



# Volunteer

# Handbook

# Loxton Lutheran School

## VOLUNTEER POLICY

### RATIONALE

We believe that voluntary workers can make a significant contribution to the school community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. We acknowledge that they offer their service of their own free will. They are highly valued and respected members of the school community. Volunteers have a wide range of interests and abilities that complement school programs, thus providing a wider range of positive interactions and experiences for students.

### VOLUNTEER SELECTION PROCEDURES

Volunteers will be assessed for their suitability to work at the school by the Principal or nominee. This assessment will be made in relation to the skills and contributions being offered and after verification of the person's good character.

Volunteers will be required to complete induction training and sign a **Confidential Volunteer Declaration Agreement** before they commence volunteer work. Volunteers may be required to attend an interview, complete induction training and sign both an agreement and confidential declaration form before they commence volunteer work.

Volunteers offering to assist in programs where students are involved will be asked to provide:

- Details of qualifications, experience and other information relevant to the program.
- A current Working with Children's Check (WWCC)
- Willingness to undertake Valuing Safe Communities Training.

The Principal's decision is final in determining who is eligible to work as a volunteer at the school. Any applicant not accepted for volunteer work will be advised in writing.

### SEQUENCE OF STEPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. Make informal contact with the school to ascertain school needs re volunteers.
2. Apply to the school providing background information, referee details and signed confidential declaration.
3. Attend an interview.
4. Sign agreement form.
5. Attend induction training.

### THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO VOLUNTEERS

- A staff member will be allocated to supervise a volunteer in each of the areas in which they work.
- Volunteers will be provided with full induction training that will include:
  - Valuing Safe Communities
  - LEA (Lutheran Education Australia) Code of Ethics (Appendix 2)
  - Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect (Mandatory Notification)
  - Occupational Health Safety & Welfare procedures
  - Confidentiality requirements
  - Training specific to the area of volunteer work
- Volunteers will be matched with work that is suitable to their skills, interests, time commitments and health status.

- Changes to a volunteer's area of work or time commitment will be made with full consultation.
- Supervising teachers will be available to discuss volunteers' concerns as they arise.

## **VOLUNTEER'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

The volunteer's most important responsibility relates to their duty of care to children. Students are a vulnerable group generally, due to their age and lack of experience. Their vulnerability increases if they are very young, if they have an intellectual or physical disability, if they are newly arrived in Australia with English as a second language or if they experience emotional or physical neglect.

For volunteers, respecting the rights of children means they **must not**:

- be involved in toileting students or assisting with changerooms/sickrooms
- have unsupervised contact with students during break times
- encourage affection from or dependency in students (eg by giving presents)
- have inappropriate physical contact with students (the supervising teacher will provide comfort/first aid to a distressed student)
- display bullying or intimidating behaviours towards students.

## **VOLUNTEERS MUST**

- refer all student concerns or behaviour issues to the supervising teacher.
- refer all requests for student information to the supervising teacher.
- keep all school matters confidential.
- sign the Visitor's Register on arrival and departure.
- notify the school as early as possible if they are unable to fulfil their volunteer commitment.

## **CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT**

When concerns arise about a volunteer, opportunity to remedy a problem or improve an area of concern will be offered wherever appropriate. A volunteer's agreement can be cancelled at the Principal's discretion and where the volunteer:

- has no more suitable work available
- fails to follow requirements outlined in the volunteer policy and elaborated through the induction training.
- behaves towards students, parents or staff in a manner deemed inappropriate or improper.
- repeatedly fails to meet commitments without notice to the school

## CONFIDENTIALITY

In working in a school environment, a volunteer may be told or may hear about matters that must be kept private and stay within the confines of school and its personnel, paid or unpaid.

**Confidentiality is of the utmost importance.** Volunteers may come across information regarding the school, staff, parents and students that is of a personal and confidential nature. A volunteer needs to recognise there is a difference between sharing experiences with their coordinator and 'gossiping' about the students or school at home or with acquaintances. In particular a volunteer working with children is being trusted by a child when they tell of their thoughts, but a volunteer is also in a position of trust by the parents and school staff.

A volunteer needs to be aware that a student's feelings and thoughts need to be respected in order to build trust in the relationship and needs to be constantly vigilant in appreciating the confidential nature of their work. It is a unique privilege to be working with someone else's child.

A breach of confidentiality can have a detrimental effect. A volunteer must understand however that they have a legal responsibility as a mandated notifier to report any concern about possible child abuse directly to their Coordinator or Principal.

## MANDATORY REPORTING

Volunteers should be aware that they may at some stage or another be told "secrets". Many of these will be the innocent dreams or hopes of a child but there is always the possibility that the secrets may be of a more personal nature and may involve the actions of other people towards that child. Whilst it is not something that most of us would even think about given the choice, it is however something of which we must all be aware.

As a volunteer you are in a position where you are obliged to report any such occurrences. A child may disclose something of which you are uncertain or you may be unhappy about the inferences made in general chatter of that child.

As a volunteer in the school you do have the right to report any concerns directly to the **CARL (Child Abuse Report Line 131478)** if you wish, but it is advisable to always inform the school of the situation and your actions. Generally you would report your concerns to the Principal when you are considering making a notification or after you have done so. This information will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

## DUTY OF CARE

When a student-volunteer relationship exists the volunteer has a special duty of care. This duty is not only limited to refraining from doing things which may lead to a student being injured, but also requires a volunteer to take positive steps towards maintaining health and safety. The duty of care owed by volunteers is that of a reasonable person and will be governed by factors which include the age of the student, the student's individual capabilities, including intellectual and physical impairment, potential dangers and the predictability of injury.

## LEA Code of Ethics for safe and professional relationships

Lutheran schools seek to ensure that each member of the school community (students, employees, parents, volunteers, independent contractors, agents and work experience personnel) enjoys a safe, healthy and respectful workplace. The LEA Code of Ethics for safe and professional relationships provides a clear statement of principles and expectations for behaviour based on the values that Lutheran schools adhere to and promote. It makes explicit the practices that are needed to build school communities that are safe for all and are characterised by the highest level of ethical and professional behaviour.

### Love

*In response to God's love for us, we demonstrate the same kind of love for others*

Therefore we:

- uphold and promote the Lutheran Christian ethos, both in and beyond the school
- demonstrate grace, forgiveness, and compassion in our relationships with others, particularly in critical areas school life, such as pastoral care, behaviour management, resolution of conflict and management of complaints
- are courteous, caring, kind and respectful in our words and actions, both at school and at school functions
- develop positive relationships, based on trust, honesty and diplomacy
- do not engage in sexual behaviour or sexual relationships with students
- take reasonable care to establish and maintain a working environment that minimises the risk of physical, mental and emotional harm to ourselves and others
- are vigilant in fulfilling duty of care responsibilities

### Justice

*Through genuine concern and through developing a conscience for the rights and well being of others, we act with fairness and consistency and respond to injustice with courage and integrity*

Therefore we:

- are fair, consistent and just in our dealings with all students, parents and caregivers, colleagues and members of the wider school community
- maintain sensitive information with appropriate confidentiality and therefore refrain from discussing school issues or others' personal or professional problems in situations where the information may not be treated confidentially
- are aware of and fulfil the ethical, moral and legal responsibilities relevant to our position,
- are truthful when making statements about our qualifications and competencies

### Compassion

*We are open and responsive to the needs and concerns of others, and exercise the ability to reach out to and actively care for them*

Therefore we:

- take notice of others' reactions to our actions, tone of voice and manner
- raise any concerns, issues, problems with the appropriate level of school management as soon as possible
- ensure all allegations and suspicions of abuse to young people are recorded and acted upon
- ensure that our personal behaviour does not contribute to inappropriate conduct by others
- ensure that any physical contact with a child is in response to the situation, the needs and wishes of that child, non-secretive and appropriate for the child's age, health and developmental stage
- are cautious, sensitive and respectful about making personal comments and asking personal questions when caring for students
- recognise that social relations between staff and students can be problematic

### Forgiveness

*We pardon the wrongs others have done to us, seek pardon for the wrongs we have done to others and in doing so, focus on making a new start*

Therefore we:

- deal proactively, openly and decisively with dysfunctional relationships and see them as opportunities for God to transform and heal
- accept our obligations to put damaged relationships right
- understand that genuine forgiveness can be a difficult process, but that it is a biblical imperative, made possible in the lives of people through the grace of God
- accept that at times our actions lead to consequences (including disciplinary action) and that these are not incompatible with forgiveness

## Service

*We give our love, time, energy, gifts in response to the needs of others and to make a difference in their lives, without expecting recognition or reward*

Therefore we:

- put the needs of others ahead of our personal agendas
- do not seek recognition at the expense of professional objectivity
- consult with parents and caregivers when making decisions which have an impact on the education or wellbeing of a student
- respond to others' concerns in a timely and appropriate manner
- do not exploit our position for personal or financial gain
- ensure that personal or financial interests do not interfere with the performance of our duties

## Humility

*We recognise and value the gifts and abilities of others equally to our own and therefore respect and learn from their experience*

Therefore we:

- acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional experience and diversity of colleagues
- demonstrate the ability and willingness to work effectively in teams
- make every effort to use constructive methods to manage conflict and differences of opinion in a spirit of collegiality, without blame and with respect for different opinions, strategies, practices and viewpoints
- give respectful feedback and accept feedback
- are aware of the role of other professionals, services and agencies that can assist us support students and their families, and know when to refer on

## Courage

*We have the strength of heart and firmness of spirit to stand up for what is right and 'have a go' despite difficulties, uncertainty and setbacks*

Therefore we:

- use constructive action and appropriate forums to debate issues and to bring about change
- challenge negative interpersonal behaviours and use appropriate processes to deal with them
- protect students and colleagues from intimidation, humiliation and harm
- seek advice, support and assistance when we are facing personal challenges

## Hope

*We place our trust and faith in God's provision of the things we need to handle all kinds of situations and events, and look forward with trust and confidence*

Therefore we:

- appreciate that all interactions are opportunities for the Holy Spirit to work
- actively seek to develop our personal resilience

## Quality

*In every task, every relationship, every interaction we strive always to use our gifts, abilities, skills and talents to bring about the best outcome*

Therefore we:

- create and maintain safe, healthy environments which enable learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth and resilience
- are committed to, and model, highly professional conduct and best practice
- conduct ourselves in a manner that is consistent with the responsibility to be a positive role model to children and as a representative of our school
- present the school in a positive light to the community

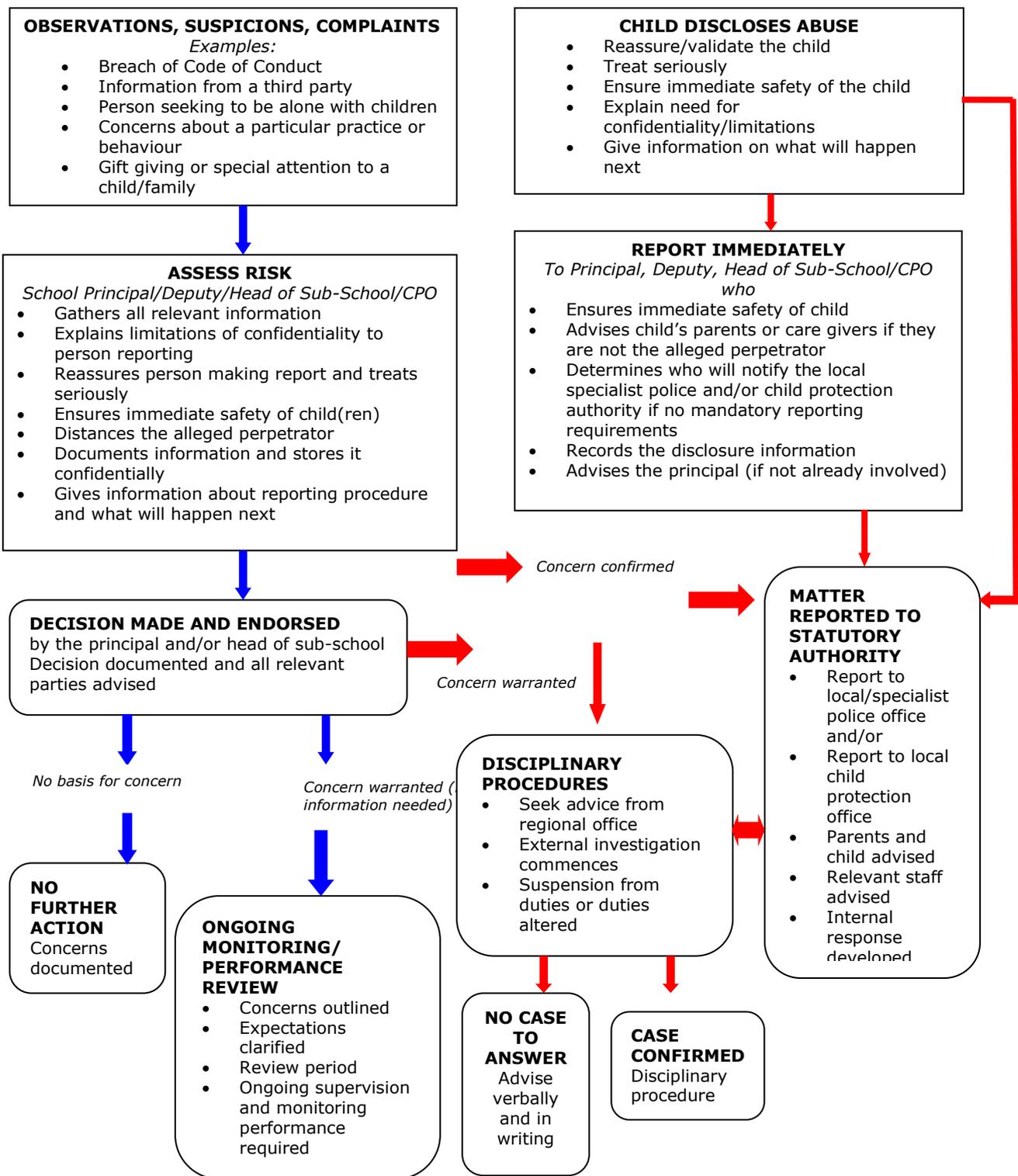
## Appreciation

*We recognise and value highly the gifts and blessings given to us and surrounding us*

Therefore we:

- recognise and value the gifts and talents of others
- celebrate the positive aspects of our work environment
- provide support for one another
- value and care for school property and other physical assets

# Child Protection: Recommended Process for responding to Complaints, Allegations and Disclosures





# VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **MOBILE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY CONTACT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any health conditions that we need to know about?      YES      NO

Details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Details of qualifications, experience and other relevant information:

\_\_\_\_\_

## CONFIDENTIAL VOLUNTEER DECLARATION AGREEMENT

### As a volunteer at Loxton Lutheran School:

1. I agree to provide a current Working with Children's Check (WWCC).
2. I agree to discuss any concerns in relation to school matters with the appropriate staff member or a member of the senior management of the school.
3. I agree to keep all school-related matters confidential and under no circumstances approach parents or community members in relation to issues arising at the school. I understand this is the responsibility of the Principal.
4. I agree to abide by the terms and conditions detailed in the Volunteer Policy.
5. I will contact Loxton Lutheran School as soon as possible if I am unable to attend on a particular day.
6. I understand my responsibilities regarding mandatory reporting, occupational health, safety and welfare procedures, duty of care to students and confidentiality.
7. I understand that if I breach any of the above agreements my services as a volunteer may be terminated.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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### OFFICE USE ONLY:

**WWCC SIGHTED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGNED** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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