Policy

Volunteer policy

Please note this policy is mandatory and staff are required to adhere to the content.

Summary

This information applies to all volunteers working in Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) educational programs, government children's centres, preschools and schools (including out of school hours care and vacation care services).

Table 1– Document details

Publication date	November 2017
File number	DECD16/20643
Related legislation	*Children's Protection Act 1993* *Children's Protection Regulations 2010* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)* *Education Regulations 2012* *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* *Information Privacy Principles 2017* *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)* *Volunteers Protection Act 2001* *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*
Related policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, frameworks and training	Camps and excursions guidelines for schools and preschools Child protection in schools, early childhood education and care policy Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment – Volunteers Information management policy National Standards for Volunteer Involvement Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people: guidelines for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings Public sector code of ethics Responding to abuse and neglect – education and care (RAN-EC) Screening and suitability – child safety policy Screening and suitability – child safety procedure Work health and safety policy

Version	V2.2
Replaces	Volunteers Working in Educational Sites and Settings, 2012
Policy officer (position)	Senior Policy and Project Officer – Volunteers
Policy officer (phone)	8226 3795
Policy sponsor (position)	Engagement and Wellbeing directorate, Early Years and Child Development division
Executive director responsible (position and office)	Executive Director, Early Years and Child Development
Applies to	DECD sites and services
Key words	Volunteering, volunteers, screening for volunteers, inductions for volunteers, volunteer management,
Status	Approved
Approved by	Chief Operating Officer
Approval date	20 November 2017
Review date	27 October 2019

Table 2 - Revision record

Date	Version	Revision description
November 2016	V2.0	Major edit- update to policy including change in title from 'Volunteers working in educational sites and settings' to 'Volunteer policy.' Families SA content included.
November 2017	V2.1	Minor edit. Removal of Families SA content. Updated supporting documents. Updated processes reflected in new volunteer procedure.

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1. Title

Volunteer policy

2. Purpose

This policy outlines DECD's commitment to making sure its volunteers are encouraged and supported and their contribution is acknowledged and valued. It also sets out the relevant legislative and policy obligations.

3. Scope

This policy applies to volunteers working in DECD (including those who volunteer online, eg e-mentors in schools). These include:

- volunteers in children's centres, play centres, child parent centres, child care centres, occasional care and learning centres
- volunteers in preschools and schools, including out of school hours care and vacation care services
- parent volunteers whose volunteering directly involves their own child
- volunteers from third party provider organisations.

3.1 Site leaders and third party providers

Site leaders must make sure volunteers from third party provider organisations that help at a DECD site are managed according to this policy and the volunteer procedure.

Site leaders must make sure volunteers from organisations that have a deed with the minister or a memorandum of understanding abide by any volunteer-specific details in the agreement.

3.2 Out of scope

The following are not in scope of this policy:

3.2.1 Governing councils, school councils or management committees

Members of these councils and committees are considered volunteers of the department. However, these volunteers do not fall within the scope of this policy.

For specific information on the management of these volunteers refer to https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sites-and-facilities/governing-councils

3.2.2 Work experience and work placement

People contributing to DECD as part of their work experience or a work placement are not in the scope of this policy.

Staff should refer to the DECD workplace learning procedure for information about their students on work experience.

4. Policy detail

The government's commitment to volunteer involvement:

Volunteers in DECD sites and settings help to achieve South Australian government objectives. [The advancing the community together partnership](#) and the [Volunteering Strategy for South Australia 2014-2020](#) are cross-sector volunteer strategies supporting the development of volunteering in South Australia and the state's strategic plan target to maintain a volunteer participation rate of 70% or better.

4.1 Benefits of volunteering

Volunteers play an integral part in supporting the work of the department and enriching the lives of children and young people in public education and child development.

Benefits of volunteers include that they:

- provide sites with a broader resource base from which to draw positive opportunities for children and young people

- enhance community participation and parent involvement

- expand the social, cultural and educational outcomes for children and young people

- provide a safer environment for children and young people

- make a positive difference for children and young people.

Benefits to volunteers include:

- a sense of purpose that enhances their feelings of belonging and happiness

- an opportunity to learn new skills.

The department values that volunteers bring differing levels of expertise and life skills and provide a broad knowledge base for children and young people to benefit from. They come from a range of backgrounds that reflect the diversity in the wider community.

The department is committed to reconciliation and our volunteer programs contribute to making a positive difference in the lives of Aboriginal people, their culture and their values.

4.2 Requirements for volunteers

The following requirements apply when engaging volunteers in DECD sites and services. These requirements support volunteer participation and aim to ensure their safety and the safety of children, young people, staff and others.

The department's practice of involving volunteers aligns with Volunteering Australia's [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#) and the [Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment – Volunteers](#).

To encourage volunteer participation and enhance the benefits of volunteering, DECD sites must make sure that volunteers meet the following requirements.

4.2.1 Recruitment and screening

Site leaders must make sure volunteers:

- are recruited using an open and planned approach to attract volunteers with relevant interests, knowledge, skills or attributes, as required by the DECD site

- are selected based on interest, knowledge and skills or attributes relevant to the role

- are not discriminated against and that there is equal opportunity for all

- are given relevant information about the site, their role and the recruitment and selection process

- meet screening and suitability requirements as per DECD screening and suitability – child safety policy and DECD screening and suitability child safety procedure (refer to the relevant history screening webpage for more information about screening)

- are advised that if their relevant history changes after their appointment – for example if they are charged or convicted of an offence relevant to risk of harm to children – they let the site leader know immediately.

4.2.2 Preparation and training

Site leaders must make sure volunteers:

- meet expected requirements as per the DECD child protection in schools, early childhood education and care policy which includes being provided with the responding to abuse and neglect – education and care (RAN-EC) induction session for volunteers as a condition of volunteering

- are given the name of a nominated site leader who can provide advice and support to them about any child protection or wellbeing concerns.

All site leaders must make sure volunteers are given:

- clearly written role descriptions – if their role changes during the course of their appointment, the site leader must take appropriate steps to make sure the volunteer is suitable and able to perform the new duties

- the information, training and/or resources necessary to enable them to perform their role effectively without creating risks to themselves or to others

- a volunteer agreement with the information needed to make sure they are aware of and understand their obligations to maintain confidentiality and to act in a manner consistent with the principles of conduct for South Australian public sector volunteers (part of the Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment - Volunteers)

- a site induction/orientation which includes information about work health and safety requirements relevant to their work.

Volunteers must observe work health and safety requirements and do any training necessary to make sure they will not put their own or anyone else's safety at risk. The principles and practices in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* are applicable to volunteers.

4.2.3 Management

Site leaders must make sure volunteers:

- are introduced to a volunteer contact person at the site or in the volunteer program

- complete and sign the department's volunteer application, declaration and agreement forms

- are given safe, meaningful work in a well-managed workplace

- receive the level of supervision required for them to do their assigned role

- are given ongoing support and feedback about their work

- given recognition and thanks respectful of cultural values and perspectives

- know they are expected to observe similar ethical, policy and/or legislative requirements as employees

- are not used where paid employment should be utilised

- are reimbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred as part of their role.

Site leaders must have processes in place that protect the health and safety of volunteers while they carry out their duties.

Site leaders must follow the details in the department's volunteer procedure.

4.2.4 Record keeping

Site leaders must:

- keep accurate and up-to-date records for volunteers

- make sure any personal information is securely stored and not misused

- keep a copy of the volunteer application, declaration and agreement forms

- record the impact volunteering activities have had on children and young people

- follow the details in the department's volunteer procedure about what type of information to keep and how to do it

- keep records according to the information management policy.

The department values the contribution of volunteers and, as part of record keeping requirements, site leaders must keep track of the extent of the contribution of the site's volunteer programs. This is also a way to meet the requirements of SAicorp insurance (see section 4.4 of this policy and 4.11 of the volunteer procedure).

4.2.5 Guiding the work of volunteers

To guide their work with volunteers, staff need to refer to the department's volunteer procedure and the volunteer webpages:

- Managing volunteers – staff intranet

- Volunteering in schools, preschools and children's centres – visible to the public

These websites have resources to help make sure required actions are followed when recruiting, screening, inducting, training and managing volunteers.

4.2.6 Site leader rights

The DECD site leader has the right to:

- decline voluntary work to a person they deem unsuitable to work with children and young people

- require a volunteer to withdraw from volunteering activities at any time if concerns exist about their suitability to be working with children

- exercise their power under the *Education Regulations 2012* to request that a volunteer leaves the site premises for 24 hours (known as a 'bar'), issue warning letters to volunteers and seek approval to issue prohibition notices against volunteers, when a volunteer's behaviour has

negatively impacted on the site and its community (in children's centres, preschools, and schools, but not stand-alone preschools).

4.3 Volunteer activities

Volunteers do many roles that support the work of DECD staff to make sure children and young people are cared for in a safe and positive environment. Some of the roles volunteers do include student mentoring, taking part in fundraising committees, helping in the school canteen, providing education support, coaching sports teams and helping on excursions.

DECD sites must make sure volunteer activities positively support the achievement of the program and organisational objectives. The volunteer activity should be meaningful, both to the volunteer and in contributing to the work of the department. Volunteers should not be exploited or expected to perform tasks that employees are reluctant to do.

Volunteers must not be used to replace paid staff.

4.4 SAicorp insurance

DECD has a responsibility to provide SAicorp, as part of the annual insurance and risk management questionnaire, details of the approximate numbers of volunteers and a brief description of the nature of tasks undertaken by volunteers to make sure that the volunteers are covered by the government insurance arrangements.

To assist the department in completing its annual SAicorp questionnaire, sites are required to record the number of volunteers engaged and the tasks they perform at the site each calendar year.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 3 – Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
nominated site leader	Providing advice and support to volunteers about child safety. The nominated site leader is a department employee in a leadership position at the site. Volunteers are to be advised who their nominated site leader is prior to commencement of their volunteering.
site leader	Ensuring that all aspects of this policy and related documents are implemented. Site leaders can delegate some of the responsibilities to other members of their leadership team.
volunteer	Must follow direction of the DECD site leader. Must also meet the responsibilities as set out in their signed volunteer agreement.
volunteer contact person	A suitably qualified DECD staff member, selected by the site leader to help coordinate, involve, recognise and reward the site's volunteers. They are the key contact person for the site's volunteers.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The policy will be reviewed by DECD policy officers every 3 years or as required. The Engagement and Wellbeing unit, Early Years and Child Development is responsible for monitoring this policy.

7. Definitions and abbreviations

For the purposes of this document the following definitions and abbreviations apply.

Table 4 – Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
sites and settings	A DECD site or service including but not limited to schools, preschools, children's centres, early childhood sites and settings, out of school hours care facilities, and vacation care.
site leader	Any person who has the responsibility, management or control of a DECD workplace or work unit. This includes but is not limited to education directors, directors, principals, and preschool directors.
suitable person	A person who has the required experience and the emotional, physical, intellectual and ethical capacity to be engaged with a particular DECD site and or service from the perspective of child safety.
third party provider	People or organisations engaged by a DECD site or service. See definition of third party provider volunteers below.
unsuitable person	An individual who has not met or maintained the required suitability for engagement with and/or participation in a DECD site/service and/or to provide a service to a DECD site/child or young person.
volunteer	A suitable individual who has been accepted to willingly engage, share their skills and experiences, without payment (other than reimbursement of approved out-of-pocket expenses). They provide regular or irregular ongoing assistance in a DECD site or setting. This might involve direct or indirect contact with children and young people or with their records. Volunteers work in a position designated by the DECD site leader as a volunteer position. They could be a: **DECD volunteer** – a volunteer that has been recruited, screened and trained directly by a DECD site or setting relevant to the particular role and function they will be performing. For example attending an overnight camp, kitchen garden helpers, student mentors, canteen helpers, tutors, a coach of a

Term	Meaning
	sport team.
	It also includes corporate volunteering: when a business provides employees to volunteer at a DECD site or setting during the employee's work time.
	parent volunteer – a parent or guardian who is a DECD volunteer with duties that directly involve their own child or children.
	Refer to the relevant history screening webpage for screening requirements of parent volunteers.
	third party provider volunteer – a volunteer that has been recruited, screened and trained by a third party provider and who provides a specific role in a DECD site or setting. For example, volunteers from the schools ministry group or a university volunteering program.
DECD/department	Department for Education and Child Development
RAN-EC	Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care
SAicorp	The captive insurer for the Government of South Australia.

8. Supporting documents

- Child protection policies and guidelines
- Guideline of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment – Volunteers
- Managing volunteers – intranet page
- National Standards for Volunteer Involvement
- Putting the volunteer policy into practice – plink online learning module
- Screening and suitability – child safety policy
- Screening and suitability – child safety procedure
- Relevant history screening
- Organising RAN-EC sessions for volunteers
- Volunteers – DECD internet page
- Work health and safety policy

9. References

- Advancing the community together: a partnership between the volunteer sector and the South Australian Government
- *Children's Services Act 1985*
- *Children's Protection Act 1993*

- DECD workplace learning procedure

- Duty of care policy

- *Education Act 1972*

- *Education Regulations 2012*

- *Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011*

- *Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Regulations 2011*

- Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standards

- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*

- Governing councils portal

- Non-DECD Service providers in preschools, schools and educational programs procedure

- Out of school hours care policy

- Provision of out of school hours care (OSHC) services on (DECD) sites procedure

- Information management policy

- South Australia's Strategic Plan (2004-2014) Community: Target 24

- Volunteering Strategy for South Australia (2014-2020)

- *Volunteers Protection Act 2001*

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*