

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers working at Travancore School are engaged in work that is safe, significant, fulfilling and aligned to their skills and capabilities. This policy also aims to ensure that the contribution of volunteers to Travancore School's operations is recognised and appreciated.

## 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 a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, 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
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

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 (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**

**Travancore** School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Travancore School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Travancore School's 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 the community who would like to volunteer will need to contact the school and meet with a member of the school leadership. Parent/family members of students currently engaged with Travancore School will not be used in volunteer roles for any child related work.

## **Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks**

### ***Working with students***

Travancore School values the volunteers that assist with our programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Travancore School is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Travancore School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Business Manager or nominated staff contact person for verification in the following circumstances:

Volunteers are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work 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 Travancore, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

### ***Non child-related work***

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related [eg: school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, pro bono professional services or fundraising] 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 Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Travancore School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its' discretion if

considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances or required by the hosting mental health service. Refer to: [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#)

## **Management and supervision**

All volunteers shall be allocated to a supervising staff member who has been nominated by the Principal to provide all required induction, supervision and support.

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, our Child Safety Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

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

Travancore School 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.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Travancore School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

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

## **Compensation**

### *Personal injury*

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

### *Property damage*

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

### *Public liability insurance*

The Department of Education and Training'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.

### **Related Policies and Resources**

Department of Education and Training links:

[Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

[Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#)

Travancore Policies

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy,
- Visitors Policy,
- Child Safe Policy,
- Child Safety Code of Conduct

### **Review Cycle**

This policy was last approved by school council on September, 2021 and is scheduled for review in September 2024.