

Participation of Volunteers and Students

Quality Area 4 | Version 1.0

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at NERPSA, while ensuring that children’s health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Policy Statement

Values

NERPSA is committed to:

- supporting connections with educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to undertake practicum placements as part of their studies
- building relationships with community members and providing suitable opportunities to engage volunteers to contribute to the programs and activities of the service
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the service through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of NERPSA, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Responsibilities

		Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
	R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
1	Developing guidelines for accepting applications from volunteers and students to work at the service in consultation with the nominated supervisor, ECT and educators and	✓	✓	✓		

	which are aligned with the <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>					
2	Accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the nominated supervisor	✓	✓			
3	Obtaining a valid WWC Check (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and providing details to the service prior to commencement					✓
4	Checking the status of the Working with Children (WWC) Clearance (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) of volunteers and students where required, and ensuring that the details, including identification number and expiry date are recorded in the staff record	R	✓			
5	Ensuring that the identifying number and the expiry date of a students or volunteers' current teacher registration is recorded in the staff record	R	✓			
6	Ensuring that the staff record contains the full name, address and date of birth of volunteers and students attending the service (<i>Regulations 145, 149(1)</i>).	R	✓			
7	Requesting additional information on the staff records such as emergency contact/next of kin and medical conditions	✓	✓			
8	Keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (<i>Regulation 149(2)</i>)	R	✓			
9	Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected (<i>National Law, Section: 167</i>)	R	✓	✓		
10	Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.				✓	✓
11	Ensuring volunteers and students on placement at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

	<i>(Regulation 83) (refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy)</i>					
12	Providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures <i>(Regulation 171)</i> , and access to the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185)</i>	R	✓			
13	Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and Education and Care Services National Law</i> and all service policies and procedures <i>(Regulations 170)</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Complying with the requirements of the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185)</i> and with all service policies and procedures, including the <i>Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, Interactions with Children and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> while attending the service				✓	✓
15	Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations	R	✓		✓	
16	Ensuring volunteers, students and parents/guardians can identify children with medical conditions, the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication <i>(Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)</i>	R	✓	✓		
17	Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services <i>Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)</i>	R	✓			
18	Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services emergency and evacuation procedures <i>(Regulations 97, 168 (2)(e))</i>	R	✓	✓		
19	Developing an induction checklist for volunteers and students attending the service in	R	✓	✓		

	consultation with the nominated supervisor and educators.					
20	Ensuring that volunteers and students have completed the induction checklist and have been provided with a copy of the staff handbook, if applicable.	R	✓	✓		✓
21	Developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service	✓	✓			

Background And Legislation

Background

Students may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by NERPSA wherever appropriate and possible.

NERPSA values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and the voluntary contribution they make to the education and care of their own and other children. “In genuine partnerships families and educators value each other’s knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making” (Early Years Learning Framework – *refer to Sources*).

NERPSA aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers and students to participate in programs and activities while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with staff, and other adults and children at the service (*refer to Code of Conduct Policy*).

The role that volunteers and students play in education and care services varies and can include working with groups of children, preparing materials or food, assisting with administrative tasks or working one-on-one with individual children. The service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers and students are suitable to work with children, and that children’s health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, services should not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers must not be asked to perform tasks:

- that they are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
- that put the children or themselves in a vulnerable or potentially unsafe situation
- where there is a conflict of interest.

Prior to participation at the service, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance (*refer to Definitions*).

Parents/guardians whose children usually attend the service are also required to undergo a WWC Check (*refer to Definitions*).

In line with Child Safe Standards and the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*, prior to engaging a volunteer or student an assessment should be undertaken of the nature of the responsibility to determine whether a position description is required and based on that whether an interview and referee checks are required.

Legislation And Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Child Safe Standards
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Regulation 2021 (Vic)

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file.

Child-related work: In relation to the WWC Check (*refer to Definitions*), child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.

Conflict of interest: (In relation to this policy) refers to an interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of the volunteer, or may impair their independence or loyalty to the service. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the volunteer, but also their relatives, friends or business associates

Student: A person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised early childhood qualification. This student will be supported by an educational institution in the completion of their placement.

Volunteer: A person or parent (who's child attends the service) who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include child-related work (*refer to Definitions*), administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Sources And Related Policies

Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au

- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being, Becoming: www.acecqa.gov.au
- A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (The Commission for Children and Young People) www.ccyp.vic.gov.au
- Working with Children Check; www.service.vic.gov.au

Related Policies

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Determining Responsible Person
- Inclusion and Equity
- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Staffing
- Supervision of Children

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students, volunteers and where appropriate parents/guardians are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

Attachments

- Nil.

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of NERPSA on 31st July 2024.

Review Date:

31st July 2027.