

Volunteers Policy

Policy Development and Management

Document Title:	Volunteers Policy
Policy No:	29
Date of First Issue:	October 2013
Last Review Date:	August 2017
Document Author:	Deputy Principal
Authorised By:	Principal
Next Review Date:	March 2020

Rationale

Volunteering is a practical expression of the Biblical value of serving others and an important expression of partnership within the life of the College. Volunteers serve staff and students practically, and volunteering creates opportunities for adults to model the values of God's kingdom.

It is in Northside Christian College's objectives to develop "Enhanced partnerships between parents, students and staff, strengthening the teaching and learning process." The development of volunteer relationships that can serve to enrich the College program and advance the College's mission is welcomed and encouraged.

There are many areas within the College where voluntary assistance richly enhances the College and enables the College to provide a quality service. Such assistance is highly valued and appreciated.

The exhortation in Colossians 3:23-24 applies equally to volunteers as for remunerated members of staff: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Aim

The aim of the Policy is to outline the standards of behaviour expected of all volunteers at Northside Christian College.

This Policy does not attempt to provide a detailed and exhaustive list of what to do in every aspect of a volunteer's role. Instead, it sets out general expectations of the standards of behaviour required.

The Policy places an obligation on all volunteers to take responsibility for their own conduct and to work with colleagues cooperatively to achieve a consultative and collaborative College that people are happy and proud to be part of.

Definitions

"Volunteers" refer to those workers approved by the College to willingly assist with the College program without remuneration or other financial gain, and include those referred to as "parent helpers". Such volunteers may be members of the College community and/or wider community, subject to the conditions detailed within this policy. Please note that people visiting the College on a "once off" basis to speak to classes or in other ways contribute to the College program under direct supervision are regarded as visitors rather than volunteers (see the College's *Visitors Policy*).

Secondary School work experience students and tertiary student teachers on placement, where approved to work at the College, shall be regarded as volunteers and shall be subject to the provisions of this policy.

"Remuneration" refers to payment for goods or services, or reward for employment in the form of pay, salary or wages. It does not include reimbursement of expenses (where appropriate prior approval has been obtained); the giving of moderate gifts of appreciation; or the provision of transport, accommodation and food (for example, for participation in camps and excursions). It also does not include the payment of an approved honorarium in certain instances.

Guidelines

While not receiving remuneration for services rendered, volunteers shall be regarded by the College as workers and a primary duty of care is therefore owed to them in the same way as for paid staff members. Such duty of care is reflected in government legislation (for example, in

relation to occupational health and safety and equal opportunity and discrimination) and in various College policies.

Volunteers shall have a right to:

- (a) Receive respect, cooperation and support from fellow workers;
- (b) Receive recognition and feedback from supervising staff members;
- (c) Be assigned suitable projects, tasks or jobs;
- (d) Decline to perform tasks that they feel unable to do or would rather not do; and
- (e) Be provided with sufficient information and instruction to perform their duties adequately and safely.

Volunteers are expected to uphold the same standards of conduct as paid staff members.

Volunteers are expected to:

- (a) Perform their duties to the best of their ability and be accountable for their performance;
- (b) Follow reasonable instructions given by staff;
- (c) Comply with lawful directions;
- (d) Be courteous and responsive in dealing with staff, students, parents and members of the public (if applicable);
- (e) Work collaboratively with staff and colleagues;
- (f) Ensure that their conduct is consistent with the ethos of the College and does not damage the reputation of the College;
- (g) Comply with all College policies, procedures and rules as distributed and/or explained to them; and
- (h) Undertake any training, orientation or induction as required by the College.

The College, through the Principal or his / her delegates, reserves the right to refuse a volunteer or to cease using the services of a volunteer. Such action may apply if at any time a volunteer's actions or presence is deemed to interfere, or to be likely to interfere, with the positive and productive functioning of any aspect of the College.

Teaching staff members may approve parents of children in their class to work voluntarily within their child's classroom provided they have completed a Working with Children Check. All other volunteers (including current parents, past parents, past students and members of the wider community) shall require approval by the appropriate Director of Learning / Head of School.

Required Documentation

It is the responsibility of the Director of Learning / Head of School and supervising staff members to ensure volunteers are screened and have provided appropriate documentation (as per this policy), and to monitor ongoing compliance with all aspects of this policy. Staff and Volunteers must be familiar with the Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure.

Northside Christian College requires all volunteers aged 18 years and older must have or obtain valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) cards. Such WWCCs should nominate the College as a voluntary organisation. In addition to a WWC Check, the College may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted. This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWC Check. The College covers the cost of the criminal record check.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse made several recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection children receive through Working with Children Checks. One amendment to the Act to be mindful of is the expansion of the definition of 'direct contact' in the Act. The definition of direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.

Duties shall not commence until the College has received the required checks. The Working with Children Check aims to prevent people who pose a risk to children from working or volunteering with them.

Copies of Police Criminal Records Checks and evidence of Working with Children Checks should be kept in a file in College Office.

Assigning Volunteers to a Staff Member

The appropriate Director of Learning / Head of School shall assign all volunteers to a staff member. Such staff member shall be their direct supervisor and shall ensure that volunteers are provided with all reasonable support, information and instruction as required.

Badge

Volunteers are required to sign in upon arrival and departure from Northside Christian College. The sign in sheet is located at Reception, where a member of the Administration team will issue volunteers with a visitor lanyard. Visitors must wear the visitor lanyard at all times whilst on College grounds.

Confidential Information

Volunteers shall be restricted from access to confidential student and employee information except where unavoidable to comply with legislation or College policies and procedures (for example, where access to student medical details while on camp is necessary). Volunteers shall be responsible for maintaining confidentiality regarding information seen or heard while working as a volunteer.

Volunteers must not disclose or use any confidential information without the express permission of the Principal.

Duty of Care and Work Health and Safety

Volunteers are required to cooperate with the College's efforts to comply with its legal and ethical duties in relation to providing a healthy and safe workplace and learning environment. They are encouraged to take care to prevent injuries to themselves and others, to report work-related illness or injury; to report situations they believe may constitute a risk or danger; and to share information and ideas about risks and how to control them.

Volunteers need to wear clothing that meets workplace health and safety requirements. Each volunteer is expected to maintain a professional appearance and demeanour appropriate to his or her assignment. Clothing should be comfortable and modest. Additionally volunteers assisting in food preparation activities will require additional training prior to volunteering. Volunteers assisting in certain areas of the College (e.g. Home Economics kitchen, Science, Woodwork, or Garden) are required to wear sturdy, closed-toe footwear.

We ask our volunteers to avoid the following:

- Spaghetti straps or low-cut tank tops
- Shirts that reveal an individual's mid-section or back
- Inappropriate writing, illustrations or graphics on clothing
- Dresses / skirts / shorts which are not of modest length

Volunteers have a duty of care to students in their care. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect students from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted. The standard of care that is

required, for example, the degree of supervision, needs to be commensurate with the students maturity and ability.

Volunteers have a responsibility under OH&S legislation to take care of their own health and safety whilst in a volunteer role. Considerations of safety relate to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

Volunteers should take all reasonable steps to ensure that no student is exposed to any unnecessary risk of injury. If safety concerns are raised or observed, volunteers must report these matters immediately to the supervising staff member. Volunteers have a general duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and that of others who may be affected by their work, and to assist the College to make the environment safe.

Administration of prescribed medication to students should only be undertaken by staff and in accordance with College's Medications Policy.

Volunteers must follow staff instructions during evacuations and lockdown procedures.

Personal Property

Northside Christian College cannot be responsible for personal property. Volunteers are advised to please make sure all personal property is in a safe and secure location while volunteering.

Drugs / Alcohol / Weapons

Northside Christian College is a drug-free, alcohol-free and weapons-free facility. Please do not bring these items on site. Smoking is not allowed on the College grounds.

Media

Volunteer will not represent themselves as an employee or agent of Northside Christian College. The Principal is designated as Northside Christian College's main media contact and spokesperson as documented in the College's Media Policy.

Professional Relationships Between Volunteers and Students

Volunteers should avoid situations where they are alone in an enclosed space with a student.

Volunteers should never drive a student in their car unless they have specific permission from the College.

Volunteers must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of their duties.

Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student. Volunteers should always advise the student if they intend on touching them and seek their consent.

Volunteers must not develop a relationship with any student (other than their own child) that is, or that can be, interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency and of equality of treatment.

At all times when speaking with students, care must be taken to use appropriate language. Volunteers must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.

Volunteers must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where they disclose information about themselves. Volunteers must not:

- (a) Invite students to their home;
- (b) Visit students at their home unless they have the express permission of the student's

parents or caregiver or they are doing so as a normal part of their parental relationship to their own child.

Child Protection

Volunteers must be aware of and comply with the College's Child Protection Policy. The College's commitment to Child Safety is clearly outlined on the College's website and in the Child Safe Policy.

Volunteers must report any concerns they may have about any employee, contractor or volunteer engaging in "reportable conduct" or any allegation of "reportable conduct" that has been made to them to the Principal. This includes self-disclosure if the allegation involves themselves.

Broadly, "reportable conduct" includes:

- (a) Any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child (including a child pornography offence); or
- (b) Any assault, harm, ill treatment or neglect of a child; or
- (c) Any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child, whether or not the child consents.

Cultural Safety of Aboriginal Children

As a child safe organisation, Northside Christian College respects cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to a family's personal, cultural or religious beliefs. The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 12) highlighted, "Cultural diversity refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or views."

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 12) also stated, "... a child safe organisation recognises that these differences do not reduce a child's right to be safe or the organisation's responsibility to protect the child from harm." Furthermore, "The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Interim Report noted that some children are more vulnerable to abuse, based on various factors including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and prior abuse or neglect" (p. 12).

Northside Christian College acknowledges the Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 12) who have noted that respecting diversity means:

- Valuing and respecting people's beliefs
- Building responsive relationships
- Communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs
- Examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs and respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another
- Acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance.

Cultural Safety of Children from Culturally and / or Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

The Child Safe Standards require organisations to consider cultural safety of culturally and / or linguistically diverse children across the implementation of all the standards.

The State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2015, pp. 9-10) highlighted:

There is a lack of data on the incidence of abuse of children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, it is understood that these children face unique risks leading to their involvement with child protection services, including distrust of social service providers. It has been reported that culturally and / or linguistically diverse children, particularly those from refugee or asylum seeker communities, are also more

likely to have experienced trauma or displacement and loss (or have parents who have) before coming to Australia. Culturally and / or linguistically diverse children and families may also experience communication barriers when it comes to reporting abuse and knowing where to go for support.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 14) documented a range of strategies that schools can implement to promote the cultural safety. Northside Christian College can promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

- Ensuring our organisation clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination;
- Being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds;
- Recognising times of importance to different cultures;
- Ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of decoration and artwork;
- Employing staff that are representative of your local community;
- Actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved; and
- Asking about the best way to provide information to children and families.

Safety of Children with a Disability

At Northside Christian College, we acknowledge that people with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and should be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. In particular, people with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse.

Education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (the Act). The Standards give students and prospective students with a disability the right to education and training opportunities on the same basis as students without a disability.

The Department of Health and Human Services (2015, p. 10) reported that:

Children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused compared with children without a disability. A number of factors may contribute to the risk of abuse including physical impairments or difficulties with speech and communication, memory, literacy, vision and hearing impairments, and reliance on caregivers. People with a disability often receive less sexual education than their peers. These factors may also contribute to poor recognition of abuse of children with a disability.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p. 15) have highlighted a range of strategies that schools can implement to promote the safety of children with a disability. Northside Christian College can promote the safety of children with a disability by:

- Acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure our risk assessment processes considers their needs;
- Ensuring our College clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children;
- Making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties;
- Being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability;
- Supporting our staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability; and
- Thinking about how we can encourage participation and feedback from children with a

disability and their families.

Respect for People

Volunteers who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for students.

Similarly, it is important for volunteers to treat colleagues, all staff, contractors, students and parents with respect. Rude or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, intimidating or derogatory language and physical abuse or intimidation towards staff, contractors, students and parents is unacceptable. Volunteers must not use information and communication technologies, such as email, mobile phones, text, social media sites and other websites to engage in this type of behaviour.

Volunteers must not discriminate against, harass for any unlawful reason, or bully for any reason any staff member, contractor, student or parent. Unlawful harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. Bullying may be a breach of obligations under duty of care at common law.

Required Reporting

All volunteers are required to inform the Principal if they are charged with or convicted of a serious offence. Volunteers must also report if they become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order.

If a volunteer becomes aware of a serious crime committed by another person, they are required to report it to the Principal, who may be required to inform statutory authorities.

Volunteers must report to staff:

- (a) Any concerns that they may have about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person;
- (b) Any concerns they may have about the inappropriate actions of any other staff member, contractor or volunteer that involves children or young people;
- (c) Any concerns they may have about any other staff member, contractor or volunteer engaging in "reportable conduct" or any allegation of "reportable conduct" that has been made to them;
- (d) Knowledge that a staff member, contractor or volunteer has been charged with or convicted of an offence involving "reportable conduct"; and
- (e) If they become the subject of allegations of "reportable conduct" whether or not they relate to their role in the College.

Volunteers should refer to the College's Child Safety webpage for further information about these obligations.

Breaches of this Policy?

Actions that may be taken by the College in respect of a breach of the Policy include disciplinary actions ranging from a warning to termination of the volunteer role. The College will reserve the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Policy.

Responsibilities

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The person to contact at the College if you have any concerns or questions is the Principal's Assistant. The Administration team is also available to help with any queries, please ask at the Office.

Evaluation

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

Related Policies

Volunteers should be aware of workplace policies and other staff-related policies including:

- College Visitors Policy
- Working with Children Policy
- Police Checks Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Workplace Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Camps and Excursions Policy
- Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure

Prescriptive legal and regulatory requirements include:

- Ministerial Order 870
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005

Document History

Approved: October 2013

Updated by the Deputy Principal in August 2017

References

Commission for Children and Young People. (2015, December). *A Guide for Creating a Child-safe Organisation*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cryp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf>.

Department of Health and Human Services. (2015, December). *An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>.

Kerang Christian College. (2016, July). *Volunteers Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.kccs.vic.edu.au/pdf/NO-45-Volunteers-Policy.pdf>

Knox Grammar School. (2015). *Volunteer Code of Conduct*. Retrieved July 28th 2016 from <http://www.knox.nsw.edu.au/about/public-information/annual-report-and-policies>

APPENDIX A:

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Name of Volunteer: _____

Name of Staff member
to whom volunteer reports: _____

Proposed Volunteer Roles(s): _____

Parent / Carer of (if applicable):

Year Level:

I acknowledge I have:

- Been briefed on Northside Christian College's Volunteer Policy and am aware of my responsibilities.
- Read and agree to abide by the requirements of the Northside Christian College Volunteers Policy.
- Presented the original copy of my Working with Children Check to the College for copying and retention.
- Presented another form of identification for verification. i.e. drivers licence
- Completed a Medical Information Form and have noted all issues requiring special care.
- Submitted a copy of a signed Child Safety Code of Conduct form for Northside Christian College.

Working with Children Card No: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**PLEASE RETURN THE AGREEMENT TO
THE NORTHSIDE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE OFFICE**

Volunteer Contact Details

FULL NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE NUMBER: _____ MOBILE PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

CAR NUMBER PLATE: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____ PHONE: _____

DO YOU HAVE ANY MEDICAL CONDITIONS THAT WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF? e.g. Allergies, Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Diabetes. Please attach another page if required and an action plan if applicable:

WWCC NUMBER: _____ EXPIRY DATE: _____

CODE OF CONDUCT SIGNED & RETURNED? YES / NO

VOLUNTEERING IN: (please tick)

CLASSROOM GROUNDS LEARNING SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION

OTHER:

REPORTING TO: _____

HOW OFTEN AND WHAT DAY/S ARE YOU AVAILABLE TO VOLUNTEER? (please tick day/s)

Frequency: _____

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

OTHER DETAILS WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

