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Volunteers Policy

1. Policy Statement

Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School (PEGS) is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly school, where children and young people are safe and feel safe. The school has a policy of zero tolerance for child abuse. The school recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to the school community and the obligations to protect the safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and volunteers.

2. Purpose

To outline the processes for the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of volunteers, to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

3. Scope

This policy applies to any adult providing voluntary (unpaid) work at, or for, the school.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Child-related work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> involves an adult working with children under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work) having direct contact with children (physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact) and is a usual part of the person's duties (and is not occasional or incidental to their work) <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Child-connected work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present occasional direct or indirect contact with children that is incidental to the work may occur <p>Note: Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. Schools may also choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>

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Term	Meaning
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 worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.
School work	<p>Any activity that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out the functions of the School Board • 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 • Carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the Principal (or delegate) • Providing assistance in the work of the school. <p>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 (i.e. indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.</p>

5. Policy/Procedure

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, that they understand their responsibility to protect children from harm and respond to suspicions of child abuse and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

5.1 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.

5.2 Suitability checks and clearances including Working with Children Check

Child-related work

PEGS values the many volunteers that assist as homeroom parent contacts, school programs, or 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, Ministerial Order No 1359* and the Child Safe Standards, PEGS is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a valid Victorian Working With Children Check (WWCC) 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 WWCC, the Principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWCC 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 all volunteers involved in child-related work to obtain a

WWCC 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.

Volunteers engaged in **child-related work** are required to comply with the **Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with students**.

Volunteers engaged in **child-connected work** are required to comply with the **Code of Conduct for Contractors, Volunteers and Visitors**.

Parents and caregivers who are assisting as volunteers are reminded of expectations for their cooperation as summarized in the **Parent Code of Conduct**.

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.

Child-connected work

At the discretion of the Principal, a volunteer whose duties may involve occasional contact with students and who will be a regular presence at the school and/or when children are reasonably expected to be present will require a valid WWCC.

Other volunteers

Board Members will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWCC. Whilst we acknowledge that Board Members will not be engaging in child-related or child-connected 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 WWCC.

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-connected. 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 WWCC 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 WWCC, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

5.3 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 Child Safety Policy, Procedures to Protect Children from Abuse and Code of Conduct for Staff, and Others Interacting with Students, Policy for Positive Interactions of Staff and 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.

Induction/training of volunteers

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.

In accordance with Ministerial Order No 1359, information provided to volunteers engaged in child-related work during induction will include:

- the Child Safety Policy
- Procedures to Protect Children from Abuse
- the Code of Conduct for Staff and Others Interacting with Students
- their responsibilities to children and students, information sharing and reporting obligations and record-keeping obligations. Refer to *Four Critical Actions for Schools*.

Volunteers will read and sign the **Code of Conduct for Staff and others interacting with students** through PASSTAB at Reception.

All Volunteers will sign-in at Reception, in accordance with the **Visitors Policy**.

Volunteers engaged in **child-related work** will read and sign the **Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with students**, via PASSTAB at reception.

Volunteers engaged in **child-connected work** will read and sign the **Code of Conduct for Contractors, Volunteers and Visitors**, via 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.

5.4 Insurances

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.

6. Related Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Ministerial Order No 1359 – Implementing the Child Safety Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises.

7. Related Documents

Child Safety Policy

Procedures to Protect Children from Abuse

Code of Conduct for Staff and others who interact with students

Code of Conduct for Contractors, Volunteers and Visitors

Parent Code of Conduct

Policy for Positive Interaction of Staff and Students

Statement of Behaviour

Mutual Respect Policy

Workplace Behaviour - Harassment, Bullying and Occupational Violence

Equal Opportunity

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Visitors Policy