

# VOLUNTEERS POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Rubicon Outdoor School on 03 5773 2285 or via email at [Rubicon.os@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:Rubicon.os@education.vic.gov.au)

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Rubicon Outdoor 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.

Rubicon only accepts teaching students and school council members as volunteers.

Any volunteers engaged by visiting schools to attend Rubicon Outdoor School program are required to comply with the visiting school's volunteers and camps and excursion policy.

## DEFINITIONS

*Child-connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*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

Rubicon Outdoor School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Rubicon Outdoor 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

Rubicon only accepts teaching students and school council members as volunteers, if you would like to volunteer please reach out to the school directly.

### Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearance

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

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Rubicon Outdoor School is required to undertake suitability checks of volunteers which may include a Working With Children (WWC) Clearance, proof of identity, qualifications, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Rubicon Outdoor School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the principal or their nominee.

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

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of school council will be asked to provide 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 our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC.

## Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonable likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Volunteers Child Safety Induction Pack (Appendix A) and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Rubicon Outdoor School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

## Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Rubicon Outdoor School 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 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 Rubicon Outdoor School principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of school 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 Rubicon Outdoor School.

## Privacy and information-sharing

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school 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 school such as to Victoria Police.

For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures*.

### Records management

While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the business manager to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: [Records Management – Schools](#).

### 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.

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Rubicon Outdoor School:

- [Volunteers Induction Package](#)
- [Child Safe Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child safety responding and reporting policy](#)

Department policies:

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

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Created/reviewed date | October 2022                              |
| Consultation          | 19/10/2022 Rubicon Outdoor School Council |
| Endorsed by           | Rubicon Outdoor School Council            |
| Endorsed on           | 19/10/2022                                |
| Next review date      | October 2026                              |

## APPENDIX A

### Rubicon Outdoor School Volunteers Child Safety Induction Pack

#### Purpose

The purpose of this Child Safety Induction is to ensure Rubicon Outdoor School volunteers are familiar with our policies and procedures relating to child safety and understand the important role they play in maintaining and promoting the safety of our students.

Volunteers must read the suite of policies and procedures in the links below before commencing any work where children are likely to be present.

#### Key messages

- Rubicon Outdoor School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating inclusive environment where diversity is supported and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community, you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the North Eastern Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training on 1300 333 231

#### Responsibilities:

- Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the Rubicon Outdoor School principal (or their nominee)
- Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies.
- Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).
- Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action.
- In the event that volunteers are responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to the business manager

#### Induction materials – must read

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with. Please click on the hyperlinks to access each document. If you would prefer a hard copy of this pack, please contact the office staff who will happily provide you with one.

- [Rubicon Outdoor School Volunteers Policy](#)
- [Rubicon Outdoor School Child Safety Policy](#)

- [Rubicon Outdoor School Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Rubicon Outdoor School Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)
- [PROTECT: Identify child abuse](#)

### Contact

We value your feedback on ways we can continue to improve and strengthen our child safety approach and encourage you to contact the leading teacher for wellbeing and inclusion and/or the principal with any comments or questions.