

Operational Instructions Volunteers in our Schools (4.01)

Introduction

Mercy Education Ltd (Mercy Education) encourages and promotes the engagement and acknowledgement of volunteers in its schools. The balance between embracing volunteer participation and managing compliance requirements is at the discretion of the Principal and should be considered according to the role and time commitment of the volunteer.

All volunteers in Mercy schools are expected to demonstrate the Mercy values of *Compassion, Justice, Respect, Hospitality, Service* and *Courage*.

Purpose

To provide guidelines to Mercy Education governed schools for the engagement and management of volunteers

Definitions

Volunteer: A person who willingly gives their time for the common good without financial gain.

Employee: an individual working in a school environment or school boarding environment who is:

- Directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- Contracted service provider (whether a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; or
- A minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school (ref Clergy)

Coverage

These Operational Instructions apply to volunteers at all Mercy Education governed schools.

Instructions

01 Recruitment

It is essential to establish the suitability and integrity of persons volunteering within Mercy Education schools. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people must be the key focus in the selection, recruitment, induction and management of volunteers. Recruitment requirements (listed below) will vary according to the level and duration of the role are at the

discretion of the Principal. The recruitment of volunteers should incorporate the following:

- Selection/screening process documentation
- Interview (where practicable)
- Relevant qualifications and experience (if necessary)
- Working With Children Check (as per State legislation and school policies)
- National Police Check (if relevant to the role)
- Role description or list of tasks (as applicable)
- Personal details of each volunteer, including emergency contact information (advisable)

Additional information may be required for activities such as camps, excursions, overseas trips and homestay situations. For individuals involved with associated entities, there may be further declarations. The school should ensure that the recruitment, screening, induction and recording of volunteer information is the responsibility of a nominated staff member at the school for the particular event or activity. It is expected that volunteers will be supervised by existing employees at the school.

02 Induction and Training

An induction and training programme must be provided for all volunteers so that they can perform the required tasks safely and to the best of their ability. Induction and training must be customised according to the role and managed accordingly but should include:

- Mercy Education *Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers*
- Mercy Education *Policy 1.07 Privacy*
- Mercy Education *Policy 6.09 Child Safety and Wellbeing*
- Mercy Education *Policy 1.15 Cybersecurity* (as required)
- Safeguarding Essentials training (SALT Learning Platform) as required
- Mercy Education values and School values (as applicable)
- Health and Safety (OHS/WHS) training including emergency management procedures
- Overview and acceptance of relevant school policies and procedures (as required)
- Any skills or procedures required to perform the required role

03 Attendance

Volunteers will vary in the time that they have available to assist in the various roles offered. The school should ensure that there are:

- Records of attendance and training (if applicable)
- Identification to be worn whilst on school grounds (e.g. lanyard with ID badge or hi-vis vest)
- Instructions on areas of the school campus(es) that are not accessible to volunteers
- Protocols for travel (e.g. if assisting on an excursion, overnight stay, or overseas trip)

04 Workplace Health and Safety

The health and safety of volunteers is a key consideration when engaging and managing volunteers on school property. The potential hazards of each task should be outlined clearly for each volunteer as well as how to respond in the event of an incident, accident, or emergency. Volunteers should be made aware of:

- Referral personnel
- Record keeping for incidents, accidents and near misses
- Risk assessments for duties and activities
- Dress code or uniform/PPE requirements
- Supervision and reporting arrangements
- Emergency exits and designated safe zones
- Any applicable safe work statements

05 Privacy and Confidentiality

Volunteers are to be assured of privacy and confidentiality in all aspects of their role at the school. This includes:

- optimum levels of confidentiality and security of the information collected, accessed, used, or disclosed by the school
- adherence by all parties to the Mercy Education Policy *1.07 Privacy*
- permission regarding the use of volunteer images in school social media posts and publications

In the event that a volunteer is privy to confidential, school information, they will abide by the requirements of Mercy Education Policy *1.07 Privacy*

06 Reimbursement of costs

Schools will reimburse volunteers for any related purchases necessary to their role when approved in advance and receipts are provided (e.g. travel costs).

07 Insurance

The school will ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place to protect volunteers

08 Acknowledgement of volunteers

It is important to acknowledge the contribution of volunteers. Schools will have different ways of showing their appreciation.

09 Fee Discount

Some schools have arrangements in place where a fee discount is offered in exchange for contributing a minimum number of volunteer hours. This arrangement requires a written agreement between the family and the school and must be approved by the Principal. Records should be kept for audit verification and tax implications.

Related Documents:

Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA)

- *Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers Catholic Schools*

Legislation, Regulatory Authorities and Source Entities

- *Child Protection Council SA - Child Safeguarding Policy*
- *Creating Child Safe Organisations through recruitment and staff management (Dept of Communities WA)*
- *Federation of Catholic Schools Parent Communities (SA)*
- *Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools*
- *Australian Catholic Safeguarding Limited (ACSL): National Catholic Safeguarding Standards*
- *Work, Health and Safety Act (WA) 2020*
- *Work, Health and Safety Act (SA) 2012*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act (Vic) 2004*

Mercy Education Ltd (MEL)

- *1.10a Code of Conduct Employees and Volunteers*
- *1.10b Parent Code of Conduct*
- *1.07 Policy: Privacy*
- *1.15 Policy Cybersecurity*
- *5.01 Overseas Tours*
- *5.04A Policy: Workplace Health & Safety*
- *6.09 Policy: Child Safety and Wellbeing*
- *1.03 Associated Entities*

Mercy Education Schools

- *Relevant school policies*

Review History:

Version	Date Released	Next Review	Author	Approved
1.0	July 2021	June 2024	Head of People and Culture	MEL Executive
2.0	September 2024	September 2027	Head of People and Culture	MEL Executive