

PARTICIPATION OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 4



PURPOSE

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

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Auburn South Preschool 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.

2. 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 of Auburn South Preschool.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Students and volunteers may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time in order to observe and experience the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by Auburn South Preschool wherever appropriate and possible.

Auburn South Preschool values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and the voluntary contribution they make 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*).

Auburn South Preschool 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 (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*).

The role that students and 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 one-on-one with individual children, under the supervision of Auburn South ECT's and Educators. The children's 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.

Prior to participation at the service, a volunteer (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children Clearance (WWCC). Parents/guardians and family members closely related to children attending the service are exempt from needing a WWC Check.

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

In line with Child Safe Standards and the *Child Safe Environment Policy*, prior to engaging a volunteer or student an assessment should be undertaken of the nature of the responsibility to determine whether a position description is required, and based on that whether an interview and referee checks are required.

It is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* that the Approved Provider uses the staff record to document the details of all students and volunteers. The staff record must include the full name, address and date of birth of each student or volunteer who participates at the service.

The Approved Provider of a centre-based service must also keep a record for each day on which the student or volunteer participates at the service, including the date and the hours of participation. In addition to this, it is recommended that students and volunteers undertake an induction to the service and complete an induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1), which should also be stored with the staff record.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 169
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 123, 145, 149, 157, 355, 358, 360
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
 - Standard 4.1: Staffing arrangements enhance children’s learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Child-related work: In relation to the WWC Check (*refer to Definitions*), child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.

Conflict of interest: (In relation to this policy) 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.

Student: 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.

Volunteer: A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a children's service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include direct contact with children, administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Working directly with children: For the purposes of the National Regulations, working directly with children is defined as being physically present with children and directly engaged in providing them with education and/or care.

Working with Children (WWC) Check: 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. A WWC Check card, notice or document (valid for five years), is granted to a person under working with children legislation if:

- they have been assessed as suitable to work with children
- there has been no information that, if the person worked with children, they would pose a risk to those children
- they are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being, Becoming: www.acecqa.gov.au
- A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (The Commission for Children and Young People) www.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Working with Children Check; www.service.vic.gov.au

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Determining Responsible Person Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- developing guidelines in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators for accepting applications from volunteers/students to work at the service and which are aligned with the *Child Safe Environment Policy*

- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer/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 (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service
- ensuring that the staff record contains information for all volunteers/students attending the service with details of name, address, date of birth and details of the Working with Children (WWC) Check (Regulations 145, 149)
- requesting additional information on the staff records such as emergency contact/next of kin and medical conditions
- keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (*Regulation 149(2)*)
- 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 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 (Regulation 157)
- Ensuring 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 (*Regulation 83*)
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations
- 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
- informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services emergency and evacuation procedures (*Regulations 97, 168 (2)(e)*)
- developing an induction checklist for volunteers/students attending the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students) in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators.
- Ensuring that volunteers/students have completed the induction checklist (*refer to Attachment 1*)

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- assisting the Approved Provider to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- assisting the Approved Provider with decisions in relation to accepting/rejecting a potential volunteer/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 (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)

- ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service, and that details are included on the staff record
- 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 aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations
- 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 (Regulation 157)
- 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
- assisting the Approved Provider to develop an induction checklist for volunteers/students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students)
- ensuring that volunteers/students have completed the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1)

Persons in day-to day charge (certified supervisors) are responsible for:

- ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service.

Persons in day-to day charge (certified supervisors) and other educators are responsible for:

- assisting the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- 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 (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations
- 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
- complying with the requirement 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
- complying with the requirement 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/students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students)
- assisting volunteers/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 Working with Children (WWC) Check and presenting a current WWC Check card or other notification, as applicable
- understanding and acknowledging the requirement for confidentiality of all information relating to educators and families within the service (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- understanding and acknowledging the requirement to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations
- 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 (refer to Attachment 1) 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:

- 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 attending 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.
- ensuring they are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children
- complying with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider and/or Nominated Supervisor will:

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students and volunteers are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Auburn South Preschool on June 27th 2018.

REVIEWED: JUNE 2023

REVIEW DATE: JUNE 2025

This procedure will be reviewed in a 2 yearly policy review cycle or earlier, in response to new information informing best practice including legislation, research, feedback and policy.

ATTACHMENT 1. SAMPLE INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Name: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by all volunteers and students participating at Auburn South Preschool and returned to the supervisor prior to commencing at the service.

Volunteer/Student	Please tick
I have been given access to all the policies and procedures of Auburn South Preschool	
I have had explained to me the expectations, including those relating to:	
• conduct while at the service (<i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>)	
• emergency, evacuation, fire and safety, including locations of fire extinguishers and emergency exits (<i>Emergency and Evacuation Policy</i>)	
• accidents at the service (<i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i>)	
• dealing with medical conditions (<i>Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy, Diabetes Policy, Epilepsy and Seizures Policy and Administration of Medication Policy</i>)	
• good hygiene practices (<i>Hygiene Policy and Food Safety Policy</i>)	
• first aid arrangements for children and adults, including the location of the nearest first aid kit (<i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i>)	
• daily routines	
• the importance of OHS and following safe work practices (<i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>)	
• interacting appropriately with children (<i>Interactions with Children Policy</i>)	
• reporting hazards in the workplace (<i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>)	
• handling complaints and grievances (<i>Compliments and Complaints Policy</i>)	
• child safety and wellbeing and child protection including how to respond to concerns (<i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	
• privacy and confidentiality of information (<i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	

Volunteer/Student	Please tick
I am aware of the non-smoking policy of the service and not be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair my capacity to complete my tasks <i>(Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, Alcohol, and other Drugs Policy)</i>	
The expectations of my placement/engagement, my role and responsibilities (including attending to the requirements of children with additional needs) have been clearly explained to me by my supervisor	
I am aware that I am expected to participate in general tasks, including maintaining the environment in a clean, safe and tidy condition	

Volunteer or student name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Nominated/Certified Supervisor's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____