**Volunteer Policy**

Volunteers do many roles that support the work of department staff to make sure children and young people are cared for in a safe and positive environment. Some of the roles volunteers do include student mentoring, taking part in fundraising committees, providing education support, coaching sports teams and helping on excursions.

**Benefits of volunteering**

Volunteers play an integral part in supporting the work of the department and enriching the lives of children and young people in public education and child development.

Benefits of volunteers include that they:

* provide education and early childhood services 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.

**Requirements for volunteers**

The following requirements apply when engaging volunteers in education and early childhood services. These requirements support volunteer participation and aim to ensure 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](http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/policy-and-best-practise/national-standards-and-supporting-material) and the [guideline of the commissioner for public sector employment – volunteers (PDF 550KB)](https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/20200124-Guideline-Volunteers-2.pdf).

Volunteers must:

* Complete the volunteers online course, [RAN-EC training for volunteers](https://www.plink.sa.edu.au/pages/signup.jsf) (login required) takes about 90 minutes and includes assessments. Leaders must make sure volunteers can access the online session and resources on plink.
* All volunteers must complete the department’s online volunteer induction. The induction is on the [volunteer section of plink](https://www.plink.sa.edu.au/pages/signup.jsf) (login required).

The induction outlines important aspects of the volunteer’s role including their obligations under the Act. It only takes 20 minutes to do and is open to anyone with an email address.

* Applicants to volunteer must apply for a working with children check through the [DHS Screening Unit](https://screening.sa.gov.au/)  online application.

Volunteers will be given:

* clearly written role descriptions – if their role changes during the course of their appointment, the education and early childhood leader must take appropriate steps to make sure the volunteer is suitable and able to perform the new duties
* the information, training and resources necessary to enable them to perform their role effectively without creating risks to themselves or to others
* a volunteer agreement with the information needed to make sure they are aware of and understand their obligations to maintain confidentiality and to act in a manner consistent with the principles of conduct for South Australian public sector volunteers (part of the [guideline of the commissioner for public sector employment – volunteers)](https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/20200124-Guideline-Volunteers-2.pdf)
* an education and early childhood service induction or orientation which includes information about work health and safety requirements relevant to their work.
* the name of a nominated education and early childhood leader who can provide advice and support to them about any child protection or wellbeing concerns.

Volunteers must observe work health and safety requirements and do any training necessary to make sure they will not put their own or anyone else’s safety at risk. The principles and practices in the [Work Health and Safety Act 2012](https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/WORK%20HEALTH%20AND%20SAFETY%20ACT%202012.aspx) are applicable to volunteers.

The education and early childhood 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 from volunteering activities at any time if concerns exist about their suitability to be working with children
* exercise their power under the [Education and Children’s Services Act 2019](https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/EDUCATION%20AND%20CHILDRENS%20SERVICES%20ACT%202019/CURRENT/2019.19.AUTH.PDF) (Division 3, Section 93) to issue a notice (a barring notice) to a volunteer when a volunteer’s behaviour has negatively impacted on the education or early childhood service and its community.

**Contact**

Volunteers

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