

Lowther Hall

ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

All about the girl

Volunteers Policy

Date of last review:	2025
Review cycle:	2 yearly
Review and approval responsibility:	Executive
Category:	HR and Employment
VRQA required:	Yes
Locations:	O: Drive, LowtherLink, Website



1. PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Lowther Hall will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school. This applies to both on and off-site.

3. DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: 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, 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.

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.

4. CONTEXT AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School (the School) is committed to creating and maintaining a school in which all children are safe from harm. The School has a zero tolerance of child abuse.

As part of this commitment, the School has developed a set of policies, of which this is one, which are designed to keep children safe. Related policies can be found in Section 12.

4.1 Legal and regulatory context

The School recognises that it also has obligations under various laws and regulatory instruments which inform this policy and the procedures associated therewith. These include:

4.1.1 Victorian Government Acts

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (the Act). This Act establishes the principles for the wellbeing of children, sets the standards framework and provides for the oversight functions of the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic). This Act provides for the protection of children including mandatory reporting.
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 This Act provides for the offences of failure to protect and failure to disclose.

4.1.2 Other regulatory instruments and reports

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards 2021.
- Ministerial Order 1359 July 2022 (Vic) – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.
- Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisation, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018 and adopted by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2019.
- Victorian Child Safe Standards, July 2022.

School management is committed to providing a safe working environment through the implementation of risk prevention and reduction strategies that are integrated into all school activities. A consultative, cooperative approach between employees and management on OH&S issues is a key priority.

The legal context in which this policy sits in the *OH&S Act, 2004 (Vic)*.

5. POLICY

Lowther Hall is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children (including vulnerable children) and our staff and volunteers. Lowther Hall 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 Lowther Hall's volunteers are suitable to work with children, are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community and abide by the Code of Conduct (staff and volunteers).

5.1 Becoming a Volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to look out for information from the relevant Head of School.

5.2 Suitability Checks Including Working with Children Clearances

5.2.1 Working with students

Lowther Hall values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, School Productions, Sport programs, activities and events. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the Worker Screening Act and the Child Safe Standards, Lowther Hall 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 and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Lowther Hall is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card or application receipt to the Human Resources Department for verification when undertaking activities involving children, including but not limited to:

- assisting with any classroom or school activities
- assisting with excursions, camps and similar events

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.

5.2.2 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. This may include: volunteering on the Parents and Friends' Association, being a member of the School Council, participating in sub-committees of School Council, festival coordination or being part of other parent groups that meet in the evenings or making sets for productions. During these activities, children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Lowther Hall volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Clearance, proof of ID and may be required to provide references and/ or work history.

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.

5.2.3 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 and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school.

All volunteers are required to complete the Lowther Hall volunteer online Induction Program.

Volunteers must return the signed agreement that is attached to this policy prior to commencing their work as a volunteer.

5.2.1 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 Policy and Code of Conduct. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Lowther Hall's Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

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 Lowther Hall.

Lowther Hall will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The Principal (or their nominee) 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 Lowther Hall's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures.

5.2.2 Procedures which all Staff and Volunteers should be aware of

- Child safety & Mandatory Reporting
- Emergency Evacuation & Lockdown

6. PRIVACY AND INFORMATION-SHARING

6.1 Student Information

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.

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 Safe Standards and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy.

6.2 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 Director of Human Resources and Strategic Operations to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Schools Record Management Policy.

7. COMPENSATION

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered Lowther Hall's Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

Public liability insurance

Lowther Hall'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.

8. COMMUNICATION

This Policy will be communicated to our School community in the following ways

- available publicly on our School's website
- available on LowtherLink for parents
- included in volunteer induction processes

9. RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Lowther Hall policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Respectful Workplace Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Standards and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Visitor Registration Policy](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct \(staff and volunteers\)](#)
- Privacy and Record Management Policy

10. REVIEW

This policy is reviewed at least every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident.

APPENDIX 1

LOWTHER HALL ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

* This page is to be signed by the volunteer and returned to the Human Resources Department. Please attach a copy of your current WWC (volunteer) check if you have not submitted it to Lowther Hall previously.

Volunteers are expected to:

- abide by the Code of Conduct (staff and volunteers)
- have a current WWC
- be outstanding role models for all students
- sign in at reception before and after helping in the classrooms
- work under the professional direction of staff, following all school policies
- allow the teacher to deal with discipline issues
- maintain confidentiality at all times
- report any issues of concern to teachers (and not directly intervene)
- speak in a kind and friendly way to all students
- establish and maintain a rapport with students based on mutual respect
- contact Lowther Hall if they are unable to attend via a phone call or an email
- wear appropriate attire for the day
- help in other classrooms other than their child's classroom
- turn off their mobile phones or leave them in silent mode while helping in the classroom
- leave younger child(ren) with a carer while helping in the school
- focus their attention in helping the students assigned to them
- follow the school's emergency evacuation plan
- attend the volunteer briefing session

Volunteers have the right to expect:

- work to be prepared and organised by the teachers
- good manners and acceptable behaviour from students
- to be treated with respect
- support by the teachers
- the teachers to deal with discipline issue that arises
- to be informed of the tasks expected of them
- to be notified if sessions are cancelled or the timetable has changed

I have read and understood the guidelines in the Volunteer Policy, and endeavour to abide by these expectations so that all members of the school community will benefit from my valuable work for the students while volunteering my help at Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School.

Full name of Volunteer

Working with Children Check number (or VIT number)

Signature

Date

PLEASE CIRCLE one or multiple

I am a Parent/Caregiver of a student/s in:

- Blinkbonnie House (K to Year 1)
- Raymond House (Years 2 to 6)
- Senior School (Years 7 to 12)

Name of Student/s