

VOLUNTEER POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Victory Christian College (VCC) is committed to implementing and following practices that protect the safety and wellbeing of children, staff and volunteers. Our College is enriched through volunteer contributions, and we acknowledge how valuable this engagement is to our students' learning experiences and social development.

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our College. It does not apply to other services that operate on the Victory site, such as Victory Church, TheirCare Outside School Hours Care or community groups that lease VCC's gymnasium.

AIMS

- To outline the processes that Victory Christian College will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers.
- To provide a child-safe environment for all children and young people at Victory Christian College.
- To explain the legal rights of volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided in *Ministerial Order 1359* and the *Worker Screening Act 2020*.

Child-connected work: 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.

Child-related work: As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020*, child-related work is 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 direct 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 a School Council [*i.e. Victory Christian College Board.*]
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the College 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 School Council [*i.e. Victory Christian College Board.*]
- Providing assistance in the work of any school.

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

Volunteer Hours and Fee Reduction

Volunteer participation is welcomed and celebrated at Victory Christian College. Research suggests that students feel supported in their learning and have better outcomes when parents and caregivers are actively involved in their learning.



To show how much the College values volunteer time, approved volunteer hours will be credited off accounts. The Fee Policy and Schedule, which is reviewed annually, defines the number of hours a family can claim towards fee reduction. The time involvement for 2023 is set at 10 hours per annum from each family, at a set rate of \$20.00 per hour; a maximum of \$200. For more information regarding the volunteer hours fee reduction process, see the Fee Policy and Schedule 2023.

Becoming a Volunteer

Members of our College community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to register their interest at the beginning of the school year.

Key information is then captured through a digital form, including Working with Children Check (WWCC) numbers.

All volunteers must complete an induction program which includes:

- VCC's Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- An overview of confidentiality requirements
- A description of the sign-in and sign-out procedures for volunteers
- Emergency procedures
- First-aid information.

Suitability Checks

Victory Christian College values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sporting events, camps and excursions, and other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Worker Screening Act and the Child Safe Standards, Victory Christian College is required to undertake suitability checks which will involve asking for:

- Evidence of a WWCC clearance
- Proof of identity
- Referees
- Qualification and work history.

All information provided will be stored in accordance with VCC's Privacy Policy.

All volunteers at Victory Christian College must have a current WWCC in order to complete child-related work. This means that people who could have a legal exemption (parents volunteering in an activity with their child, and/or people closely related to all the children they are undertaking the activity with) are still required by the College to have a WWCC. This allows VCC to have consistent checks whenever possible and protects children in the event that volunteer circumstances change.

For example, a person may initially volunteer to read in the Primary classrooms with their child but later offer to go on a camp. In the first instance, they could have a legal exemption but in the second instance, they could not. Having the same level of checks for all volunteers ensures any person doing volunteer work within the College has the same clearance.

There are some exemptions to WWCC clearance such as:

- People under the age of 18 (as they are not old enough to gain this clearance).
- A student who is 18 or 19 years old volunteering or on placement which has been organised by their educational institution (although VCC would request WWCC if possible).
- VIT registered teachers and Police officers (their checks are the equivalent to WWCC).

Where prospective volunteers are required under the law to have a WWCC Clearance, the Principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWCC application in order to commence volunteer work - provided that the volunteer produces the College with evidence of the application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after they receive it.

Volunteers must also ensure they have linked their WWCC to Victory Christian College.

Further information regarding suitability checks can be found in the Screening Checks Procedure for Working with Children document.

Signing-In and Identification

On-site Activities

- All visitors, including regular volunteers, must sign in at Reception on arrival and present their Working with Children Card to reception staff.
- They are required to provide their details and a photo of themselves from that day. The photo is a vital step so we can easily locate them in an evacuation or emergency.
- Volunteers will then be issued an identification (ID) label.
- When they leave, volunteers must also sign out. This can be done by scanning their ID label on the Reception iPad.

Off-site Activities

- When volunteering at an off-site activity such as a sporting event, excursion or camp, volunteers must check in with event organisers at the beginning and end of their volunteer work.
- Volunteers at offsite activities will have a label issued to them so they are easily recognised at the event.

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 VCC's policies, including, but not limited to the Parent Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Protection policies (see list at the end of this policy).

The Principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of college staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

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 Victory.

Privacy and Information-Sharing

Volunteers, in the course of their duties, may have access to confidential information about the College and about its students, parents and employees. Confidentiality refers to the ethical obligation to conceal information obtained through a professional relationship (Jacob & Hartshorne, 2007).

When entering the classroom, it is important that helpers respect the privacy of all staff, students and their families by maintaining confidentiality. Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with VCC's Privacy Policy, and Child Safety and Child Protection policies.

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant College staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing and health;
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors;
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the College such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to the Child Protection: Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Use of Technology

Volunteers should carry their mobile phones when completing volunteer work for emergency purposes. In the course of their work, volunteers are not permitted to:

- Use mobile phones during class time for personal use (as is the case for staff and students).
- Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with college policy (i.e. ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy) or where required for duty of care purposes.

Ongoing training

Volunteers must complete annual child safety training to maintain their volunteer status at the College. In their first year, this training is included as part of the volunteer induction process.

APPENDIX

1. Parent Code of Conduct

RELEVANT RESOURCES

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Jacob, S., & Hartshorne, T. S. (2007). *Ethics and law for school psychologists* (5th ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Ministerial Order 1359
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- [Working With Children Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#)

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Camps and Excursions Policy
- Child Protection: Failure to Disclose Policy
- Child Protection: Failure to Protect Policy
- Child Protection: Grooming Policy
- Child Protection: Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Enrolment Policy
- Fee Policy and Schedule 2023
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Screening Checks Procedure for Working with Children
- Swimming Policy

APPENDIX 1- PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

This extract has been taken from Victory Christian College's Enrolment Policy.

That parents/guardians agree:

- to interacting in a civil manner to staff, students and other parents at all times.
- that written and spoken communication to anyone in the school community should be courteous and respectful.
- to not raising their voice or getting involved in verbal or online altercations with another parent or child under any circumstances.
- to advising the College of areas of potential conflict, such as parenting and family court orders in accordance with relevant laws.
- to providing relevant medical information about their child to the College, i.e. Anaphylaxis, Asthma and Diabetes Action Plans.
- to respecting the privacy of other students, parents, staff, contractors and volunteers in the school community.
- to not taking any photos or video footage, or post any photos or video footage on social media, of students, staff or parents in accordance with College Policy.
- to ensuring the College is a child safe environment
- to behaving lawfully on the school grounds and observing the terms of any order, obligation or undertaking they may be subject to.
- when using social media to not discuss or mention the College, its staff, or any members of the school community in a negative or defamatory way.