

# Muhammadiyah Australia College

## CHILD SAFETY VOLUNTEERS POLICY



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## Purpose

This policy describes the process Muhammadiyah Australia College will implement to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers engaged by the College.

## Scope

This policy applies to any person who volunteers their time and/or services at Muhammadiyah Australia College including parents and community members, student teachers and College Board members.

## Definitions and Terms

The following definitions apply to this policy:

*Child-connected work:* work authorised by the College Board and performed by an adult (18 years and over) in a school environment (at main campus, on excursion or camp or at College events) while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*Child-related work:* As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*, child-related work is 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 direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

*Closely related family member:* parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, step parent, 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. Volunteers can include closely related family members of a student at the school.

*School work:* school work means

- Carrying out the functions of the College board
- Providing assistance in the work of the College e.g. classroom assistants, attending excursions or events in a helper capacity
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the College by any parents' group or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the College
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the College at the request of the Principal or College board

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 from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer schoolwork in good faith.

## **Commitment to Child Safety**

The College has zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse and is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. We are committed to identifying, reducing and removing risks of child abuse and harm and to responding promptly and decisively to concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

We have implemented policies to protect child from harm which include those relating to mandatory reporting, failure to disclose, failure to protect, grooming and reportable conduct. We work with our staff and families to develop a child safe environment both physical and online.

## **Policy**

### **Volunteers at the College**

Parents or members of the College community can assist the College in a variety of ways. This might include assisting teachers in the classroom, on excursions, camps or at school events, with sports events or other programs. Any member of our College community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the Administration Office and speak with the Business Manager.

### **Working with students**

In order to meet our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, the College is required to undertake suitability checks. In most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance but may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Volunteers are required to obtain a WWC Clearance and provide their valid card to the Business Manager for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or College activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the College if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions, camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.

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

There will be occasions where parents and other community members volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, membership of the College Board or a sub-committee, special event coordination, fundraising activities that meet at times 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 WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities.

College Board members and volunteers on any sub-committee of the Board 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, we believe that it is important that any person who is involved in making important decisions about the College which will have an impact on students has a valid WWC Clearance.

### **Training and induction**

The College will provide any volunteers with appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing including reporting obligations and procedures. This will include providing volunteers with the policies and procedures relating to child safety, mandatory and other reporting obligations, sharing of information, and the Child Safe Standards including our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Volunteers are expected to follow the actions and requirements in these documents when volunteering for our school.

The College will hold induction sessions for volunteers as required, usually at the commencement of the school year (on an 'as needed basis'). A volunteer will not be able to participate in any activity involving students unless they have undertaken induction.

Volunteers will be provided with specific guidance and training on:

- how to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other students
- how to identify and manage child safety risks (relevant to their role) without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- their obligations to share information and create and maintain records in relation to child safety matters.

### **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 College Philosophy and Values, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Principal (or their nominee) has overall responsibility for the engagement and management of volunteers and will determine the level of College 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 decide about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer.

## **Sign in procedures for volunteers**

Provided a volunteer has completed an induction session they will be must:

- Report to the College reception upon arrival
- Provide their current WWC Clearance to reception staff
- Sign in via the online sign in system
- Acknowledge and agree to the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Wear a volunteer identification badge while on College grounds
- Return to the reception and sign out before leaving the premises.

## **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 College's Privacy Policy.

Volunteers can share information about students they interact with relevant College staff (e.g. classroom teacher, Student Wellbeing Officer, Principal) to:

- protect the student and/or to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student;
- support the student's education, health and wellbeing;
- support decisions which allow reasonable adjustments to be made to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Any child safety concerns that a volunteer becomes aware of must be reported 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 College such as to Victoria Police. Volunteers can seek advice and support from the Business Manager/ Principal.

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

## **COMMUNICATION**

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

- Available publicly on our College's website
- Made available in hard copy from the College Admin office upon request

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

Muhammadiyah Australia College policies:

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Visitors Policy

- Child Safety Mandatory and Other Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Duty of Care Policy
- Emergency and Critical Incident Management Plan
- Working With Children Clearance Policy and Procedures