

PARTICIPATION OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 4

Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education and Care Ltd. (SCECE&C) is an incorporated company constituted by the Bishop of Sandhurst and is a subsidiary company of Catholic Education Sandhurst (CES) Limited, who is its Member, and it is governed by an independent Board of Directors.

SCECE&C Ltd.'s Vision is to create high quality environments which are authentically Catholic, where each child and family is accompanied on their journey of development, supported by the pastoral ministry of our Church as embodied in our Sandhurst communities.

St Mel's Kindergarten is an Early Childhood Education and Care service within the Diocese of Sandhurst which is operated by SCECE&C as the Approved Provider.

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at St Mel's Kindergarten, while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

St Mel's Kindergarten is committed to:

- supporting connections with educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to undertake practicum placements as part of their studies
- building relationships with community members and providing suitable opportunities to engage volunteers to contribute to the programs and activities of St Mel's Kindergarten
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at St Mel's Kindergarten through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of St Mel's Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing guidelines for accepting applications from volunteers and students to work at St Mel's Kindergarten in consultation with the nominated supervisor, ECT and educators and which are aligned with the <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>	√	√	√		
Accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of St Mel's Kindergarten at the time, in consultation with the nominated supervisor	√	√			
Obtaining a valid WWC Check (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and providing details to St Mel's Kindergarten prior to commencement					√
Checking the status of the Working with Children (WWC) Clearance (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) of volunteers and students where required, and ensuring that the details are recorded in the staff record	R	√			
Ensuring that the staff record contains the full name, address and date of birth of volunteers and students attending St Mel's Kindergarten (<i>Regulations 145, 149(1)</i>).	R	√			
Requesting additional information on the staff records such as emergency contact/next of kin and medical conditions	√	√			
Keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (<i>Regulation 149(2)</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at St Mel's Kindergarten is protected (<i>National Law, Section: 167</i>)	R	√	√		
Following the directions of staff at St Mel's Kindergarten at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.				√	√
Ensuring volunteers and students on placement at St Mel's Kindergarten are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children (<i>Regulation 83</i>) (<i>refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy</i>)	R	√	√	√	√

Providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures (<i>Regulation 171</i>), and access to the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185)</i>	R	√			
Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and Education and Care Services National Law</i> and all service policies and procedures (<i>Regulations 170</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Complying with the requirements of the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185)</i> and with all service policies and procedures, including the <i>Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, Interactions with Children and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> while attending St Mel's Kindergarten				√	√
Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations	R	√		√	
Ensuring volunteers, students and parents/guardians can identify children with medical conditions, the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication (<i>Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171</i>)	R	√	√		
Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of St Mel's Kindergartens <i>Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)</i>	R	√			
Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of St Mel's Kindergartens emergency and evacuation procedures (<i>Regulations 97, 168 (2)(e)</i>)	R	√	√		
Developing an induction checklist for volunteers and students attending St Mel's Kindergarten (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>) in consultation with the nominated supervisor and educators.	R	√	√		
Ensuring that volunteers and students have completed the induction checklist (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>) and have been provided with a copy of the staff handbook, if applicable.	R	√	√		√
Developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at St Mel's Kindergarten	√	√			

BACKGROUND and LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Students may participate in programs and activities at St Mel's Kindergarten from time to time including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by St Mel's Kindergarten wherever appropriate and possible.

St Mel's Kindergarten values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and the voluntary contribution they make to the education and care of their own and other children. "In genuine partnerships families and educators value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making" (*Early Years Learning Framework – refer to Sources*).

St Mel's Kindergarten aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers and students to participate in programs and activities while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with staff, and other adults and children at St Mel's Kindergarten (*refer to Code of Conduct Policy*).

The role that volunteers play in education and care services varies and can include working with groups of children, preparing materials or food, assisting with administrative tasks or working one-on-one with individual children. St Mel's Kindergarten is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, services should not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers must **not** be asked to perform tasks:

- that they are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
- that put the children or themselves in a vulnerable or potentially unsafe situation
- where there is a conflict of interest.

Prior to participation at St Mel's Kindergarten, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Check.

Parents/guardians whose children usually attend St Mel's Kindergarten are exempt from needing a WWC Check. However, as a demonstration of duty of care, all parents/guardians who volunteer at St Mel's Kindergarten are required to undergo a WWC Check.

In line with Child Safe Standard 4 and the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*, prior to engaging a volunteer or student an assessment should be undertaken of the nature of the responsibility to determine whether a position description is required, and based on that whether an interview and referee checks are required.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Child Safe Standards
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Child-related work: In relation to the WWC Check, child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.

Conflict of interest: (In relation to this policy) refers to an interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of the volunteer, or may impair their independence or loyalty to St Mel's Kindergarten. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the volunteer, but also their relatives, friends or business associates.

Staff record: A record which the Approved Provider of a centre-based service must keep containing information about the Nominated Supervisor, the Educational Leader, staff, volunteers, students and the Responsible Person at a service (Regulations 146–149). A sample staff record is available on the ACECQA website: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Student: A person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised early childhood qualification. This student will be supported by an educational institution in the completion of their placement.

Volunteer: A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include child-related work (refer to *Definitions*), administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Working with Children (WWC) Check: The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work (refer to *Definitions*) in Victoria and is a measure to help protect children from harm arising as a result of physical or sexual abuse. The Department of Justice assesses a person’s suitability to work with children by examining relevant serious sexual, physical and drug offences in a person’s national criminal history and, where appropriate, their professional history. A WWC Check card is granted to a person under working with children legislation if:

- they have been assessed as suitable to work with children
- there has been no information that, if the person worked with children, they would pose a risk to those children
- they are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

SOURCES and RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au
- *The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being, Becoming*: www.acecqa.gov.au
- A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (The Commission for Children and Young People) www.ccyv.vic.gov.au
- Working with Children Check; www.service.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Determining Responsible Person Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students, volunteers and where appropriate parents/guardians are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of St Mel's Kindergarten's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Sample induction checklist for volunteers and students

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider on 27 July 2021 and reviewed on 23 October 2023

REVIEW DATE: **OCTOBER 2026**



ATTACHMENT 1 - SAMPLE INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Name: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by all volunteers and students participating at St Mel's Kindergarten and returned to the Nominated Supervisor prior to commencing at St Mel's Kindergarten.

	Please tick
I have been given access to all the policies and procedures of St Mel's Kindergarten	
I understand the content of service policies and procedures, including those relating to:	
• conduct while at St Mel's Kindergarten (<i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>)	
• emergency, evacuation, fire and safety, including locations of fire extinguishers and emergency exits (<i>Emergency and Evacuation Policy</i>)	
• accidents at St Mel's Kindergarten (<i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i>)	
• dealing with medical conditions (<i>Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy, Diabetes Policy, Epilepsy and Seizures Policy and Administration of Medication Policy</i>)	
• good hygiene practices (<i>Hygiene and Food Safety Policy</i>)	
• dealing with infectious diseases (<i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy</i>)	
• first aid arrangements for children and adults, including the location of the nearest first aid kit (<i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i>)	
• daily routines	
• the importance of OHS and following safe work practices (<i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>)	
• interacting appropriately with children (<i>Interactions with Children Policy</i>)	
• reporting of serious incidents and notifiable incidents at St Mel's Kindergarten (<i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, Complaints and Grievances Policy and Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>)	
• reporting hazards in the workplace (<i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>)	
• handling complaints and grievances (<i>Compliments and Complaints Policy</i>)	

	Please tick
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child safety and wellbeing and child protection including how to respond to concerns (<i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • privacy and confidentiality of information (<i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>) 	
I am aware of the non-smoking policy of St Mel's Kindergarten and not be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would Impair my capacity to complete my tasks (<i>Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy</i>)	
The expectations of my placement/engagement, my role and responsibilities (including attending to the requirements of children with additional needs) have been clearly explained to me by my supervisor	
I am aware that I am expected to participate in general tasks, including maintaining the environment in a clean, safe and tidy condition	

Volunteer or student name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Nominated Supervisor's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____