

## Participation of volunteers and students policy/procedure

### Mandatory – Quality area 4

*HDKA promotes a commitment to child safety, wellbeing, participation, empowerment, cultural safety and awareness including children with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and/or communities and children from cultural and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.*

*HDKA has a zero tolerance of child abuse and a duty of care to prevent and manage child abuse risks including physical and online environments.*

### Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at services administered by HDKA while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

### Values

HDKA 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.
- Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the service through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.

### Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of services administered by HDKA.

### Background

Volunteers and students may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time in order to observe and experience the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by HDKA wherever appropriate and possible.

HDKA 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*). HDKA 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, other adults and children at the service (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*).

Volunteers and students can expect:

- A safe and well-managed workplace.
- Meaningful work experience with appropriate direction, supervision and training.
- Recognition for their contribution.

The role that volunteers play in children's 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 children's service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Prior to participation at the service a volunteer (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Check card unless they are under the direct supervision of an educator

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who is over 18 years of age and holds, or is actively working towards an approved diploma-level education and care qualification (Regulation 358) (refer to *Staffing Policy*).

Parents/guardians and family members closely related to children attending the service are exempt from needing a WWC Check. However a service may decide, as a demonstration of duty of care that all parents/guardians who volunteer at the service are required to undergo a WWC Check.

**Note:** HDKA requires members of site advisory committees who hold positions of office which have control over money such as the President, signatories to bank accounts and fundraising members who collect and/or bank money to hold a Police Check. Parents who volunteer at the service in a 'parent helper' role are not required to undertake a WWC Check. They will be under the direct supervision of staff at all times.

*Volunteers who will work with the group on a regular basis to assist staff will be required to undertake a WWC check.*

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement not replace the work of paid staff. Accordingly services should 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 commencing work at the service all volunteers should be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for and interest in the tasks they will be undertaking and to assess whether the volunteer's goals can be achieved. The interview process also provides an opportunity for volunteers to have their questions answered. Reference checks must be undertaken by the Approved Provider or a nominee of the Approved Provider to confirm work abilities or character attributes. Good practice in volunteer management includes acknowledgement and recognition of volunteer contributions and this can involve a mixture of formal and informal recognition strategies.

It is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* that the Approved Provider uses the staff record to document the details of all students and volunteers. The staff record must include the full name, address and date of birth of each student or volunteer who participates at the service. The Approved Provider of a centre-based service must also keep a record for each day on which the student or volunteer participates at the service including the date and the hours of participation. In addition to this it is recommended that students and volunteers undertake an induction to the service and complete an induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1), which should also be stored with the staff record.

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 169*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 123, 145, 149, 157, 355, 358, 360*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements*  
- *Standard 4.1: Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*

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- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*

#### **Definitions**

**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.

**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 person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a children's service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include direct contact with children, administrative tasks or preparing materials or food.

**Working directly with children:** For the purposes of the National Regulations working directly with children is defined as being physically present with children and directly engaged in providing them with education and/or care.

**Working with Children (WWC) Check:** The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work in Victoria and is a measure to help protect children from harm arising as a result of physical or sexual abuse. The Department of Justice assesses a person's suitability to work with children by examining relevant serious sexual, physical and drug offences in a person's national criminal history and where appropriate their professional history. A WWC Check card, notice or document (valid for five years) is granted to a person under working with children legislation if:

- They have been assessed as suitable to work with children.
- There has been no information that if the person worked with children they would pose a risk to those children.
- They are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

#### **Sources**

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority ([ACECQA](#)):
- [National Quality Framework](#)
- [Working with Children Check](#) Unit, Department of Justice, Victoria:

#### **Service policies**

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Determining Responsible Person Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

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#### Procedures

##### **The Approved Provider (HDKA) is responsible for:**

- Developing guidelines in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators for accepting applications from volunteers and students to work at the service.
- Accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor.
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to Supervision of Children Policy).
- Ensuring that where required the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read or sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service.
- Ensuring that the staff record contains information for all volunteers and students attending the service with details of name, address, date of birth, days and hours of participation and details of the Working with Children (WWC) Check (Regulations 145, 147, 149).
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians are adequately supervised at all times and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected.
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.
- Ensuring that parents or guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the law (Regulation 157).
- Developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents or guardians at the service.
- Providing volunteers and students, parents or guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians comply with the National regulations and all service policies and procedures including the *Code of Conduct Policy* while attending the service.
- Developing an induction checklist for volunteers and students attending the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students) in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators.

##### **The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- Assisting the Approved Provider to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to work at the service.
- Assisting the Approved Provider with decisions in relation to accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time.
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Ensuring that where required the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read or sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service and that details are included on the staff record.
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians are adequately supervised at all times and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected.
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.
- Ensuring that parents or guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service

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premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the law (Regulation 157).

- Ensuring strategies are in place to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents or guardians at the service.
- Providing volunteers and students, parents or guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures including the *Code of Conduct Policy* while attending the service
- Assisting the Approved Provider to develop an induction checklist for volunteers and students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students).
- Ensuring that volunteers and students have completed the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1) and have been provided with a copy of the staff handbook if applicable.

#### **Certified Supervisors are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that where required the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read or sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service.

#### **Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:**

- Assisting the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to work at the service.
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*).
- Providing volunteers and students, parents or guardians with access to all service policies and procedures and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.
- Ensuring that volunteers and students, parents or guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures including the *Code of Conduct Policy* while attending the service.
- Complying with the requirement that volunteers and students, parents or guardians are adequately supervised at all times and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected.
- Complying with the requirement that volunteers and students, parents or guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.
- Enabling parents or guardians of children attending the service to access the service premises at any time the child is being educated and cared for except where this poses a risk to the safety of children or staff.
- Encouraging the participation and involvement of parents or guardians at the service.
- Assisting the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop an induction checklist for volunteers and students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers and students).
- Assisting volunteers and students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service.

#### **Volunteers and students while at the service are responsible for:**

- Ensuring they have provided all details required to complete the staff record.
- Undertaking a Working with Children (WWC) Check and presenting a current WWC Check card or other notification as applicable.
- Understanding and acknowledging the requirement for confidentiality of all information

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relating to educators and families within the service (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

- Complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures including the *Code of Conduct Policy* while at the service.
- Undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1) prior to commencement at the service.
- Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

#### Parents or guardians are responsible for:

- Complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures including the *Code of Conduct Policy* while attending the service.
- Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

#### Attachments

- Attachment 1: Sample induction checklist for volunteers and students.

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**Attachment 1 - Sample induction checklist for volunteers and students**

**Name** (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

To be completed by all volunteers and students participating at services administered by HDKA and returned to the Nominated Supervisor prior to commencing at the service.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have been given access to a copy of all the policies and procedures of HDKA
I understand the content of service policies and procedures including those relating to:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct while at the service ( <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency evacuation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency, evacuation, fire and safety, including locations of fire extinguishers and emergency exits ( <i>Emergency and Evacuation Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accidents at the service ( <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dealing with medical conditions ( <i>Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Diabetes Policy, Epilepsy Policy and Administration of Medication Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Good hygiene practices ( <i>Hygiene Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dealing with infectious diseases ( <i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	First aid arrangements for children and adults, including the location of the nearest first aid kit ( <i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily routines
<input type="checkbox"/>	The importance of OHS and following safe work practices ( <i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Interacting appropriately with children ( <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reporting of serious incidents and notifiable incidents at the service ( <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy, Complaints and Grievances Policy and Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reporting hazards in the workplace ( <i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Handling complaints and grievances ( <i>Complaints and Grievances Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child protection ( <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Privacy and confidentiality of information ( <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am aware of the non-smoking policy of the service
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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
<input type="checkbox"/>	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 signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominated supervisor name** (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominated supervisor signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_