

<b>Title</b>	<b>Participation of Volunteers, Visitors and Students Policy</b>
<b>Policy Category</b>	Childrens Programs
<b>Policy Type</b>	Mandatory
<b>NQF Standard</b>	NQS: Quality Area 4
<b>Related Legislation</b>	See legislation map

### Background and Context

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at Glen Education, while ensuring that children’s health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Glen Education 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, visitors and students.

Students may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by Glen Education wherever appropriate and possible.

Glen Education 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*).

Glen Education aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers, visitors 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*).

The role that volunteers play in education and care services varies and can include participating in the educational program and sharing unique expertise and skills. Glen Education staff are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that children’s health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Volunteers and visitors should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff and are not included in child to staff ratios (as per regulations 2011). Accordingly, services will not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers, visitors and students 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 participation at the service, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a current Working with Children (WWC) Clearance.

Parents/guardians whose children usually attend the service are exempt from needing a WWC Clearance (refer to Definitions). However, the organisation may decide, as a demonstration of duty of care, that all parents/guardians who volunteer at the service are required to undergo a WWC Clearance (refer to Definitions)

In line with Child Safe Standard 4 and the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*, prior to engaging a volunteer, visitor or student, an assessment should be undertaken of the nature of the responsibility to determine whether a position description is required and based on that whether an interview and referee checks are required.

### Scope

This policy applies to Glen Education, Nominated Supervisor (also known as Glen Education Leaders), educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, visitors to the program, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Glen Education.

### Definitions

**Child-related work:** In relation to the WWC Clearance (refer to Definitions), child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic/online communication.

**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, visitor or student 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, visitor or student, but also their relatives, friends or business associates.

**Code of conduct:** A set of rules or practices that establish a standard of behaviour to be followed by individuals and organisations. A code of conduct defines how individuals should behave towards each other and towards other organisations and individuals in the community (refer to Code of Conduct Policy).

**Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP):** an organisation that is responsible for administering the reportable conduct scheme (see definition). This includes:

- supporting and guiding organisations that receive allegations in order to promote fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses
- independently overseeing, monitoring and, where appropriate, making recommendations to improve the responses of those organisations.
- The Commission can share information where appropriate, including with the Working with Children Check Unit, relevant regulators and Victoria Police, to better prevent and protect children from abuse.

The Commission works with other regulators including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

**Glen Education Leader:** A person who is nominated by Glen Education Management to provide leadership and mentoring (operational and educational) across the organisation, that aligns with the National Early Years Framework and who actively promotes and ensures adherence to all Glen Education practices, policies and procedures (also as per the Nominated Supervisor definition).

**Nominated Supervisor:** A person who has been nominated by Glen Education under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor(s) with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations (Section 5 and 161). At Glen Education, this role is undertaken by a Glen Education Leader.

**Orange Door:** The Orange Door is support and safety hub for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence; and families who need support with the care, wellbeing and development of the children or young people. The Orange Door is not Child Protection, but provides support for families that may be vulnerable, and is an entry point into the broader service support system. The Orange Door provides:

- a more visible contact point so that people know where to go for support
- a connection to a wide range of supports across the spectrum of prevention, early intervention and response
- an immediate response for people in crisis (during business hours) by linking them to specialist services, medical treatment and care, accommodation and practical assistance
- specialist support and tailored advice for victim survivors, families and children, with a strong focus on perpetrator accountability, based on the best available information and latest risk assessment tools.

**Reasonable belief/reasonable grounds:** A person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection after becoming aware that the child or young person's safety, health or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect them. There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused

a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be referring to themselves)

someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused

a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused

the person is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability or other factors that are impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development

the person observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision

a child's/young person's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm and the parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

**Reportable Conduct Scheme:** The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Act). The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the Commission will be aware of every allegation of certain types of misconduct involving children in relevant organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children.

**Staff record:** A record which Glen Education must keep containing information about the Nominated Supervisor, the Educational Leader, staff, volunteers, students and the Responsible Person at a service (Regulations 146–149). A sample staff record is available on the ACECQA website:

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

**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.

**Visitor:** a person who attends Glen Education with the intent to offer goods/services to enhance our offerings. A visitor often stays for a particular time, with a particular purpose. Some examples of visitors include external experts (offering educational incursions), a professional touring our programs, preferred suppliers/contractors that attend to address maintenance or to deliver goods/services.

**Volunteer:** A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include child-related work (refer to *Definitions*), administrative tasks, or preparing materials

**Working with Children (WWC) Clearance:** A WWC Clearance is granted to a person under Worker Screening 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

## Policy

### Responsibilities

**Glen Education is responsible for:**

- developing guidelines for accepting applications from volunteers, visitors and students to work at the service in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leaders and educators and which are aligned with the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*
- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer, visitor or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader
- 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*)
- reading the Working with Children (WWC) Clearance of volunteers, visitors and students where required, and ensuring that the details are current (checking via the [Department of Justice website](#)), and details are recorded appropriately at the time of arrival (before entering a program where children are present).
- ensuring that the attendance record contains the name, address and date of birth of volunteers, visitors and students attending the service (Regulations 145, 149(1))
- keeping a record for each day on which each student, visitor or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (Regulation 149(2))
- ensuring that volunteers, visitors and 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, visitors, and students and parents/guardians are never left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children and do not enter bathrooms, unless needed, without the presence of a permanent staff member.
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader, educators and other staff, volunteers, visitors and students on placement at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children (Regulation 83)
- 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 Glen Education, Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader 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, visitors and students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*. Policies and procedures are available on the [Glen Education website](#).
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy and related Statements*, while attending the service
- completing an induction checklist for volunteers and students (and visitors that remain in the program for any length of time) attending the service (refer to sample induction checklist for volunteers and students) in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader and educators.

#### **The Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader and Managers are responsible for:**

- assisting Glen Education Management to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to work at the service and which are aligned with the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*
- assisting Glen Education Management with decisions in relation to accepting/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, volunteers/visitors/students only commence at the service with a Working with Children's Clearance, and that details are included on the staff/visitor record
- ensuring that volunteers, visitors students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times when participating at the service, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, visitors 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 Glen Education, Nominated Supervisor 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
- providing volunteers, visitors 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, visitors 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 Glen Education Management to develop an induction checklist for volunteers and students (and visitors as required) at the service (refer to sample induction checklist for volunteers and students)
- ensuring that volunteers and students (and visitors as required) have completed the induction checklist have been informed to access a copy of the staff handbook and indication information, if applicable.

### All educators are responsible for:

- assisting Glen Education Management and Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to participate at the service and are aligned with the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*
- ensuring that a current Working with Children (WWC) Clearance has been read/sighted/checked prior to the volunteer's commencement 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, visitors and students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies (see the [Glen Education website](#) for further information) and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers, visitors, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy and related statements (on display at services)*, while attending the service
- ensuring that volunteers, visitors and students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the safety, health and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, visitors and students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- enabling parents/guardians of children attending the service 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 and/or staff
- encouraging the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- assisting Glen Education and Nominated Supervisor/Glen Education Leader to distribute the induction checklist for volunteers and students (and visitors as required) at the service (refer to sample induction checklist for volunteers and students)
- assisting volunteers, visitors and students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service.

### Volunteers, Visitors and Students, while at the service, are responsible for:

- **declaring any conflict of interest or connection to children, staff or other families attending the service**
- ensuring they have provided all details required to complete the staff record (if required)
- undertaking a WWC Clearance and presenting a current WWC Clearance 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 and related statements (on display at entrance)*, while at the service
- undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist 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. This may involve reporting concerns immediately if there are fears for a child's safety. Any person who forms a reasonable belief (refer to Definitions), that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to Child Protection and/or Orange Door, the Police or Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme (refer to Definitions). See also the Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy for guidelines.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- providing information for the staff record as required
- 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* and related statements and *Privacy and Confidentiality 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.
- following processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse and reporting immediately if there are concerns for a child’s safety. Any person who forms a reasonable belief (refer to Definitions), that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to Child Protection and/or Orange Door, the Police or Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme (refer to Definitions). See also the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy* for guidelines.

**Approvals and Revision**

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
Q3 2012	1.00	Glen Education Management	New Policy
Q2 2022	6.00	Glen Education Management	Policy updated due to rebranding May 2022
Q1 2024	7.00	Glen Education Management	Annual Review
Q4 2024	8.00	Glen Education Management/Leaders	Inclusion of visitors and volunteers (explicitly) as per Child Safe Assessment