



PENLEIGH AND ESSENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Volunteers policy

Purpose

To outline the processes that Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

Definitions

Child-related work: work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Closely related family member: parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

Volunteer worker: A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work: School work means:

Carrying out the functions of the School Board

Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school board, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal (or delegate)

Providing assistance in the work of the school

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with sport or excursions, are legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

Policy

Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School (PEGS) is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of our students and our staff and volunteers. PEGS recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that PEGS volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to speak with the relevant Head of Section or Director of Department.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

PEGS values the many volunteers that assist as homeroom contacts, PYP program, excursions, in the sports program, fundraisers and other activities as required. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, PEGS is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working With Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks. Where prospective volunteers are required under the law and this policy to have a WWC Clearance, the principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWC check application in order to commence volunteer work, provided the volunteer provides the school with evidence of the application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after the applicant receives it.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that PEGS is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to Reception for verification through our PASSTAB sign on system in the following circumstances:

Volunteers who are not parent/family members of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.

Parent/family volunteers who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is not participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.

Parent/family volunteers who assist with excursions, camps, trips and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

Parent/family volunteers who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not

Parent/community Friends of PEGS members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not

Sports program coaches, assistants and umpires who regularly volunteer, regardless of whether they are being supervised.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Non child-related work

Board Members will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that Board Members will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, we believe that as volunteers who are making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students, they do require a valid WWC Clearance.

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, Craft Market coordination, Friends of PEGS coordination or other fundraising groups that may meet offsite or in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, PEGS reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Policy for a Child Safe School, Policy for Protection of Children and Managing the Risk of Child Abuse, Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with students, Policy for Interaction of Staff with Students and our Rules of the School.

Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with the School's training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteers, including the School's policies relating to Equal Opportunity, and Workplace Behaviour.

The principal has the discretion to make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at PEGS.

PEGS will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to the School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures.

Volunteers will read and sign the Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with student through PASSTAB at Reception.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

Compensation

Public liability insurance

The School's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:
a claim for bodily injury to a third party
damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Principal may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the Director of Finance.

Related Policies and Resources

- Policy for a Child Safe School
- Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with students
- Policy for Protection of Children and Managing the Risk of Child Abuse
- Policy for Interaction of Staff with Students
- Statement of Behaviour
- Mutual Respect Policy
- Workplace Behaviour - Harassment, Bullying and Occupational Violence
- Equal Opportunity
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy