

Volunteer Policy

Purpose

This policy and procedure outlines how Urban College (UC) will recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and the legal rights of volunteers.

Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at the college.

Definitions

Child/Youth/Student:

Child-connected work: work authorised by the college governing authority/provider and performed by an adult in a college 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 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 the college board
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the college, by the college board, 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 board.
- Providing assistance to the work of the college
- Attending meetings in relation to 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

UC is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children, youth, staff and volunteers. UC recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to the college community and the work that the college does.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that all community and external service volunteers engaging with the college are suitable to work with children and youth and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to the college community.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of the college community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the Assistant Principal or Principal. UC may at times ask for volunteers when assistance is needed for specific events. Any member of the community looking to volunteer should contact a member of the Principal class.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

UC values the volunteers that assist in its classrooms, camps, excursions and events. To ensure that the college is meeting the legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, UC is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children Check (WWCC). Additional suitability checks may also be required depending on the volunteer role, such as references, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Considering its legal obligations, and the commitment to ensuring that UC is a child safe environment, the college will require volunteers to obtain a WWCC and produce their valid card to the college receptionist or a Principal class member 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. This is a legal requirement under the *Worker Screening Act*.
- **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. This is a legal requirement under the *Worker Screening Act*.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist in college activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/community UC Board members** sitting on the UC Board whether with or without student members, regardless of whether their own young person is a student member or not.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, the college may ask volunteers to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, criminal check or additional proof of identity documents).

Non-child related work

On some occasions, parents/carers and other members of the college 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 club coordination, college board committees, fetes or 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 WWCC or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, UC reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWCC, 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 the college 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 the staff handbook and ensure the actions and requirements in this document are followed when volunteering for the college.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of the role, UC 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 delegate). This will include the requirement to follow the college's policies, including, but not limited to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Community Code of Conduct.

Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with all other UC policies and procedures to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers.

The Principal (or their delegate) 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 the students.

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 UC.

Privacy and Information Sharing

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware during their course of volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the UC Privacy and Information Sharing Policy.

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.

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 UC Business Manager to ensure they are managed in accordance with the UC Policies and Procedures.

Personal Injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the UC Public Liability Insurance if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in college work.

Associated Documents

- [Workers Screening Act](#)
- Privacy and Information Sharing Policy
- [Working with Children Check](#)
- [Criminal Check Australia](#)

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