



**Catholic
Education**
Diocese of Cairns

Learning with Faith and Vision

Guideline/Procedure

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Volunteers – schools & CES

Purpose

This guideline is intended to provide advice to schools and CES in the management of volunteers and volunteer programs.

Application

This will be applied in all schools in the Diocese of Cairns and CES.

Guideline or Procedure

National Standards for Volunteering

Volunteering Australia has developed the following eight National Standards for involving volunteers in not-for-profit organisations:

1. Policies and procedures

An organisation that involves volunteers shall define and document its policies and procedures for volunteer involvement and ensure that these are understood, implemented and maintained at all levels of the organisation where volunteers are involved.

2. Management responsibilities

An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers are managed within a defined system and by capable personnel with the authority and resources to achieve the organisation's policy goals.

3. Recruitment

An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and have clearly documented volunteer recruitment, selection, and orientation policies and procedures that are consistent with non-discriminatory practices and guidelines.

4. Work and the workplace

An organisation that involves volunteers shall clearly specify and control the work of volunteers and ensure that their place of work is conducive to preserving their health, safety and general well-being.

5. Training and development

An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that volunteers obtain the knowledge, skills, feedback on work, and the recognition needed to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

6. Service delivery

An organisation that involves volunteers shall ensure that appropriate processes and procedures are established and followed for the effective planning, control, and review of all activities relating to the delivery of services by volunteers.

7. Documentation and records

An organisation that involves volunteers shall establish a system and have defined procedures to control all documentation and personnel records that relate to the management of volunteers.

8. Continuous improvement

An organisation that involves volunteers shall plan and continually review its volunteer management system to ensure that opportunities to improve the quality of the system are identified and actively pursued.

Recruiting volunteers

Schools should have a clear sense of what they are seeking to achieve with a volunteer program. This should include the identification of possible tasks and the types of skills that might be required.

Ideally tasks should cater for a variety of skills and aptitudes such that the school is not discriminatory in the presentation of the volunteer program.

Clear role descriptions and expectations should be provided. Schools will find that most volunteers appreciate having a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities rather than a vague sense of 'helping out'.

The school should apply a thorough risk assessment to all volunteer activities to ensure volunteers are not exposed to unnecessary or avoidable risks. The school's commitment to a safe and healthy workplace extends to all volunteers.

A suggested application form for new volunteers is provided on the Staff Portal governance page/forms and agreements/new volunteer application form. The form includes personal contact and duty of care requirements but also provides volunteers with an opportunity to identify skills that might be useful for the school.

Induction and training

Induction training may take the form of a briefing session and/or induction booklet. The topics should include:

- Requirements for Suitability Card for Child Related Employment (Blue Card) or Volunteer Suitability Declaration
- Sign-in/Sign-out requirements, Name Tags
- School safety procedures (fire, lockdown etc)
- Student Protection – Handbook for Volunteers and/or PowerPoint (CES)
- Code of Conduct for Parents and Volunteers (CES)
- Dress code (see OLHOC's – Attachment 1)
- Requirements for confidentiality (See OLHOC's – Attachment 2)
- Social and Emotional Learning at the school and the requirements for volunteer behaviour
- A staff point of contact for volunteer questions, concerns, grievances
- Work Health and Safety considerations (including special areas such as the tuckshop and use of equipment during working bees).

Blue Cards (Suitability for Child related Employment)

Blue Cards are required for all volunteers who are not parents of children attending the school. Volunteers not required to hold a current Blue Card will be asked to sign a Volunteer Suitability Declaration (CES).

Schools should retain a record of Blue Card and Suitability Declarations and their expiry dates.

A person who is not a parent or have an exemption, and does not hold a current Blue Card, is not able to volunteer at the school until a valid Blue Card has been verified.

Volunteers and full-time staff

Volunteers are not intended to take the place of paid staff. Nor should they be used to take the place of paid staff during industrial disputes and staff shortages. They should not be asked to undertake tasks previously undertaken by paid employees. Usurping the role of staff carries the risk of creating enmity between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers should complement the role of paid staff. The tasks undertaken by volunteers should add value to the life of the school, assist in the provision of services that the school would not otherwise be able to provide and provide opportunities for the volunteers to participate in the school community.

Examples of this might include assistance with junior years numeracy and reading programs, helping with excursions and school camps, helping with sports days and training, involvement in liturgies and other religious activities of the school, working bees for school landscaping, mentoring and general classroom assistance, and tuckshops.

Insurance coverage

School volunteers are covered under Catholic Church Insurance's Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance. Lump sum benefits are provided for accidents and typically it covers death, permanent disablement and other listed events.

The insurance covers limited medical expenses although CCI makes clear it is not a registered health fund. CC Insurance cannot pay any benefit claimable under Medicare nor can it pay "the gap". It should be pointed out to volunteers that this insurance is not a substitute for health insurance.

Please see www.ccinsurance.org.au/insurance/products/personal-accident-voluntary-workers.htm

Considering the needs of volunteers

The following list is not an exhaustive list of how schools can support and recognise volunteers:

- Does the school provide adequate safe places for volunteers to work including access to toilets and areas for breaks?
- Are volunteers considered for professional development and training opportunities available through the school? Is the school prepared to pay attendance fees for them for such training?
- Is the school prepared to provide a reference or statement of service if asked? Can the school quantify the hours a volunteer has contributed (some volunteers undertake courses which require certain levels of service as part of the course requirements)?
- Does the school offer to re-imburse out of pocket expenses such as petrol, travel and material needs.
- Does the school provide necessary equipment and clothing (eg gloves, safety glasses) for volunteers to undertake their work?

Acknowledging volunteer contributions

Schools should use both formal and informal approaches to show appreciation for the contribution made by volunteers. This can be achieved through school media (websites and newsletters), events such as school assemblies and morning teas, or awards for outstanding contributions.

Enquiries

Manager, Governance and Engagement

Reflection

www.volunteeringaustralia.org

www.fnqvolunteers.org

Positive notice Blue Cards for Child-Related employment – www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

- CES Volunteer Suitability Declaration
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Student protection handbook (CES)

Attachment 1

Statement on the need for confidentiality

The following is an excerpt from OLHOC's Volunteer Information/Induction Pack:

In order to allow our community a confidence in our ability to do our work with integrity and a sense of justice, <name of school> has the highest expectations of staff and volunteers when it comes to confidentiality.

This includes our moral obligations consistent with the Catholic values of the school as well as our legal obligations under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

While volunteering at <name of school> an individual may hear or see parts of actions and conversations regarding staff, parents and students. <Name of school> expects that any concerns or queries in regards to these situations should initially be taken to the teacher involved, and then if unresolved to the Principal, Assistant Principal or APRE. They should not be relayed to other parents, as often, when a part of the whole is observed, inaccurate assumptions are made. This creates an injustice for all involved. It also needs to be understood that staff are often unable to disclose information to volunteers because of the confidentiality expectations of them.

If a volunteer recognises an issue with their child, or another child, during their time assisting a class, they should follow general school procedures i.e. arrange a time to speak with the teacher and if unresolved then arrange a time to meet the Principal, Assistant Principal or APRE.

Under no circumstances should a parent approach another student in order to resolve or investigate an issue regarding their child. This is a teacher's responsibility.

If you have any queries regarding these expectations, please speak with the teacher for whom you are volunteering, or speak with the Assistant Principal.

Dress Code

The following is OLHOC's Dress Code provided as part of the school's Volunteer Information/Induction Pack:

Staff Dress Code

Preamble

A staff dress code establishes a sense of professionalism and pride, identifies staff as key people within the school community, and portrays a united staff team. Issues of equality, health and safety, and expense are also factors that need consideration when establishing a staff dress code.

Policy

Our Lady Help of Christians School recognizes the need to establish a practical, professional and popular dress code supported by staff.

Values

Respect, Service, Justice, Dignity, Openness

Procedures

- In support of the professionalism of our staff, we have chosen to implement a staff dress code.
- The dress code has been developed after a process of considerable staff consultation.
- The dress code, whilst not a prescriptive uniform, outlines **minimum dress expectations** and requirements.
- The minimum staff dress code requires:
 1. That staff wear clothing commensurate to a professional work environment.
 2. That staff wear appropriate full-brimmed hats during all outdoor activities unless a specific activity warrants a cap.
 3. That staff wear clothing and footwear that is **modest** and **practical** to the task being undertaken. Care to be taken with the following: low cut tops (front and back), low slung pants.
 4. That staff wear clothing taking into account any safety issues for the task being undertaken.
 5. Staff need to ensure that they wear their name badge for security purposes and to ensure that students, parents and members of the community can readily identify members of staff.
 6. Clothing is not to display inappropriate logos, promote inappropriate products, or contain inappropriate language or messages.

Issues relating to the minimum dress code will be managed by the school principal.

- In addition to the minimum dress code, staff have agreed upon a non-compulsory staff uniform.

Concerns relating to the non-compulsory staff uniform are to be directed to the Assistant Principal.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, or at times when the principal believes that staff dress code issues warrant a review.