

MOUNT RIDLEY P-12 COLLEGE

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you require assistance with understanding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the College and someone will organise a multicultural aide or the relevant person to assist you.

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Mount Ridley P-12 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 College.

DEFINITIONS

Child-connected work: work authorised by the College governing authority/provider of a College boarding services and performed by an adult in a College or College 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 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 College worker is a person who voluntarily engages in College work or approved community work without payment or reward.

College work: College work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a College council;
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a College, by the College council, any parents' club 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 Council;
- Providing assistance in the work of any College; and

- Attending meetings in relation to government Colleges convened by any organisation which receives government financial support.

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in College 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 College work in good faith.

POLICY

Mount Ridley P-12 College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Mount Ridley P-12 College recognises the value of volunteers in assisting with the delivery of the curriculum and student services programs. Volunteers add significantly to the human resources available to the College and consequently deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Mount Ridley P-12 College's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our College community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our College community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to reply to news items requesting volunteers. The College Principal or the College Council may also seek volunteers formally through the College newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversations.

Sign in procedure

All volunteers are required to report to one of the following offices on arrival, the Main Administration Office, the Early Years Mini School Office or the Community Hub (located on the Early Years site).

Volunteers must:

- Sign into the Compass Kiosks located at the Early Years and Main Administration Offices or the "Visitors" book located in the Community Hub. Volunteers are assigned a "Visitors" pass which they must wear at all times within the College;
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request;
- Produce their valid Working with Children Clearance (WWCC).
- Follow instruction from College staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on College grounds including; Child Safe/Mandatory Reporting, Child Safety, Child Safe Code of Conduct/Duty of Care, Respectful Relationships Protocol, Statement of Values and College Philosophy as well as Department policies such as the [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#); and
- Report to the Office where they initially signed in at the end of their visit to return their "Visitors" pass and be signed out.

Mount Ridley P-12 College will ensure that our College's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available and visible to volunteers when they sign in.

As part of our commitment to supporting our College's volunteers, we will ensure that:

- Comfortable and non-intimidating waiting and interviewing spaces will be made available;
- Volunteers will be made aware of any construction or other works that may impact upon their safety or comfort;
- The College's emergency management procedures will ensure that volunteers within the College at the time of any emergency or practice drill will be recognised and appropriately catered for.

Working with students

Mount Ridley P-12 College values the many volunteers that assist with the running of our many programs (eg: Parents and Friends Association, Classroom Helpers Program, etc) To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Mount Ridley P-12 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 Mount Ridley P-12 College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to either the Main Administration Office, the Early Years Mini-School Office or the Early Years Community Hub for verification in the following circumstances:

- **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 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.
- **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 College 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 College 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 College community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, College Council, participating in sub-committees

of College Council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings, 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. However, Mount Ridley P-12 College reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

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 at our Child Safety Induction and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our College.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Mount Ridley P-12 College's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our College has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of. All volunteers are required to agree to follow and sign the 'Child Safety Code of Conduct' form.

The College Principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

Volunteers will be provided with an overview of the College before commencing their volunteer role to assist them in carrying out their tasks in an effective manner. The following areas will be covered:

- Privacy and Confidentiality,
- Teacher Duty of Care,
- Mandatory Reporting,
- OHS induction,
- College policy and student management,
- Appropriate behaviour when working with students, and
- Volunteer Policy and any relevant codes of practice.

Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with College expectations/values, including;

- Maintaining a professional, co-operative and confidential working environment;
- Maintaining an appropriate standard of conduct at all times. This includes speaking style/language, respect for personal space and care with any physical conduct;
- Respecting the professional standing and roles of College staff members. College staff members and volunteers will be expected to treat each other with respect; and
- Not approaching classroom teachers on controversial issues.

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 College's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct/Duty of Care policies, Statement of Values and College 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 (or their nominee) 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.

If staff have any issues related to the volunteers program they should be brought to the attention of the relevant Principal class member.

Concerns by staff or parents regarding the work of a volunteer should be raised with the relevant Principal class member immediately. Such concerns will be discussed promptly with the volunteer concerned and appropriate action taken.

The College 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 Mount Ridley P-12 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 [Colleges' Privacy Policy](#) and the Department's policy on [Privacy and Information Sharing](#).

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant College 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 College 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 College records during their volunteer work, any College records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to

the relevant Principal Class member 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 College work.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out College 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 College 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 College community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our College's website;
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff;
- Made available from College administration upon request.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Mount Ridley P-12 College policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

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 College Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Created date	April-May 2022, last updated 2024
Consultation	College Council
Endorsed by	Acting Principal – Con Stamatelatos
Updated on	2026
Next review date	May 2028 (every two years)

As a volunteer you may occasionally access personal information of students, staff, and others in the College community. There are legislative requirements that prescribe how an individual's personal information can be collected, used and disclosed, stored and accessed. Personal information includes health information.

Personal Information is any information that identifies an individual; it may be enrolment information, health or student progress information. Schools have a responsibility to ensure the personal information they possess is used for the purposes it was collected and is adequately secured.

For example, schools may collect and display student health information in a secured staff room to ensure students receive appropriate care. The information should not be used or disclosed for other purposes. Similarly, schools may take some limited student information off premises when on excursions. Schools are obliged to ensure personal information is secured and used for appropriate purposes.

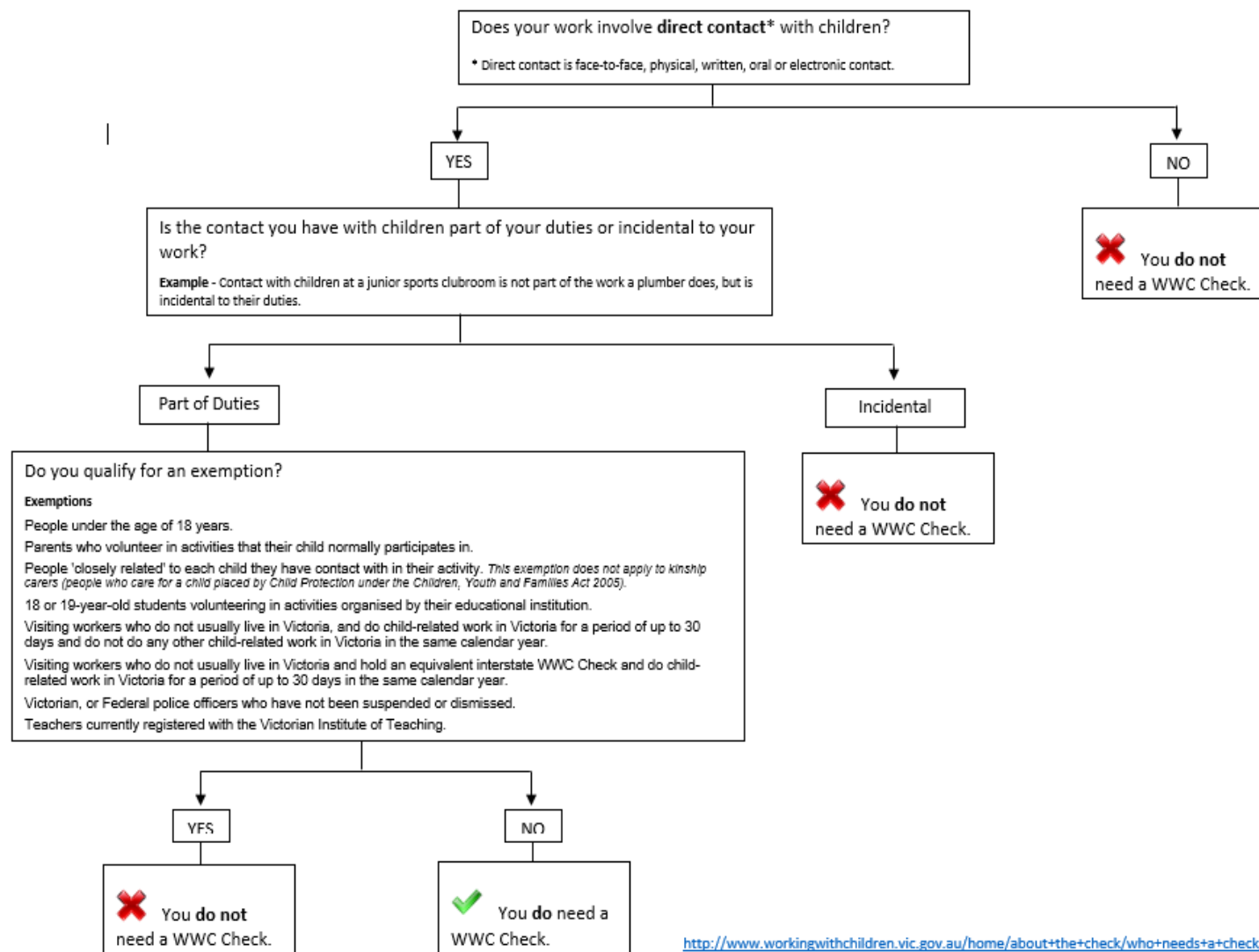
What do I need to do as a volunteer?

- Ensure that you have only that personal information required to undertake your role as a volunteer.
- Ask yourself, do I need all the available information, or just a part of the available information to undertake my role?
- Ask yourself, is this information relevant to my role or the task I'm going to do?
- Don't disclose any personal information that you may have accessed in your role as a volunteer.
- Only use personal information for the purpose it was disclosed to you in your role as a volunteer.
- Ensure that personal data is appropriately secured, particularly if it is taken off the College premises, e.g. medical information taken on an excursion.
- If emailing personal information off site place the personal information in a word document and password protect the document. Don't include the password in the email!
- If taking personal information on a laptop or a memory stick out of College, ensure all documents containing personal information are password protected.
- If in doubt about the handling of personal information, seek advice from staff.
- Individuals can complain to the Department of Education and Training or the Victorian Privacy Commissioner if they feel their privacy has been breached.
- If you have a question or concern about handling of the personal information in the College, speak to the College or call the Privacy Officer at Department of Education and Training on 9637 3601.

Responsible management of personal information is everyone's business.

Appendix 2

Do I need a Working with Children Check to 'Visit' or 'Volunteer' at Mount Ridley College?



MOUNT RIDLEY P-12 COLLEGE

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CLEARANCE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND:

The Working with Children Check (WWCC) aims to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm. It is designed to complement good selection, supervision and training practices (including rigorous reference checking).

The intent of this procedure is to outline which positions at the College require a WWCC and the process to be followed.

This procedure applies to all positions at The College including volunteer, honorary, consultant and contractor positions. Any reference to 'candidates' also extends to staff currently occupying a position.

DEFINITIONS:

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Student: any child who is enrolled at the College.

WHAT IS THE WWCC?

The WWCC verifies a person's history to make sure they do not have any relevant criminal offences or findings from professional disciplinary bodies. The WWCC is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time the cardholder continues to be checked for new relevant offences or findings. The WWCC is administered by the Department of Justice.

WHEN IS A WWCC REQUIRED?

A WWCC is required for positions that meet all of the following criteria:

- involve contact with children in connection with our College;
- the contact happens on a regular (everyday) basis;
- involve direct contact with children and this contact is not directly supervised, and

- the position does not qualify for an exemption as listed under the act.

WHAT IS THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

The candidate must complete a Working with Children Check application form. The forms are available online from the Department of Justice website.

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/>

Under the section marked 'Details of Organisation', candidates should ensure they state the name of the College.

If the applicant passes the check they will be sent a successful Assessment Notice, followed by a WWCC card 2-3 weeks later.

Further information about the application process is available on the Department of Justice webpage.

WHAT IF THE APPLICANT DOES NOT PASS THE WWCC?

If the applicant does not pass the check they will be given an Interim Negative Notice. The applicant can then make a submission to the Department of Justice to explain why they believe they should pass. If this submission is not successful the applicant will be issued with a Negative Notice. This means they have failed the WWCC and cannot undertake 'child-related work' or work in the College

WHEN CAN THE CANDIDATE COMMENCE?

Commencement at Mount Ridley P-12 College is conditional upon receipt of a successful Assessment Notice or WWCC card. Any queries should be directed to the Business Manager.

WHO PAYS FOR THE WWCC?

Candidates who are required to undergo a WWCC as a condition of working in the College will not be able to receive reimbursement for the cost from the College.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The College must:

- identify all staff who require a WWCC;
- ensure existing staff and volunteers are informed of the requirement to undergo the check;
- ensure prospective staff and volunteers have passed a WWCC before commencement;
- check the card's validity on the Department of Justice webpage;

- have a photocopy of the current WWCC and with details updated on the College Compliance Register (if the individual is a staff member, copy to be kept on the staff member's personnel file), and
- ensure suitable monitoring procedures are in place to ensure staff members hold a valid WWCC card at all times.

The staff member or volunteer must:

- provide the successful WWCC card prior to commencement at the College;
- notify College if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, (for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence); and
- apply for a new WWCC before their card expires.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WWCC AND A POLICE RECORDS CHECK?

A police records check gives information about a person's past criminal record and is only valid at the time of issue. The WWCC is valid for 5 years (unless revoked). During this time, cardholders continue to be checked for new relevant offences or disciplinary findings from professional bodies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching. In addition, not all criminal offences are relevant to the WWCC. Broadly, the WWCC considers serious sexual and violent drug offences.

A staff member or volunteer is required to undertake a WWCC even if they have already completed a police records check.

Further information is available from the [Department of Justice Working with Children webpage](#) or the Working with Children information line on 1300 652 879

COLLEGE COMPLIANCE REGISTER:

The College will take a copy of each WWCC and file them accordingly.

MOUNT RIDLEY P-12 COLLEGE

CHILD SAFETY INDUCTION PACK - VOLUNTEERS

Purpose

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. The purpose of this induction pack is to ensure Mount Ridley P-12 College 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

- Mount Ridley P-12 College 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 a Principal Class member. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the North Western Regional Office of the Department of Education and Training on 1300 338 691.

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 team in the office who will happily provide you with one.

- Mount Ridley P-12 College Volunteers Policy
- Mount Ridley P-12 College Child Safety Policy
- Mount Ridley P-12 College Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Mount Ridley P-12 College 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 a Principal Class member with any comments or question

