Volunteers

A volunteer is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work, without payment or reward. This is a broad definition and means that a volunteer can participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions. Activities volunteers can participate in can include reading and numeracy support, assisting with excursions, working bees, the school canteen, acting as mentors, or assisting with sport and music groups.

Volunteers can therefore make valuable contributions to schools.

Guidelines for State Agency Management of Volunteer Activity

Recognising that volunteering is an integral part of Tasmanian society, and has significant benefits to both the community and individuals, the Department of Premier and Cabinet has developed Guidelines for State Agency Management of Volunteer Activity (external link).

These Guidelines apply to volunteers in the Department of Education.

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People

Volunteers must meet legal requirements to work with children and therefore obtain Registration to Work with Vulnerable People prior to commencing volunteering.

The process for registration is found at http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children.

Schools must assess and verify the suitability of volunteers, including that volunteers provide evidence of their suitability.

Principals should maintain a register of all volunteers in their school and to ask volunteers to sign in and out on each visit.

Relationship between the Department of Education and Volunteers

Unlike paid employees, volunteers are not covered by the State Service Act 2000, the State Service Employment Directions, Ministerial Directions or workplace awards and agreements.

Volunteers are not considered to be workers under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 and therefore cannot make a claim for workers compensation.

While they are not employees, volunteers are subject to Work Health and Safety provisions. A volunteer must take reasonable care for their own (and other peoples’) health and safety which includes complying with instructions relating to workplace health and safety, policies and procedures of the Department. The Department must ensure the health and safety of volunteers which includes consulting with volunteers on workplace health and safety matters and providing volunteers with necessary information, training and supervision.

While they are not employees, there are certain conditions applicable to volunteers that are similar to those which apply to employees. For example, a volunteer must comply with all reasonable requests or directions made by an employee with the authority to make those requests or directions. Similarly, they must use departmental resources appropriately and respect the confidentiality of any information gained during the course of their volunteer work.
Volunteers must be given adequate instruction in the work to be performed to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with accepted practice and standards. Similarly, the Department must be satisfied that the volunteer is seemingly capable of undertaking the duties, that adequate supervision is provided and that the work environment is safe.

**Duty of Care by Volunteers**

When a volunteer supervises a student group, the school still owes a duty of care to those students. Volunteers will also owe a duty of care where they take charge of a school activity (e.g. refereeing a game, coaching a school sports team), as they will have assumed responsibility for student safety. Please refer to the [Legal Issues Handbook](#) for further clarification.

**Insurance**

The insurable risks of Tasmanian Government agencies are covered by the Tasmanian Risk Management Fund (TRMF); the State Government’s self-insurance arrangement. This includes the provision of cover to, or in respect of, authorised agency volunteers providing assistance to government agencies.

The Department of Treasury and Finance has produced a brochure that provides further information regarding the extent of cover provided to volunteers. See [http://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Documents/TRMF-Cover-For-Volunteers-brochure.pdf](http://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Documents/TRMF-Cover-For-Volunteers-brochure.pdf)


**Other**

Volunteer workers must not be engaged for the purpose of reducing salary costs. In some cases, however, it is possible for the volunteer to receive reimbursement for such things as minor travel costs, without invalidating their volunteer status.

When a volunteer is under the age of 18 the consent of their parent or guardian must be obtained.

Please refer to the [delegations](#) [Staff only] for the authorities relating to approving school based and non-school based volunteer workers.

**Contact details**

For further information or assistance in relation to the above, please contact the Regional HR Coordinator in the relevant Learning Services.

**Related Documents**

The following documents are available from [www.education.tas.gov.au](http://www.education.tas.gov.au)

- [HR Delegations](#) [staff access only]
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