

PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS POLICY

1. POLICY DETAILS

Classification:	Mandatory		
Quality Area:	4 – Staffing Arrangements		
Policy Owner:	President	Contact:	com.rscce@gmail.com

2. PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc., while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 VALUES

Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. 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 and parents/guardians 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.

3.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to the Committee of Management, Director, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc..

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Committee of Management, Director, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

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.

Parent: A person who is a parent or guardian of a child currently part of the educational program.

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.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- developing guidelines in consultation with the Director and educators for accepting applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer/student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the Director
- 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/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service
- ensuring that the staff record contains information for all volunteers/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/students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that parents/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 Committee of Management, Director or educators under the law (Regulation 157)
- developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- providing volunteers/students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/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/students attending the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Induction checklist for volunteers/students) in consultation with the Director and educators.

5.2 THE DIRECTOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- assisting the Committee of Management to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- assisting the Committee of Management with decisions in relation to accepting/rejecting a potential volunteer/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/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service, and that details are included on the staff record
- ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that parents/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 Committee of Management, Director or educators under the law (Regulation 157)
- ensuring strategies are in place to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service, including managing the Parent Participation Program (refer to Attachment 2 – Parent Participation Program)
- providing volunteers/students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- assisting the Committee of Management to develop an induction checklist for volunteers/students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Induction checklist for volunteers/students)
- ensuring that volunteers/students have completed the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1) and have been provided with a copy of the staff handbook, if applicable.

5.3 CERTIFIED SUPERVISORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

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

5.4 CERTIFIED SUPERVISORS AND OTHER EDUCATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- assisting the Committee of Management and Director to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/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/students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/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/students and parents/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/students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that parents/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 Committee of Management, Director or educators under the law (Regulation 157)

- encouraging the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- assisting the Committee of Management and Director to develop an induction checklist for volunteers/students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Induction checklist for volunteers/students)
- assisting volunteers/students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service.

5.5 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 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.

5.6 PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.
- 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
- completing the required participation hours during the calendar year.
- paying the participation payment at the end of the calendar year if they have not completed the 12 participation hours

6. EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Committee of Management will:

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students and volunteers are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor feedback from parents in relation to levels of parent participation and barriers to parents meeting the required participation levels
- 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
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Induction checklist for volunteers/students
- Attachment 2: Parent Participation Program
- Attachment 3: Parent Participation Skills Form

8. AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Committee of Management of Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. on 19 September 2017

Review date: 30 April 2019

APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

1. 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 Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. wherever appropriate and possible.

Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. 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. Part of the *Early Years Learning Framework* state that in genuine partnerships families and educators value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making. Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. 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*).

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 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.

Volunteers should only be engaged to compliment, 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 Committee of Management or a nominee of the Committee of Management, 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 Committee of Management 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 Committee of Management 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.

2. 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)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

3. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

3.1 Sources

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au
- National *Early Years Learning Framework*: <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- Working with Children Check Unit, Department of Justice, Victoria: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren/

3.2 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*

ATTACHMENT 1: INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEERS/STUDENTS

Name: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by all volunteers/students participating at Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. and returned to the Director prior to commencing at the service.

	Please tick
I have been given access to all the policies and procedures of Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc.	
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 Policy, Diabetes Policy, Epilepsy Policy and Administration of Medication Policy</i>)	
• good hygiene practices (<i>Hygiene 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, Complaints and Grievances 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>Complaints and Grievances Policy</i>)	
• child protection (<i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i>)	
• privacy and confidentiality of information (<i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	

	Please tick
I am aware of the non-smoking policy of the service	
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/student name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 2: PARENT PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Each family is required to contribute a predetermined number of participation hours to the centre each year. This may be completed through a combination of:

- Completion of tasks advertised via email or on the notice board in the foyer of the centre
- Attendance at one or more working bees
- Undertaking tasks as assigned by the Director or the Committee of Management
- Membership of the Management Committee
- Pre-approved donations to the centre

The participation of parents/guardians is encouraged by Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc. and can help to keep costs more affordable. Each family is required to contribute **a minimum of 9 hours of time to the Centre during the year.**

We recognise that not all families are able to assist at the service. Therefore a participation payment has been introduced by the service and replaces voluntary labour with a payment where that is a family's preference. The annual participation payment is \$180 per family.

If a family does not meet the hourly participation requirements for the year, they must make the full payment to keep their child(ren)'s place(s) at the centre. This payment will be due at the start of December each year. The parent participation payment is not intended to be a barrier, and families experiencing difficulties should discuss this with Raleigh Street (Thornbury) Child Care Centre Inc.

Families using the Centre for less than a year will be required to contribute on a pro rata basis. For example, if you are at the Centre from May to December, your participation rate will be 8/12^{ths} of the full rate, to cover the eight months of the year where your family uses the Centre.

Participation payments shall be used to pay for services that would otherwise have been conducted by parent participation, e.g. maintenance, gardening, repairs to books and toys.

Every effort will be made to encourage parent participation and to assist families to avoid having to make a participation payment if that is their preferred form of contribution to the program. Parents are encouraged to contact the Director if they feel they will have a problem meeting the required participation level and/or participation payment.

Examples of Tasks and Hours

The following table provides some examples of the participation tasks which may be able to be undertaken as part of the Parent Participation Program. The "Suggested Hours Credit" in the table is a suggestion only and would need to be confirmed with the Director before undertaking the task.

Note that tasks can be added or changed at any time during the year.

Task	Suggested Hours Credit
Member of Committee of Management and attending at least 6 Committee Meetings	9 hours
Member of a Sub-Committee	Hours will be determined depending on tasks worked on and time taken.
Attendance for 3 hours at a working bee	3 hours
Helping at a fundraising activity (e.g. Sausage Sizzle).	Hours will be determined depending on tasks worked on and time taken.

Sweeping Driveway and outside entrance weekly for 1 month	1 hour
Planning and executing an activity in the children's program (e.g. cooking, music, craft)	1-3 hours depending on time and activity
Covering books	Depending on amount and time taken
Repair/Cleaning of toys / books/sewing	Depending on amount and time taken
Updating a Centre Policy or writing a new Centre Policy or proof reading	2-12 hours depending on complexity and time taken

ATTACHMENT 3: PARENT PARTICIPATION SKILL FORM

Please return this form by XXXX date

I have read and understand the parent participation requirements for Raleigh Street Child Care Centre for <insert current year> .

Parent 1 Full Name: _____ Parent 2 Full Name: _____

Child/ren: _____

Signed: _____

Please list any skills you have that might help you fulfil your parent participation (both professional and non-professional) eg: teaching languages, websites, music, dancing, IT, handyman, design, sewing, painting, gardening, sourcing supplies, writing, HR, event organising, legal, Policy writing, catering, administration etc.

Parent 1: __ Occupation (optional)

Parent 2: __ Occupation (optional)

Are you happy to hear from us if these skills are required in the centre.

Contact Name:

Contact Number:

Email: