

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Endeavour Hills Specialist School on 9113 4100

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Endeavour Hills Specialist School 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

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 worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

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, parents/friends' 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.

POLICY

Endeavour Hills Specialist School provides highly individualised programs of learning for students with disability and high needs who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder with a language disorder and/or an intellectual disability. The school welcomes students from 5 to 18 years of age.

School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive learning program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and active participation in their local community.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School seeks to establish an inclusive environment where parents/carers, neighbouring schools and community members are welcome to participate in the schools' activities, use the schools' facilities and develop partnerships in a safe and meaningful way.

The school's Business Manager will be responsible for ensuring all partners established with the school are aware of the schools' commitment to child safety and the policies and procedures outlined in this policy.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Endeavour Hills Specialist School values and respects the valuable contribution that volunteers make to our community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Endeavour Hills Specialist 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

We respect the time that volunteers offer to our school and wish to make the most of their skills and expertise. The work that volunteers undertake will be aligned with the strategic plan and associated curriculum. A list of required volunteer roles is maintained and regularly updated by teachers. Volunteers are able to select their preferred tasks from this list. Where there is nothing available or of interest, volunteers may provide details of their skills or interests which will be shared with teachers to find a match.

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to check newsletters for volunteer assistance requests for specific events, where details for the volunteer process will be provided.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

Endeavour Hills Specialist School values the many volunteers that assist with specific activities such as events, excursions, and teacher-directed activities. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Endeavour Hills Specialist School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School requires prospective volunteers to provide evidence of their WWC Clearance in order to be considered for volunteer work.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Endeavour Hills Specialist School is a child safe environment, we require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card on request for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/carer/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/carer/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/carer/family volunteers** who assist with incursions, excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/carer/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

- **Parent/carer/community School Council members** sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not.

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.

Non-child related work

On some occasions, parents/carers and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child related, such as volunteering on the weekend, working bees, community groups, school council, participation in sub-committees of school council, and other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Endeavour Hills Specialist School, volunteers for this type of work **will be** required to provide a valid WWC Clearance.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the School Council, we believe that it is important that all people involved in contributing to important decisions that impact on students have a valid WWC Clearance.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers are expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Principal (or their nominee). This includes the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to: Child Safety Policy; Child Safety Code of Conduct; and Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers are also 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 Endeavour Hills Specialist School.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School will provide 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. The Business Manager will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Endeavour Hills Specialist School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures which all staff and volunteers are made aware of through induction.

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.

PANDEMIC

- During a pandemic, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, government schools are required to comply with the Department's School Operations Guide applicable to that specific pandemic.
- The Department updates the School Operations Guide as required during a pandemic based on advice from the Department of Health. The School Operations Guide covers procedures for management of visitors and volunteers on school sites.
- The current School Operations Guide includes a COVIDSafe Plan for Schools that ensures schools remain safe environments. The link to the current Operations Guide is [available on the Department's intranet](#).

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- included in staff induction processes
- available publicly on our school's website
- included in enrolment packs
- included as annual reference in school newsletter
- made available in hard copy from the office upon request.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)
- [DET Operations Guide](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Reporting and Responding Policy
- Child Safe Risk Assessment
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2025