

## VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Principal, Stewart Milner.

### CONTEXT

The Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES) is a co-educational, specific purpose, senior secondary school where high-achieving and high-ability (HA) students can extend their learning. CHES offers face to face learning at a state-of-the-art facility in South Yarra and hosts a high-quality virtual platform to enable students to access programs at CHES regardless of where they are located.

Students engage with CHES programs in the following ways:

- direct enrolment of students into select VCE subjects onsite and virtually, including access to Student Enrichment Programs - providing mentoring, workshops, and seminars
- direct enrolment of Higher Education Studies (HES) delivered by partner Universities, including access to Student Enrichment Programs - providing mentoring, workshops, and seminars

Students participating in CHES programs remain enrolled at their chosen secondary school (base school) and are supported to undertake a course at CHES as part of their VCE program. Working in close partnership with students' base schools, students will be enrolled in a CHES course for a fraction of their timetable (generally 20 per cent), with the remainder of their enrolment and timetable reflecting the subjects being completed at their base school.

CHES shares a joint responsibility with students' base schools to ensure students' social and emotional wellbeing, and also partners with Universities and base schools to ensure students' academic needs are met.

Individual student study arrangements are considered and agreed between the student, parent/carer, base school, and CHES upon enrolment and induction. To formalise individual student study arrangements CHES develop an Individualised Achievement Plan (IAP) which will include:

- study arrangements (CHES program and delivery mode - face to face, virtual, or combination)
- timetable requirements
- travel arrangements (if applicable)
- agreed communication methods between base-school and CHES (who, what, when and how)
- agreed communication methods between partner Universities and CHES (who, what, when and how)
- reasonable adjustments (if required)

- student health care needs including asthma management, administration of medication and individual anaphylaxis management

All CHES policies are designed to reflect its unique operating environment (physical and virtual), its program offerings, its partnerships with universities and shared responsibility with students' base schools to ensure students' social and emotional wellbeing and academic needs are met.

CHES has a network of foundation schools and allows the member schools to deliver their own VCE classes within the CHES facility where not fully utilised for CHES programs. This policy does not consider CHES foundation school arrangements.

CHES has a Volunteers Policy for the campus to ensure that a safe and secure learning and teaching environment is provided for all students and staff.

## PURPOSE

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

## SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at CHES.

CHES has a network of foundation schools and allows the member schools to deliver their own VCE classes within the CHES facility where not fully utilised for CHES programs. This policy does not consider CHES foundation school arrangements. In addition, this policy does not consider the arrangements that base schools and universities may have in place to manage volunteers to their own premises.

## 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, stepparent, 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
- 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 (i.e., indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

## **POLICY**

CHES is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. CHES also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our new school community and the work that we do to promote excellence in teaching and learning for high-achieving and high-ability students across Victoria.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that CHES's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

### **Becoming a volunteer**

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the Principal, Stewart Milner.

### **COVID-19 vaccination information**

Under the directions issued by the Victorian Chief Health Officer, visitors attending school to work are required to be vaccinated or provide evidence that they are medically exempted. CHES is required to collect, record and hold vaccination information from relevant visitors to ensure they meet these requirements.

Department policy also requires us to ensure parents and carers and other adult visitors are vaccinated or medically exempted before entering school buildings and when attending outdoor gatherings and events.

For further information on this process, refer to our school's COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination – Information Collection and Storage Procedures.

For Department policy on COVID-19 mandatory vaccinations for visitors, including advice on the type of information that schools are required to collect, record and hold, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances**

#### ***Working with students***

CHES values the many volunteers that assist in and support our learning showcases, and other CHES events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, CHES 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 as per the [Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools](#) and the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) – [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#) in

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that CHES is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the Business Manager for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions, camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/community School Council members** sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, CHES 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.

### ***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. For example, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, and fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which students will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, CHES reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

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.

### **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, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's 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 CHES.

CHES 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 CHES's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Our school has a Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures which all staff and volunteers should be aware of. All volunteers will be provided with a description of their role.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

## **Compensation**

### *Personal injury*

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.

### *Property damage*

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

### *Public liability insurance*

The Department of Education and Training'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.

## **Pandemic**

During a pandemic, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, government schools are required to comply with the Department's School Operations Guide applicable to that specific pandemic. This includes student participation in programs through partner universities.

The Department updates the School Operations Guide as required during a pandemic based on advice from the Department of Health. The School Operations Guide covers procedures for management of visitors and volunteers on school sites.

The current School Operations Guide includes a COVIDSafe Plan for Schools that ensures schools remain safe environments. The link to the current Operations Guide is [available on the Department's intranet](#).

## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- included in staff induction processes, available publicly on our school's website
- included in transition and enrolment packs
- included as annual reference in school newsletter

- made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

## RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)
- [DET Operations Guide](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Reporting and Responding Policy
- Child Safe Risk Assessment
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	January 2022
Consultation	Consultation with staff, students and school council to take place in 2023 after operations commence
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2024 - to ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3-4 years thereafter.