

# VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION POLICY



**RATIONALE:** McLaren Vale Primary School has a long history of active parent/caregiver involvement in the school. Volunteering is a valuable way to support classroom and school programs. Teachers greatly appreciate the extra hands in the classroom and the benefit to children is enormous and similarly with wider school programs. Volunteers make a significant contribution to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. Volunteers may have a wide range of interests and abilities that complement school programs, thus providing a wider range of interactions and experiences for students. Volunteering benefits everyone, including the volunteers who are rewarded with the satisfaction that comes from contributing to children's learning and wellbeing.

**PROCESS:** Our children's safety and wellbeing are paramount to everything that we do, therefore we have strict processes in place for those who would like to volunteer at McLaren Vale Primary School. If you would like to be a volunteer, please email the school on [dl.0251.admin@schools.sa.edu.au](mailto:dl.0251.admin@schools.sa.edu.au) and **provide certificates/evidence** (email or hard copies to the front office) of the following (if you haven't already):

1. Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse & Neglect (RRHAN) <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/working-us/rrhan-ec/fundamentals-course-responding-risks-harm-abuse-and-neglect-education-and-care>
2. Working With Children (WWC) Check (*we can commence an application on your behalf if you don't have one, we just require your date of birth and email address - any associated costs are paid by the school*)
3. COVID Vaccination status (this is a Department for Education requirement, please see DfE Non-Employee COVID-19 vaccination policy. <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/non-employee-covid-vaccination-policy.pdf?v=1651472371>)

*Due to COVID regulations preventing face-to-face volunteer induction, we now ask that you complete the Online Volunteer General Induction below (if you haven't already):*

Online Volunteer General Induction <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/working-us/volunteers/what-volunteers-need-know/when-you-start-volunteer-inductions>

4. MVPS Volunteer application  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/528d41b3e4b0e9839ff85229/t/627da382e847f158219f9ef0/1652401036288/MVPS+Volunteer+Application+form.pdf>  
and MVPS Volunteer Agreement form  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/528d41b3e4b0e9839ff85229/t/627da0d67a8b7b20c0f492f6/1652400345076/Volunteer-agreement+form%5B1%5D.pdf>.

**We require new forms to be completed for all volunteers this year.**

Once all of these have been completed, the Principal will review your application and assess suitability for being a volunteer at MVPS. If approved you will then be invited to sit down with a MVPS staff member who will go through a MVPS Volunteer site induction checklist and then you will be approved to commence your volunteer work. An induction pack consisting of printed information and a handbook will be provided.

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**OPPORTUNITIES:** We support volunteers to connect with our learning community in a range of capacities. This includes:

- In the classroom – helping children learn to read, working with small groups under the supervision of a teacher, mentoring students, sharing skills, expertise, and experiences
- working with classes in the garden or kitchen
- coaching sporting teams
- specific activities such as art or community programs
- membership on Governing Council Committee or sub-committees
- assisting with Breakfast club
- assisting on excursions and camps
- attending working bees
- library jobs
- participating in school events, including Sports Day, Colour Run etc.

Training and support is offered to volunteers looking to gain new skills. When completing the 'Volunteer Application form' you are required to identify the nature of volunteering you would like to do.

**REQUIRED CLEARANCES:** The Department for Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit outlines the following in terms of who requires a Working With Children Check:

**Working with Children Checks are not required for the following parents/guardians:**

- parents/guardians who volunteer in connection with an activity that involves their own child (such a volunteering within their child's own class if their child is involved in the activity for the entire time)
- parents/guardians involved in one-off events, such as sports days, working bees and whole-of-school events for less than 7 days annually, and which do not involve any close personal contact which their child is attending
- parents/guardians volunteering on a governing council that is not the employing authority of an out of school hours service (OSHC).

**Working with Children Checks are required for the following parents/guardians:**

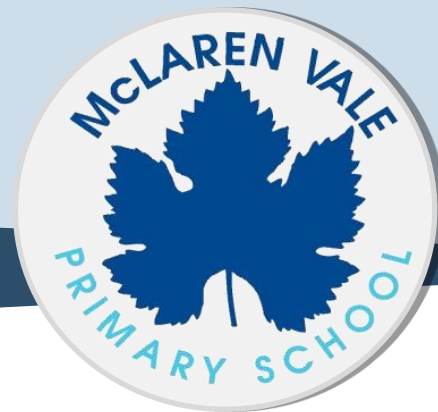
- parents/guardians who are attending overnight camps or school sleepovers
- parents/guardians involved with close personal contact with children, this involves toileting or changing clothes
- parents/guardians in close contact with students with disabilities in special classes or schools
- parents/guardians acting as sports coaches who are not parents or guardians of a child in the team
- parents/guardians, if their own child is not involved in the service or activity.

**What is a Working with Children Check?**

- It is a checking process undertaken by the Department for Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit. It involves checking the person's criminal history and any other relevant information that is lawfully available to the Screening Unit. It can include information from the police, courts, prosecuting authorities, child protection and professional registration bodies
- The check must be updated every 5 years.

MVPS staff will facilitate WWC checks for any interested parents to ensure they are able to participate in any role (including overnight excursions etc.) as they occur. Please contact Student Services staff for further information.

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**VOLUNTEER SELECTION PROCESS:** The selection of volunteers/students to work at the school will be decided by the Principal in consultation with the staff team and Governing Council Committee where appropriate. This will be made in relation to the following:

- Volunteers should be sought from the parent/caregiver community on a needs basis and should enhance the quality of what is already being provided at McLaren Vale Primary School.
- **Preference will be given to those parent/caregivers who hold a current WWC.**

**VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES:** The volunteer's most important responsibility is related to his/her duty of care to children. Children are a vulnerable group generally, due to their age and lack of experience. Their vulnerability increases if: they are very young; they have an intellectual or physical disability; they are newly arrived in Australia with English as a second language; or they experience emotional/physical neglect.

For students/volunteers, respecting the rights of children means they must not:

- Work unsupervised with children
- Be involved in toileting children or assisting with changing clothes etc
- Have unsupervised contact with children at any times
- Encourage affection from or dependency in children e.g. by giving presents
- Have intentional physical contact with children (the supervising staff will provide comfort/first aid to a distressed child)
- Display harassing, bullying or intimidating behaviours towards children
- Handle money. Parents are required to hand all money over to Student Services. Refer any questions to staff.
- Communicate with parents regarding a child's welfare or incidents that day, this is the role of the staff member.

Volunteers must:

- Abide by current COVID-19 restrictions in place. You will be informed about what these are when you begin your volunteering
- Report to their supervisor (delegated at induction) on arrival and departure
- Sign the 'Volunteers Register' located BEHIND the front desk on arrival and departure. (Please note that this is different from the 'Visitors Register')
- Wear the provided name badge at all times
- Refer all child concerns or behaviour issues to the supervising staff
- Refer all requests to access confidential information to the Principal
- Notify the school as early as possible if he/she is unable to fulfil their volunteer/student commitment
- Take reasonable care of the health and safety of yourself and others who may be affected by your acts or omissions
- Not recklessly or intentionally, interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.
- Supply and use appropriate equipment in the correct manner, following consultation with the Principal or supervisor
- While on site, maintain the work area in a well-kept and orderly condition or equipment which may be hazardous to you in assessing your work area or undertaking work at this worksite
- All information about children and families and staff at MVPS must remain strictly confidential, in line with privacy principles
- Dress appropriately with neat clothing and footwear (no thongs please) that allow ease of movement and full participation in activities with children. A broad brimmed hat is to be worn outside during times guided by the MVPS Sun Protection policy
- Feel comfortable relating to children, families and staff, but ensure all information is kept confidential and is not to leave the school

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## Interacting with children:

- Work within the MVPS philosophies, especially the view that children are competent and capable.
- Use positive and encouraging language
- Encourage children to talk about the processes they use in their learning, etc.
- Encourage safe play both inside and outside
- Encourage children to be actively engaged and take risks in their learning, challenge themselves, etc.
- Encourage children to practice new skills with minimal assistance
- Refer all behaviour management issues to staff
- Refer all clothes changing, toileting and first aid issues to staff
- Interact with children in a caring and understanding manner, modelling correct and respectful speech
- Refrain from touching children where at all possible
- Treat all children equally.

**CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT:** The Principal has the discretion at any time to consider the circumstances of volunteers working with children. If volunteers are not working or behaving in an appropriate manner, the person will be asked to leave. A failure to comply with the legal requirement, specific instructions related to health and safety, or the worksite's health and safety policies and procedures, and privacy disclosure principles will result in immediate removal from the premises, and such other action as may be appropriate.

## McLaren Vale Primary School's responsibilities to volunteers:

- A staff member will be allocated to supervise a volunteer in each of the areas that she/he works.
- Volunteers will be provided with full induction training that will include guidelines for:
  - Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care Induction session (A DfE online volunteer course will be offered)
  - Occupational Health & Safety Welfare procedures
  - Duty of Care responsibilities to children
  - Confidentiality requirements
  - Training specific to the area of volunteer work
  - Appropriate policies
- When a volunteer begins at MVPS we ensure they are welcomed and informed about safe work practices, policies and school practices. This is to ensure that they are knowledgeable about our school and are able to carry out their role with confidence.

For more information about working as a volunteer in a DfE site please refer to the [DfE Volunteer policy](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/volunteer_policy.pdf) [https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/volunteer\\_policy.pdf](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/volunteer_policy.pdf) and the DfE Volunteering in schools, preschools, kindergartens and children's centres <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/working-us/volunteers/volunteering-schools-preschools-kindergartens-and-childrens-centres> .

***Policy updated May 2022***