

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 DECD educational programs, government children's centres, preschools and schools (including out of school hours care and vacation care services) and Families SA.

Table 1 - Document details

Publication date	3 November 2016
File number	DECD10/8594
Related legislation	Children's Protection Act 1993 Children's Protection Regulation 2010 Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) 1992 Education Regulations 2012 Equal Opportunity Act 1984 Family and Community Services Act 1972 Information Privacy Principles 2013 Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) Public Sector Act 2009 Volunteer Protection Act 2001 Work Health and Safety Act 2012
Related policies, procedures, guidelines, standards, frameworks and training	Child protection in schools, early childhood education and care services policy Child-safe environments (CSE) Child-safe environments: principles of good practice National standards for involving volunteers Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people: guidelines for staff working and volunteering in education and care settings Public sector code of ethics Record management policy Responding to abuse and neglect – education and care (RAN-EC) Screening and suitability – child safety policy Screening and suitability – child safety procedure Volunteer coordinator – manual of practice (Families SA, 2014) Work health, safety and injury management policy

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Policy officer (phone)	8226 3795
Policy sponsor (position)	Engagement and Wellbeing, Office for Education and Early Childhood
Executive director responsible (position and office)	Executive Director, State-wide Services and Child Development, Office for Education and Early Childhood
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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.

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1. Title

Volunteer policy

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the Department for Education and Child Development's (DECD) commitment to making sure its volunteers are encouraged and supported and their contribution is acknowledged and valued. It also sets out the requirements for recruitment, induction and management of volunteers to comply with relevant legislative and policy obligations.

3. Scope

This policy applies to volunteers working in DECD (including those who volunteer online, e.g. 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 in education and care sites whose volunteering directly involves their own child
- volunteers working for Families SA
- 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 work with children and young people in connection with public education and care and Families SA act and are managed in a manner consistent with this policy.

Site leaders must make sure volunteers whose organisations have a formal Agreement such as a memorandum of understanding or a deed with the Minister are bound by the terms of that formal agreement and as such must abide by the relevant provisions relating to screening, training and induction. These formal agreements may also specifically identify those DECD policies and procedures for which the organisation is bound.

Education and care site leaders should refer to the [Non-DECD service providers procedure](#) for any volunteers that work in programs funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Medicare or mental health services.

3.2 Out of scope

The following are not in scope of this policy:

3.2.1 Governing councils, school councils and/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 www.decd.sa.gov.au/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.

Education and care staff should refer to the [DECD workplace learning procedure](#) for further information about people 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 landmark cross-sector volunteering strategies supporting the development of volunteerism 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 enrich the lives of children and young people in public education, child development and care.

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 make sure of 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](#).

To encourage volunteer participation and to make sure the benefits of volunteering are enhanced, 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 and consistent with anti-discrimination to make sure equal opportunity for all
- are provided with 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](#) internet page for further 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 are to advise the site leader immediately.

4.2.2 Preparation and training

If working in education and care sites and settings, 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.

If working in Families SA sites and settings, site leaders must make sure volunteers:

- meet expected requirements as per the [volunteer coordinator – manual of practice](#) including being provided with child safe environments: reporting child abuse and neglect training and completing the volunteer orientation training.

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
- the necessary information to make sure they are aware of and understand their obligations to maintain confidentiality and to act in a manner consistent with the [public sector code of ethics](#)
- 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 undertake any necessary training in order to operate in a manner that will not place at risk the safety of themselves or any other person. The principles and practices as prescribed in the [Work Health and Safety Act 2012](#) are applicable for volunteers.

4.2.3 Management

Site leaders must make sure volunteers:

- in education and care are allocated an identified volunteer contact person / liaison officer at the site or within the volunteer program
- in Families SA are allocated a volunteer coordinator
- are given safe, meaningful work in a well-managed workplace
- receive the level of supervision required for them to undertake 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.

4.2.4 Record keeping

Site leaders must keep records for volunteers, including:

- their contact details
- any emergency contacts details
- screening outcome
- induction/orientation and training dates including the date of their Responding to abuse and neglect – education and care induction (in education and care sites) or their child safe environments: reporting child abuse and neglect training and volunteer orientation training (in Families SA)
- volunteers' roles
- dates and times of volunteering
- names of the children they work with
- the name of the staff member that the volunteer reports to.

Records must be kept in accordance with the [record management policy](#). Volunteer personal information should be securely stored and not misused.

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 4.4). Site leaders need to record:

- numbers of volunteers registered at the site each year
- summary of tasks undertaken by volunteers registered at the site each year
- the impact volunteering activities have had on children and young people.

This should be communicated to appropriate bodies as required such as governing council, the Minister for Education and Child Development, employees and volunteers, DECD executive, or through the DECD annual reporting requirements.

4.2.5 Guiding the work of volunteers

To guide their work with volunteers, staff need to refer to the department's intranet sites:

- [Volunteer requirements for education and care sites and settings](#) (for education and care staff)
- [Recruiting families SA volunteers](#) (for Families SA staff)

These intranet sites provide resources to assist in ensuring 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 or deregister 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 (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 (not stand-alone preschools) and schools).

4.3 Volunteer activities

Volunteers participate in 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 participate in education and care sites include student mentoring, participating in fundraising committees, helping in the school canteen, providing education support, coaching sports teams and helping on excursions.

In Families SA volunteers participate in roles such as transporting children to appointments and providing individual or group support helping with homework or other activities like craft or music.

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 undertake.

Volunteers are not to 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 to record the number of volunteers engaged and the tasks they perform at the site each calendar year. Complying with the record keeping arrangements outlined in 4.2.4 will ensure this obligation is met.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Table 3 – Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Nominated site leader (in education and care sites only)	The person responsible for providing advice and support to volunteers in education and care about any child protection or wellbeing concerns. The nominated site leader is a department employee in a leadership position at the education and care 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 are implemented. Site leaders can delegate some of the responsibilities to other members of their leadership team.
Volunteer contact person or liaison officer (in education and care sites)	A suitably qualified DECD staff member selected by the site leader to assist them to coordinate, involve, recognise and reward volunteers in education and care sites. They are the key contact person for the volunteers at the site.
Volunteer coordinator (in Families SA)	A suitably qualified DECD child protection employee whose role it is to recruit, screen, train, select, place and supervise volunteers who work with Families SA sites and settings.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The policy will be reviewed by DECD policy officers from the following units every 3 years or as required:

- Education and Care: Student Engagement unit, Office for Education and Early Childhood are responsible for the monitoring of this policy.
- Families SA: Statewide Service, Policy and Reporting directorate.

7. Definitions and abbreviations

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

Table 4 - Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Sites and settings	A DECD location or service including education and early childhood sites and settings, out of school hours care facilities, vacation care, metropolitan or country offices, corporate office or hubs.
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 executive directors, education directors, directors, principals, pre-school directors and managers from Families SA.
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. This confidence may be established through consideration of curriculum vitae, character references, interview, work observations, family observation, testimonials, declarations, information sharing protocols, relevant history screening and any other source of permissible information or as prescribed in legislation.
Third party provider	Persons engaged by DECD through an organisation outside of the department.
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.

Term	Meaning
Volunteer	<p>A suitable individual who has been accepted to willingly engage, share their skills and experiences, for no financial gain (other than reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses) and provide regular or irregular ongoing assistance in a DECD site or setting as a 'volunteer'. This may involve direct or indirect contact with children and young people or with their records.</p> <p>Volunteers work in a position designated by the DECD site leader as a volunteer position.</p> <p>They could be a:</p> <p>Education and care volunteer – A volunteer that has been recruited, screened and trained directly by a DECD education and care 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 sport team, a corporate volunteer (when a business provides employees to volunteer at a DECD education and care site or setting during the employees work time).</p> <p>Families SA volunteer – A volunteer that has been recruited, screened and trained directly by a DECD child protection site or setting relevant to the particular role and function they will be performing. For example support for children under Guardianship of the Minister that may include transportation, individual or group support, recreational activities, skills development, promotional activities and life story work.</p> <p>Parent volunteer – a parent whose volunteering with an education and care site or setting directly involves their own child. Refer to relevant history screening webpage for advice regarding requirements for screening of parent volunteers.</p> <p>Third party provider volunteers – 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.</p>
CSE	Child-safe environments
DECD	Department for Education and Child Development
RAN-EC	Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care
SAICORP	South Australian Government Captive Insurance Corporation

8. Supporting documents

- [Child Protection in Schools, Early Childhood Education and Care Services](#)
- [Families SA Volunteer Coordinator – Manual of Practice](#)
- [National Standards for Involving Volunteers](#)
- [Non DECD Service Providers in Preschools, Schools and Educational Programs](#)
- [Screening and Suitability – Child Safety policy](#)
- [Screening and Suitability – Child Safety procedure](#)
- [Work, Health, Safety Policy](#)
- [Injury Management 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](#)
- [Education Act 1972](#)
- [Education Regulations 2012](#)
- [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act, 2011](#)
- [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registrations and Standards Regulations, 2011\)](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standards](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [OSHC Policy](#)
- [Public Sector Code of Ethics](#)
- [Record Management Policy](#)
- [DECD Strategic Plan 2014-2017](#)
- [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](#)