

Engaging and Inducting Volunteers

Procedure



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1 Purpose

Volunteers play an important role in the education of children and young people in partnership with the staff of Catholic schools. Education and care settings are unique in the degree to which they encourage participation by parents and caregivers. Positive partnerships with parents and caregivers are significant in the overall effectiveness of the education and care process.

Catholic schools must only engage volunteers who are appropriate, suitably skilled, trained and or qualified to work with children and young people. This procedure will assist Principals and Leaders in the application of best practice in engaging and inducting volunteers who are suitable to work with children and young people and all levels of staff, while ensuring all the required practices to protect children and young people are implemented.

All schools and CEO sites are required to follow established selection, mandatory notification training, supervision, monitoring and record keeping procedures for volunteers. Materials and links are provided in this package to support schools to implement the required practices.

2 Scope

The Procedure for Engaging and Inducting Volunteers applies across Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) and the Catholic Education Offices.

3 Definitions

Volunteer: a volunteer is ‘an individual who undertakes defined activities of their own free will, without payment (other than out of pocket expenses), which will be of benefit to the community and the organisation.’ (*Screening and Criminal History Checks Policy Guidelines - Intersectoral, DfE, AISSA, CESA*)

Volunteer categories include but are not limited to: sports coaches, cultural coaches, tutors, parent helpers, canteen helpers, transport helpers, LAP support, School Board members, School Board sub-committee members, parents accompanying staff on excursions, overnight camps, interstate / overseas trips. Students undertaking Work Experience (tertiary and school students) in schools and mentors from external organisations are volunteers. Please note, there is no requirement for screening children under 14 years old.

Screening: the overarching term used to encompass the Working with Children Check (WWCC), mandatory requirements of electronic screening, Volunteer Declaration form completion and other screening procedures such as referee checks (where applicable).

4 Policy Supported

This procedure supports:

- [Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#)
- [CDPP Child Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Child Protection policies and associated materials: [Safe Environments for all \(CESA Website\)](#)
- [Duty of Care Policy](#)
- Principals' School Operating Procedures (SOPs) are available on [CESAShare/Governance/Compliance Monitoring](#)
- [CSH&W Volunteers Procedure \(No. 22\)](#)
- [Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people Guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings](#)
- [Screening and Verification Authority \(SAVA\) – Working with Children Check Guidelines](#)
- [SAVA – Working with Children Checks Screening Policy](#)

5 Procedure for Engaging Volunteers

It is recognised that the practices for recruiting and engaging volunteers may vary from school to school and for the CEO. This procedure provides a minimum standard when engaging volunteers to ensure that:

- all child protection requirements are met;
- engagement practices remain consistent and non-discriminatory;
- a planned, systematic approach is adopted;
- transparency and equity are applicable at all times.

5.1 Recruiting Volunteers

Where material is published calling for volunteers, the relevant material should typically include:

- details about the school/college (mission, values, purpose);
- the type of volunteering position(s) available and the nature of the work;
- application form (see CESA Volunteer Application Package);
- knowledge, skills and attributes required;
- specific instructions on how, when and where to apply;
- name and telephone number of the school contact person.

All such material should include a specific reference to screening requirements (WWCC), compliance with CESA COVID-19 Policy and other screening processes including referee checks, where applicable.

5.2 Selecting Volunteers

While each school and the CEO will develop their own process for recruiting and selecting volunteers, selection processes for volunteers should include the following *minimum requirements*:

- CESA Volunteer Application Package;
- CESA Volunteer Declaration;
- complete satisfactory electronic screening (refer to 5.4);
- verify COVID-19 vaccination status is current and valid if volunteering in CESA High-Risk Settings (refer to 5.4);
- attendance at an interview (new volunteers who are not known at the school).

Applications for volunteer positions should be dealt with in a timely and non-discriminatory manner.

The suitability of applicants who wish to volunteer must be assessed in relation to their:

- commitment to adhering to CESA's child safe and child-friendly environment policies and procedures;
- the applicant's suitability to work with children; and
- ability to support the Catholic ethos and contribute to the Mission of the Church, School and or Catholic Education Offices (CEO).

5.3 Screening Volunteers – Requirements

Due to the nature of the work and contact with children, volunteers are required to undergo screening regardless of the type of role they hold within the school. A volunteer is deemed an 'occasional' volunteer if their volunteering does not exceed seven (7) occasions in a calendar year.

Please refer to the [Screening Decision Chart](#) for further clarification on what constitutes an 'occasional' volunteer.

Working with Children Check (WWCC)

All applicants must be informed of the requirement to hold or obtain a valid and current Working with Children Check prior to commencement, and for ongoing WWCC at regular intervals as requested.

CESA COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Volunteers do not need to be vaccinated against COVID-19, with the exception of people volunteering in CESA High-Risk Settings. Volunteers are however strongly encouraged to have and maintain an Up-To-Date Vaccination Status in accordance with the ATAGI statement. The vaccination requirement for people volunteering in CESA High-Risk Settings is a condition of engagement unless an exemption is approved in accordance with the CESA COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

Applicants / volunteers must be informed of the requirement to have and must provide:

- Completed [CESA Volunteer Application Package](#);
- Completed [CESA Volunteer Declaration](#);
- Personal identification (100 points if a WWCC is required);
- Names and contact details of two character referees:
 - where the volunteer is *well known* to the school community (e.g., parent / caregiver who has had regular active involvement in the school), provide the names and roles of 2 school staff members known to the volunteer;
 - where the volunteer *is not previously well known* to the school community, referees should include professional referees (e.g., previous or current employer, doctor, lawyer, JP, teacher etc.);
- A copy of their original WWCC prior to commencing;
- A copy of their current valid COVID-19 vaccination status prior to commencing (required in CESA High-Risk Settings);
- A certificate of completion for the Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) Fundamentals course for volunteers.

The Principal or Leader must ensure:

- An [electronic screening](#) is completed on all volunteers engaged with the school or CEO;
- Referee checks are undertaken for volunteers new to the school, and the referee attests to the good character of the volunteer;
- A confidential personnel file is established for the volunteer, and all forms and documents are filed.

Members of governing councils / school boards are required to hold a current acceptable WWCC to protect against people in such positions adversely influencing the protective climate of an education or care environment through the decisions of committees or boards. In-addition, members of governing councils / school boards are required to comply with the current CESA COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

5.4 Screening Procedures

5.4.1 Working with Children Check

This document, together with the Screening and Verification Authority (SAVA) – Working with Children Check Guidelines, Screening Policy – Working with Children Checks and the Screening Decision Chart outline the screening requirements for all recognised and approved volunteers.

- In every situation where a WWCC is required, a CESA electronic screening is also required;
- SAVA – Working with Children Check Guidelines are located on CESAShare;
- Screening Decision Chart is detailed on CESAShare.

5.4.2 CESA COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

The Principal or Leader must ensure that volunteers meet the mandatory requirements of the CESA COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and any other related Government Directive issued in the future.

5.4.3 Electronic Screening

Confirmation of screening clearance and COVID-19 vaccination status must be confirmed prior to any offer of engagement being made to a volunteer in CESA High-Risk Settings. Electronic screening must be undertaken prior to any offer being accepted. Electronic screening must be undertaken prior to any offer of engagement being made to a volunteer. Clearance notification must be received from the Human Resources team at the CEO and filed and recorded as a valid clearance. This screening process is undertaken through a web-based application.

5.4.4 Interviews (for Regular Volunteers)

Prior to commencing their volunteering work, all regular volunteers should be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in the volunteer program, and to provide an opportunity for the volunteer to ask questions.

It is essential all Compulsory questions relating to Working with Young Children / Child Protection be asked at interview, including:

- Tell us about why you want to work with children?
- Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?
- Working with children and child protection are core to our business and values. Have you ever had any involvement with, been investigated, or been charged with an offence against children?
- Other than your own family do have special relationships with children. Tell us about them?
- Is there anything that you are aware of that may cause a concern or raise question about your suitability to undertake your role? (child or criminal offences)?

5.4.5 Referee Checks

Reference checks for all volunteers are to be undertaken by the Principal (or their nominee) to confirm work abilities or character attributes to establish a person's suitability for volunteer positions.

A minimum of two reference checks must be undertaken for all volunteers. Where possible, referees should include line managers or other people who can be objective, rather than colleagues or friends.

If the applicant has a regular active involvement, is well known at the school, and has previously been reference checked as a volunteer, the Principal (or their nominee) may determine it is not necessary to undertake another reference check for volunteer positions in future years.

The [Volunteer Referee Check form](#) has a standard suite of referee questions including the compulsory child protection questions highlighted below.

- Working with children and child protection are core to our business and values. Has the applicant ever had any involvement with, been investigated, or been charged with an offense against children?
- Are you aware of any child protection concerns regarding the applicant?
- Other than the applicant's own family does the applicant have special relationships with children? If yes, tell us about them.
- Is there anything that you are aware of that may cause a concern or raise question about the applicant's suitability to perform our role?
- Would you engage this person as a volunteer?

5.5 Exclusion from Volunteering

School and CEO leaders have the authority to:

- require a volunteer to withdraw from volunteering programs at any time if concerns exist about their suitability working with children or for the role; and
- exclude a parent, caregiver or other person from the school grounds if their behaviour threatens the wellbeing of staff, parents or children.

6 Procedures for Inducting Volunteers

Schools are required to induct all volunteers.

It is recognised that the practices for inducting volunteers may vary from school to school and for the CEO. These procedures provide a minimum standard when inducting volunteers to ensure that:

- all child protection requirements are met;
- induction practices remain consistent and non-discriminatory;
- a planned, systematic approach is adopted; transparency and equity are applicable at all times; and
- processes are in place to protect the health and safety of volunteers.

6.1 Induction Process and Content

Each school Principal and or Leader must establish an induction process appropriate for all volunteers on their site. An induction process must be completed with all new volunteers, and should include, as a minimum:

- RRHAN-EC obligations)
- Mandatory notification obligations) refer [RRHAN-EC Fundamentals course for volunteers](#)
- Protective Practices)
- WH&S requirements;
- First Aid (where applicable);
- COVID-19 vaccination requirements (required in CESA High-Risk Settings);
- Privacy and confidentiality issues;

- Relevant school and or CEO policies and procedures such as:
 - Code of Conduct for Volunteers;
 - Reporting Harm of Children and Young People Policy
 - Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
 - Duty of Care Policy;
 - Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people guidelines (essential for volunteers interacting with students);
 - Information Technology Policy;
 - Work, Health and Safety Policy.
- Site specific information e.g., important times, dates, events, WHS issues etc.

During the induction / orientation process volunteers should also be consulted on the following items, including:

- clear instructions on their role, function and responsibilities;
- direct reporting lines and contact details;
- appropriate lines of authority and communication;
- who they can contact for advice and support if they have any child protection or other concerns; and?
- record keeping relevant to their role.

Ongoing induction processes for volunteers who are continuing or who have new roles in the school should include:

- any updates in WHS;
- any updates to COVID-19 vaccination requirements (required in CESA High-Risk Settings);
- school or CEO policies or updates relevant to the position.

The school will receive a written reminder from the Screening and Verification Authority (SAVA) for all people associated with the school when a new WWCC is required.

7 Work Health and Safety for Volunteers

Work, Health and Safety training is essential for all employees and volunteers in the workplace. All workers and employees including volunteers and visitors are required to take reasonable care for both their own health, safety and welfare and the health, safety and welfare of others. Volunteers are considered to be workers under current WHS legislation.

[Volunteers Procedure \(Procedures - Catholic Safety Health & Welfare SA \(cshwsa.org.au\)\)](https://cshwsa.org.au)

WHS for volunteers, including RRHAN-EC Fundamentals course for volunteers and Protective Practices are addressed in the Induction Package exemplar.

Volunteer records should include evidence of initial WHS and RRHAN-EC Fundamentals course. Evidence of any update training, including three yearly WHS and RRHAN-EC update training, should be included in the volunteer's records as they occur.

8 Volunteer WHS Induction

Privacy and Confidentiality

By the Volunteer

It is acknowledged that in the course of their work, volunteers may come across sensitive and confidential information. It is essential for all volunteers to maintain confidentiality and if concerned raise the issue with the Principal (or nominee).

About the Volunteer

Applications, unsolicited resumes, and notes taken during or as a result of interviews or meetings, including any information received from a reference or referee check are not exempt from the Privacy Act.

Care must be taken to ensure that all records are stored in a confidential area and that only authorised personnel can access those records. All records should be stored in accordance with advice from CESA (User Guide B_ Records Management - Retention Schedule).

The Induction Package documents address the privacy of volunteers.

9 Volunteer Records

Schools should maintain confidential records for each Volunteer which as a minimum should include:

- CESA Volunteer Application Package
- CESA Volunteer Declaration
- Volunteer Agreement (may be a part of CESA Volunteer Application Package)
- Medical Information
- Screening, including WWCC outcome where applicable
- Copy of current valid COVID-19 vaccination status (required in CESA High-Risk Settings)
- Referee Checks (where applicable)
- Volunteer Induction records
- WHS Induction (initial and updates)
- RRHAN-EC Fundamentals course for volunteers – completion certificate
- Driver's licence, car registration and insurance (for those transporting students other than immediate family as a volunteer).

10 Engagement and Induction: Resources, Templates, and Links

The documents in the *Documents for Volunteers - Induction Package* section below, form a basic Volunteer Induction Pack for those volunteers who will regularly volunteer at the school. Some of these documents require the school to include site-specific information and/or the school logo.

For specific volunteer positions, schools may need to add other information (e.g., a volunteer coach would require information on first aid requirements).

Links

- [CESAShare](#) and [People Leadership & Culture \(Human Resources\)](#) (Recruitment)
- [PLC \(HR\) Volunteers/Sports Coaches](#)
- Principals' School Operating Procedures (SOPs) are available on [CESAShare/Governance/Compliance Monitoring](#)

Documents for Principals, Volunteer Coordinators

- Volunteer Referee Check Form_(for use by Principals and Principal Nominees)
- Volunteer Engagement & Induction Checklist (for use by Principals and Principal Nominees)
- Volunteer Induction PowerPoint (incorporates WHS, RRHAN-EC and Protective Practices)
- Volunteer Induction Running Sheet to accompany Volunteer Induction PowerPoint
- Procedures for Electronic Screening of Applicants
- CSH&W Volunteers Procedure
- CESA COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

Documents for Volunteers - Induction Package

- CESA Volunteer Application Package
- CESA Volunteer Declaration
- Induction Booklet for Volunteers
- RRHAN-EC Information for Volunteers
- Protective Practices Information for Volunteers

11 Revision Record

The following roles provide a point of contact for the procedures and are responsible for its ongoing review and revision.

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