

PARTICIPATION OF VOLUNTEERS, STUDENTS AND CONTRACTORS

QUALITY AREA 4 – STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

PURPOSE

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

POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sparkways 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 the service
- engaging contractors to help ensure buildings, grounds, facilities and resources are fit for purpose and maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the service through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers, students and contractors

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, contractors, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Sparkways, 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	Volunteers, students and contractors
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing guidelines for accepting applications from volunteers and students to work at the service 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 the service at the time, in consultation with the nominated supervisor	√	√			
Obtaining a valid WWC Check (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and providing details to the service prior to commencement Note: Regular contractors who attend whilst children are present are required to hold a current working with children check. Contractors who attend outside of service hours, or who attend for occasional or emergency works, are strongly recommended to hold a current working with children check, however it is not mandatory. Contractors must sign-in and record their details using the specific contractor sign-in QR code at each service.					√
Checking the status of the Working with Children (WWC) Clearance (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) of volunteers, students and contractors where required, and for volunteers and students, ensuring that the WWCC 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 the service (<i>Regulations 145, 149(1)</i>)	R	√			
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 work under direct supervision of service staff at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected. NOTE: Volunteers and parents/guardians must not provide any toileting/bathroom/changeroom assistance to any child but their own.	R	√	√		
Ensuring that contractors working within the vicinity of children are under the direct supervision of staff at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected.	R	√	√		
Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.				√	√
Ensuring volunteers, students and contractors at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription	R	√	√	√	√

medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children (<i>Regulation 83</i>) or to undertake their work (<i>refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy</i>)					
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</i> and <i>Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185)</i>	R	√			
Ensuring that volunteers, students, contractors and parents/guardians comply with the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i> and all relevant service policies and procedures (<i>Regulations 170</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Complying with the requirements of the <i>Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011</i> , <i>Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185)</i> and with all service policies and procedures, including the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> , <i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i> , <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> while attending the service				√	√
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 the services <i>Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy</i> (<i>Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171</i>)	R	√	√		
Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services emergency and evacuation procedures (<i>Regulations 97, 168 (2)(e)</i>)	R	√	√		
Developing an induction checklist for volunteers and students attending the service (<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. Note: Contractors will complete a specific induction through the Facilities Manager	R	√	√		√
Developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service	√	√			



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

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

Sparkways 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*).

Sparkways 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 the service (*refer to Code of Conduct Policy*).

The role that volunteers and students 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. The service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers and students 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 must 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 the service, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children Check (WWCC) (*refer to Definitions*).

NOTE: Parent Helpers who attend the service infrequently (i.e. once or twice per term at most) to support their own child’s group (*refer to Definitions*) are strongly encouraged to hold a current Working with Children Check, however it is not mandatory.

In line with Child Safe Standards 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.

Sparkways values the role of Contractors in helping to ensure buildings, grounds, facilities and resources are fit for purpose and maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements. Sparkways will work cooperatively with councils and contractors to enable the completion of works, whilst ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

Contractors who attend the service on a regular basis whilst children are present must be in possession of a current Working with Children Check.

NOTE: Contractors who attend outside of service hours, or who attend for occasional or emergency works, are strongly recommended to hold a current Working with Children Check, however it is not mandatory.

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)
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
Worker Screening Regulation 2021 (Vic)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the Sparkways policy catalogue.

Child-related work: In relation to the WWC Check (*refer to Definitions*), 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 the service. 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.

Contractor: A person or business that undertakes work for or provides services to another person or business, they are not employed by that person or business. **Note:** A Working with Children Check is mandatory for contractors who attend a service on a regular basis whilst children are present, and strongly encouraged for contractors who attend outside of service hours or for occasional or emergency works.

Parent Helper: A parent or guardian who provides unpaid support to their child's group on an infrequent basis, e.g. once or twice per term at most. **Note:** A Working with Children Check is strongly encouraged for Parent Helpers.

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 parent/guardian, family or community member who provides unpaid support to the service on a regular basis, generally with a set schedule and routine. These activities may include child-related work (*refer to Definitions*), administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food. **Note:** A Working with Children Check is mandatory for volunteers.



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.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Working with Children Check unit, Department of Justice & Regulation – provides details of how to obtain a WWC Check: www.service.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

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



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
- seek feedback from people 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 the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant 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
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AUTHORISATION

This policy was confirmed by Sparkways on 04/09/2023

REVIEW DUE: September 2024

ATTACHMENT 1

SAMPLE INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

Name: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by all volunteers and students participating at Sparkways and returned to the nominated supervisor prior to commencing at the service.

Volunteer/Student	Please tick
I have been given access to all the policies and procedures of Sparkways, [Delete if not applicable]	
I understand the content of service policies and procedures, including those relating to:	
• conduct while at the service (<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 the service (<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 Policy and Administration of Medication Policy</i>)	
• good hygiene practices (<i>Hygiene Policy 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 the service (<i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, Compliments and Complaints 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>)	
• child safety and wellbeing and child protection including how to respond to concerns (<i>Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	

Volunteer/Student	Please tick
<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 the service 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: _____