification for volunteers and visitors | 🗌 | |
| * 1. Annual distribution of the      1. Volunteers and Visitors in Schools - Code of Conduct, | | 🗌 |
| * + 1. Volunteers and Visitors in Schools - Insurance Arrangements | | 🗌 |
| * 1. Annual distribution, collection and storage of Volunteer and Visitor in Schools - Nomination Forms. | | 🗌 |
| * 1. Ensure administration and secure storage of sign-in/out records | | 🗌 |
| 1. Check that tasks undertaken by volunteers and visitors are suitable for their individual skills, knowledge and interests (Check) | | 🗌 |
| 1. Monitor the involvement and appropriate use of volunteers and visitors in schools (Check). | | 🗌 |
| 1. Monitor compliance with the requirements of the [*Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011*](https://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2011-44/current/pdf/2011-44.pdf)for volunteers and visitors in contact with children, particularly with respect to those claiming the frequency exemption (Check) | | 🗌 |
| 1. Consider conducting surveys of staff, volunteers and visitors to assess their satisfaction with and ideas for volunteer and visitor involvement (Check) | | 🗌 |
| 1. Act on findings from program review processes (Act) | | 🗌 |
| 1. Highlight the value of volunteering/visiting and give recognition to volunteers/visitors in communications with the school and wider community e.g. school website, newsletter | | 🗌 |

### Attachment B - Volunteers and Visitors Induction Checklist

*This checklist must be completed for each volunteer or visitor and retained on file with the signed Nomination Form. It must be re-done when the need arises, for example if the type of volunteering activity materially changes.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Visitor’s/Volunteers’ Name: |  |
| Contact Details: |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Legislative and other Requirements*** | |
| 1. Volunteers and Visitors in Schools - Nomination Formhas been read and completed 2. Volunteers and Visitors Code of Conduct has been signed 3. Insurance status has been clarified and sighted if necessary | 🗌 |
| 1. Terms and conditions of exemptions under the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* have been discussed and agreed (if applicable) | 🗌 |
| ***Volunteer and Visitor Protocols*** | |
| 1. Role of volunteer/visitor defined | 🗌 |
| 1. Nature of volunteer/visitor activity discussed, including any health or medical issues that may affect capacity to undertake the activity | 🗌 |
| 1. Requirements for daily sign-in/out and wearing of identification have been discussed | 🗌 |
| 1. Handling of sensitive and personal information discussed 2. Confidentiality undertaking signed if needed | 🗌 |
| 1. Supervision requirements discussed   *Note:*  *(i) all volunteers and visitors that do not hold a WWVP card in circumstances where they are exempt or awaiting a decision on their WWVP application must be directly supervised by a school staff member.*  *(ii) all volunteers and visitors that are under 18 years of age must be directly supervised by a school staff member, regardless of whether they hold a WWVP card.* | 🗌 |
| ***Emergency and Incident Procedures*** | |
| 1. Requirements for reporting incidents and injuries discussed | 🗌 |
| 1. Protocols for responding to emergencies discussed | 🗌 |
| 1. Relevant emergency and incident guidelines provided | 🗌 |
| 1. Contact information for principal/delegate/supervising teacher/first aid officer given | 🗌 |
| ***Useful protocols*** | |
| 1. Procedure for entering and exiting the school | 🗌 |
| 1. Procedure for maintaining safety and security, including access to keys | 🗌 |
| 1. Guidelines for access to school resources or storage of own resources | 🗌 |
| 1. Guidelines for appropriate interaction with students discussed | 🗌 |
| 1. Guidelines for use of building facilities, equipment and telephones | 🗌 |
| 1. Guidelines for use of parking facilities | 🗌 |
| *Processes to make volunteers and visitors aware of* | |
| 1. Relevant policies, guidelines and school-based arrangements | 🗌 |
| 1. Mandatory reporting requirements of school staff | 🗌 |
| 1. Site specific reportable conduct reporting requirements | 🗌 |
| 1. Site specific workplace health and safety reporting requirements | 🗌 |
| 1. Disclosures of sexual abuse reporting requirements | 🗌 |
| 1. Relevant lines of authority and assistance | 🗌 |