



Mount Erin College Volunteers Policy

Child Safe Standards

Mount Erin College is a Child Safe School. Our College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We value all students as individuals and their diversity. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Mount Erin College is committed to providing a Child Safe environment where children and young people are valued and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our College takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to. Mount Erin College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

PURPOSE

This Policy outlines the processes that Mount Erin College will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage Volunteers to provide a Child Safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of Volunteers.

SCOPE

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

DEFINITIONS

The definitions below are based on the relevant legislation.

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: a 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 / College Board

- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the School Council / 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 / College Board
- Providing assistance in the work of any school
- 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

Mount Erin College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and Volunteers. Mount Erin College recognises the valuable contribution that Volunteers provide to our school community and the resultant benefit to students and staff.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Mount Erin College'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 our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact Jenny Pudney, the College's Community Liaison person.

There may be occasions when our College seeks Volunteers to provide assistance to the College for specific events such as Sports Events, College Productions or on Camps or Excursions. A request for Volunteers may be listed in the College Newsletter with the name of the relevant staff member to contact or a person may be approached directly with a request for assistance. Information will be provided regarding the need for a Working With Children Check.

Suitability Checks including Working with Children Checks

[Note: The *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) only sets out the minimum requirements for WWC Checks. The Child Safe Standards are another law relevant to schools that requires appropriate screening measures/suitability checks to be undertaken in relation to Volunteers and Visitors. To ensure compliance with both pieces of legislation and Department policy, schools may choose to go above the minimum requirements under the WWC Act, depending on the nature and risk of the activities the Volunteer will be engaged in. There are different options below that you can adopt to suit your school community.]

Working with Students

Mount Erin College values the many Volunteers that assist our school community eg: in our classrooms, sports events, Camps and Excursions, School Productions and 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, Mount Erin College will undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check, Proof of Identity, Work History involving Children and or Reference Checks as appropriate.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Mount Erin College is a Child Safe Environment, we will require Volunteers, as mandated, to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the General Office 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 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 including Swimming, Camps, Productions and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not, where Volunteers will have a high degree of direct contact with students in these situations
- **Parent / Family Volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not given the degree of contact Volunteers may have with students in these situations.
- **Parent / Community School Board Members** sitting on School Council or any College Board Sub Committees with Student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not as a means of ensuring that our College is compliant with the Child Safe Standards which require schools to implement practices for a Child Safe Environment.

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.

Mount Erin College will regularly review our requirements for Volunteers in order to ensure that it is compliant with *School Policy and Advisory Guide – Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors* page.

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. For example, Volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, Working Bees, Parents and Friends Association coordination, School Council, participating in sub committees of School Council etc 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, Mount Erin College 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.

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 and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety], our Child Safety Code of Conduct 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 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 Mount Erin College.

Mount Erin 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.

All Volunteers will be provided Induction in relation to Mount Erin 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.

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

Mount Erin College has a number of other Policies relevant to Volunteers including:

- *Statement of Values*
- *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*
- *Child Safe Policy*

REVIEW CYCLE

This Policy was approved by the College Board in August 2018 and is scheduled for review in August 2020.