

Rationale:

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

Aim:

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

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 (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:

Lowanna College is committed to implementing and following practices that protect the safety and wellbeing of children, our staff and volunteers. Lowanna College also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work they do.

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

1. Becoming a volunteer:
 - a. The school will advertise in the College newsletter and on social media for volunteers when assistance is needed for specific events.
 - b. Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the College by phone, leaving details with reception staff or speaking with specific staff members.

2. Suitability checks, including Working With Children (WWC) checks:
 - a. Working with students:
 - i. Lowanna College values the many volunteers that assist with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts and productions/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Lowanna College is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a WWC check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.
 - ii. Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Lowanna College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC check and produce their valid card to the College Business Manager for verification in the following circumstances:
 - Volunteers who are not parent/family members of any student at the school are required to have a WWC check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
 - Parent/family volunteers who are assisting with any 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 regularly assist in school activities or assist with excursions, camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
 - iii. Volunteers who are parents or closely related family members of a child at the school who volunteer as part of an activity that their child is participating in or usually participate in are not required to have a WWC check under the WWC Act. However, the Department of Education and Training (DET) recommends that schools do require parents to obtain one in these circumstances given the degree of contact volunteers may have with students in these situations.
 - iv. 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.
 - b. Non child-related work:
 - i. On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. These include Parents' Club, School Council, participating in sub-committees of School Council, or other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.
 - ii. Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have WWC or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Lowanna College reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, WWC checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.
 - c. Management and supervision:
 - i. 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 Child Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. 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 Lowanna College.
3. Lowanna College 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.
4. All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Lowanna College'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.

5. Compensation:

a. Personal injury:

- i. Volunteer workers are covered by the DETs Workers Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

b. Property damage:

- i. 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 DETs Legal Division.

c. Public liability insurance:

- i. The DETs 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.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by College Council on 20 August 2018.