

## Rationale

SDN Children's Services is committed to partnerships with families and the strengthening of communities. Volunteering opportunities in SDN can strengthen connections between SDN, families and community members and contribute to SDN's capacity.

We value the participation of volunteers in the provision of services and activities that support SDN. At the same time, we take seriously our responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children, families, staff members, and volunteers; and our responsibility to protect SDN's reputation as a provider of high-quality services.

## Scope

This policy, and its associated documents, applies to the entirety of SDN Children's Services and the entirety of its wholly owned subsidiaries.

This policy applies to anyone providing services to SDN Children's Services in a voluntary or unpaid capacity with the exception of SDN's Board of Directors and tertiary students working with SDN on work placements (see *Student Placements Policy*).

Services provided in a voluntary capacity may include people assisting with excursions, fundraising activities and events.

## Policy

Volunteer work will only be provided as required by SDN and by people who have an existing association with SDN. For example, family members of children engaged in SDN services, current or former employees, or persons who are recommended by a person who has an association with SDN.

Volunteers will be required to abide by all SDN policies and procedures, including the SDN Code of Conduct, and will be held to the same standards as paid employees of SDN.

Volunteers have a duty to report any concerns about mistreatment of children in SDN services. An allegation of reportable conduct can be made against volunteers.

SDN will retain the right to refuse applications for volunteer activities and to end volunteer activities at any time without the requirement to provide a reason for that refusal. Volunteer applications, including relevant checks, and volunteer placements will be managed by the SDN People Team and the Student Liaison & Teacher Accreditation Consultant.

Any person requesting to volunteer in an SDN centre in NSW is required to have a verified NSW Working with Children Check (WWCC). As well, any person requesting to volunteer in an SDN centre in the ACT is required to have a Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Registration Card. Please refer to the *Working with Children and Vulnerable People, NDIS Worker and Police Checks Procedure* for further detail.

NB these checks are free for the purpose of volunteer activities. SDN is responsible for the work of volunteers and any consequences that might arise directly from that work. Therefore, managers will assess the potential risks involved each time they plan to engage a volunteer. Risk may be to the safety of the volunteer, staff members, children, or risk to SDN’s business activities and therefore, managers will do everything possible to protect the health and safety of volunteers. High risk activities are not permitted.

Risks to be considered:

- any form of abuse or harm to children and young people, families, staff and/or volunteers
- legal actions which deplete the organisation's finances
- legal actions personally against the Board, senior staff members or volunteers
- adverse publicity affecting the organisation's reputation.

Where volunteers provide equipment, they will meet Icare standards, e.g. electrical equipment must meet the appropriate Australian standard (ASN 3760.2003).

Volunteers will not be permitted to take photos or videos of children while volunteering, or to carry personal electronic devices capable of capturing and storing images (e.g. mobile phones, tablets, smart watches, smart glasses, or any other device capable of capturing images and videos) while volunteering, unless for authorised essential purposes. Any exception to this must be approved.

Volunteers will be given access to a copy of the *SDN Code of Conduct, Volunteer Management Policy, Child Protection Policy* and associated procedures and a volunteer induction checklist will be completed with the volunteer to cover other relevant SDN information so that they are aware of their responsibilities.

Volunteers will not have access to sensitive information.

Volunteers will not be requested to use their private vehicle during the course of their work for SDN. SDN does not foresee a circumstance where personal expenditure by volunteers would be necessary.

SDN will hold Volunteer Insurance in the event a volunteer sustains an injury during the course of their work with SDN. SDN’s Work Health and Safety/Injury Management Consultant will manage the claim appropriately.

SDN will maintain a record of when a volunteer undertakes any volunteer activity with SDN. This record will include the full name, address and date of birth of each volunteer and a declaration/agreement signed by the volunteer acknowledging that they have gone through our induction process. These records will be managed by the SDN People Team for record keeping, and a copy will be kept onsite.

### Volunteering in SDN Children’s Education and Care Centres

Any volunteers in SDN Children’s Education and Care Centres are in attendance only for the purpose of volunteering and will not be included as part of staff ratios for the purpose of meeting regulatory requirements.

A parent/ guardian/ close relative attending their child's Centre to participate in a one off activity per calendar year (cultural experience, cooking, show and tell etc) will not be considered as a volunteer and will not need a verified WWCC/WWVP card to participate. They will however still be required to sign in as

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a visitor upon arrival, wear an SDN Visitors lanyard and be informed of the Centres Child Safe expectations whilst in the Centre.

Should a family members participation in Centre activities occur more than once per year this will be seen as volunteering and the family member will be required to have a verified WWCC/WWVP and follow the *Volunteer Management Policy*. Any participation in excursions will be seen as volunteering and will require a verified WWCC or WWVP.

In the case of SDN Children’s Education and Care Centres, the Regulatory Authority may give a prohibition notice to a volunteer if it considers that there may be an unacceptable risk of harm to a child or children.

### Volunteering in SDN Children’s Therapies

Volunteers in SDN Children’s Therapies will complete the NDIS Worker Orientation Module and additional NDIS related training required as part of their induction.

## Related SDN Documents

### Policies

- GI-HLP-1.09: Privacy and Protection of Information
- GI-HLP-1.10: Code of Conduct
- SD-HLP-2.02: Child Protection
- SD-OP-2.24: Interactions with Children
- HR-HLP-3.03: Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children
- HR-OP-3.19: Student Placements
- WHS-HLP-4.01: Work Health and Safety
- WHS-OP-4.04: Injury Management

### Procedures

- GI-PRO-1.33-01: Reporting an Allegation of Possible RC or Reportable Incident
- GI-PRO-1.33-02: Responding to Concerns of Risk of Harm
- HR-PRO-3.02-03 Working with Children and Vulnerable People, NDIS Worker and Police Checks
- HR-PRO-3.05-01: Recruitment, Selection and Appointment

### Forms/Templates

- HR-FRM-3.18-01: Volunteer/Student Record
- HR-FRM-3.18-02: Student Volunteer Induction Checklist
- WHS-FRM-4.01-08: Risk Assessment Form

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## Relevant Legislation/Regulation

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, section 166, 175 and 182
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, regulations 145 (1) and (2)(d), 149, 156(1), 168 (2)(i)(iii), 177(1)(f) and 183(1)(a), (1)(b) and (2)(g)
  - National Quality Standard, standard 4.1 and 4.2, elements 2.3.4, 4.2.1, 7.3.1 and 7.3.5
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988
- Children and Young People Act 2008
- Children Legislation Amendment (Wood Enquiry Recommendations) Act 2009
- Children’s Court Act 1987
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1988
- Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators
- NDIS Incident Management and Reportable Incident Rules 2018
- National Disability Standards

## Other Reference/Related Document

- Australian Standard (ASN 3760.2003)

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