

Volunteers Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact seymour.co@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Seymour College 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-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: 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, 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

Seymour College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Seymour College also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Seymour College's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the Campus Manager. Seymour College will ask for volunteers when we need assistance for specific events, working bees etc and the process for becoming a volunteer is outlined in this policy, along with relevant documentation to be completed.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Seymour College requires sight of a current Working With Children Clearance which will be verified on the Victorian Government's Check Status site.

Working with students

Seymour College values the many volunteers that assist our school community in our classrooms, and also with sports events, camps, excursions, school concerts and Parent and Friends activities.

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Seymour College 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, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Seymour College is a child safe environment, we will require all volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the General Office for verification in the following circumstances:

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

- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not
- **Parent/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 and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, Parents and Friends Association coordination, school council, participating 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 Seymour College, volunteers for this type of work will still 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 our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Clearance.

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 reasonably likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack 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, Seymour College 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 principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety and Wellbeing 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 principal 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.

Seymour College will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Seymour College'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 should be aware of.

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 Seymour College.

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 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 principal 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
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting
- Made available in hard copy from school administrator upon request.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Seymour College policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion and Diversity 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

Policy last reviewed	23 August 2023
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	August 2025

Child Safe Standards

“Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Seymour College actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The College’s Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school’s website.”

Volunteering at Seymour College – Information for Prospective Volunteers

Seymour College actively encourages the participation of volunteers and values the skills and abilities that parents and members of the community can bring to the students and our school.

We welcome volunteers in a wide range of activities. We offer further training opportunities and accreditation for work undertaken in the school.

There are many areas at Seymour College for volunteering:

- Classroom Helpers
- Camps and excursions
- Library
- Office work
- Class gardening
- Grounds and maintenance
- Special events and programs eg RACV Energy Breakthrough and 3-day bike ride
- Conversational Reading
- Early Years initiatives – PEEP (Parent Early Education Partnership) and H2O Learn and Grow hydrotherapy pool program.

There is a selection screening process to assess the suitability of applicants to be volunteers at Seymour College. There will be an initial review after six weeks and thereafter at half yearly intervals.

Volunteers may have the opportunity to take part in adult learning / training in their roles as volunteers. After an initial chat about your interest in becoming a volunteer, the following process is followed:

1. Police check / Working with Children Check as required
2. All volunteers are asked to sign a confidentiality form. This is a standard agreement so that we respect and understand confidentiality in the workplace.
3. As part of the orientation, volunteers are provided with other general information about Seymour College. Guidelines are discussed that will assist in volunteering at Seymour College.
4. An induction process follows which introduces volunteers to the school and provides an understanding of programs, relevant policies including OH&S and Codes of Conduct.
5. Volunteers choose their areas of expertise – where they feel most comfortable. Seymour College will support volunteers in learning new skills or developing existing skills. Where applicable skills may be recognised through accredited and non-accredited courses with adult learning providers.
6. In the event of injury or serious illness it may be necessary to call an ambulance. This will be at the volunteer's expense unless covered by an Ambulance Fund. Volunteers may be covered if they hold pensioner benefit cares. As this varies volunteers should check their status with local ambulance stations.

Volunteer Rights

Volunteers have the right to:

- Receive information about Seymour college
- Receive a clearly written job description
- Understand the lines of communication and accountability
- Develop a sense of belonging through inclusion at relevant meetings, social functions etc
- Have support in roles

- Receive training as necessary – both initially and as part of an on-going basis
- Be trusted with confidential information that is shared in order to carry out jobs
- Work in a safe environment and have insurance cover
- Have a choice and feel comfortable about saying, “No”
- Be treated respectfully and not be exploited in any way
- Consultation and inclusion in decision making on matters which directly or indirectly affect volunteers and their work
- Clear grievance and conflict resolution procedures
- Receive feedback on their work and recognition for contribution
- Personal information is kept confidential

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Arrive on time reliably
- Respect confidentiality and act in a trustworthy manner
- Respect the rights of others – adults and children
- Use a non-judgemental approach
- Support the school and represent its interests in and out of school
- Carry out the specific job description for your role as volunteer
- Give feedback
- Show accountability and accept feedback
- Show commitment to the program
- Acknowledge decisions made by the school
- Undertake training where required
- Address areas of conflict using grievance procedure
- Ask for support when it is needed

For more details regarding volunteering at Seymour College please contact the general office.

Volunteer Classroom Assistant – General

At Seymour College we value the extra assistance that classroom volunteers can provide to an individual child or group of children. The role is to foster an enjoyment of learning while assisting children's skill development.

Volunteers:

- Commit to regular visits
- Are supportive of students and model appropriate communication strategies
- Use language to suit the age and level of the student
- Are prepared to work as part of a team with staff and students
- Have the flexibility to adapt to classroom's timetable and student needs
- Are aware of the issues of confidentiality and respect the privacy of the staff, students and families
- Understand that all issues regarding discipline of students are the teacher's responsibility

Role Description:

This may vary according to the needs of children in the classroom.

- On arrival in the classroom, check with the teacher as to the individual child or group that requires support
- Make sure that you understand the task – ask questions to clarify
- Work quietly with the child / children – be sensitive to the noise level in the classroom
- Show awareness, sensitivity and mindfulness towards emotional development of child / children
- Pause, Prompt and Praise – encourage children to solve problems and work out for themselves. Foster independent thinking and working
- If appropriate, or if time permits, check to see what other jobs may need to be done about the classroom eg sharpen pencils

Please note all volunteers must sign in at the office.

Seymour College

PO Box 266, Seymour, VIC 3661

T (03) 5771 1300

F (03) 5792 4041

seymour.co@edumail.vic.gov.au

www.seymourcollege.vic.edu.au



Volunteer Classroom Assistant – Reading

At Seymour College we value the extra assistance that classroom volunteers can provide to an individual child or group of children. The role is to foster an enjoyment of learning while assisting children's skill development.

Volunteers:

- Commit to regular visits
- Are supportive of students and model appropriate communication strategies
- Use language to suit the age and level of the student
- Are prepared to work as part of a team with staff and students
- Have the flexibility to adapt to classroom's timetable and student needs
- Are aware of the issues of confidentiality and respect the privacy of the staff, students and families
- Understand that all issues regarding discipline of students are the teacher's responsibility

Role Description:

This may vary according to the needs of children in the classroom.

- On arrival in the classroom, check with the teacher as to the individual child or group that requires support
- Hear child / children read "take home reader" or reader organised by teacher
- Use "wait time" when a child struggles to identify a word – Pause, prompt (read the sentence from the beginning), praise
- Be aware, sensitive and mindful of child's emotional development
- Where appropriate read to the child
- Assist child to select new "take home reader" which is suitable for the child's reading ability
- Read the new reader to the child and make connections to the child's everyday life experiences.

The elements of the role may vary according to the needs of the individual class and class teacher. Please note all volunteers must sign in at the office.

Seymour College Volunteer Induction Form

This form should be completed by Volunteer Coordinator at the volunteer's commencement.

Name of volunteer: _____

Tick as completed:

- Volunteer has a copy of the volunteer information kit
- Current Police Check and /or Working with Children Card on file
- Signed agreement of Confidentiality, Volunteer Application and Health Declaration form on file
- Introduction to the Volunteer Staff Role at Seymour College and the review process
- Explanation for contacting school and relevant staff
- Arrival time and sign in / out procedure
- Process for absence / non-attendance
- Time for volunteer questions
- Seymour College Volunteer Complaints procedure
- School tour including – reception and office, staff and student toilets, staffroom, kitchen, First Aid kits / sickbay, area for storing personal belongings
- Emergency procedures
- Provide relevant policies
- Introduce to relevant staff, volunteers and students
- I have read the information contained in the Seymour College Volunteer Information Kit and hereby recognise, understand and accept my obligations and responsibilities as a volunteer involved at Seymour College.

_____/_____/20____
Signature of Volunteer Signature of Coordinator Dated

CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand that in the course of my involvement as a volunteer member of Seymour College that I may come into contact with private, sensitive and confidential information and material. I hereby agree that I will not at any time in the future divulge or attempt to use any information which I have acquired in the course of my involvement in a manner which may injure or cause loss to staff, students or the wider community of Seymour College.

Signature of Volunteer: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

**VOLUNTEER PROGRAM – CONFIDENTIAL
APPLICATION**

POLICE CHECK

WORKING WITH
CHILDREN CARD NO.

Title (*Please circle one*) MR MRS MISS MS

SURNAME: _____

GIVEN NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

TOWN: _____ POST CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

HEALTH: Please fill out Health Declaration form if required. Volunteer Coordinator will inform.

PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:

INTEREST IN VOLUNTEERING - what do you hope to gain from volunteering?

SKILLS - what skills, hobbies, interests or training can you share?

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT – in which areas are you interested?

How much time do you have available for your volunteer commitment? Hours per week _____

What days do you have available?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
am							
pm							

REFEREES – Please nominate two referees eg employer, work colleague, teacher, acquaintances, volunteer

1. Name _____ Phone _____

2. Name _____ Phone _____

I declare that information contained in this form to be accurate and true. I give my authorisation for referees to be contacted.

Signature of volunteer: _____ **Date:** _____