PARTICIPATION OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 4

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at a Geelong Kindergarten Association (GKA) Service while ensuring children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

The Geelong Kindergarten Association 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 and students.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to GKA as the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of a GKA Service.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Volunteers and students may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time in order to observe and experience the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by the service wherever appropriate and possible.

The service 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*). The service aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers 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*).

Volunteers and students can expect:

- a safe and well-managed workplace
- meaningful work experience with appropriate direction, supervision and training
- recognition for their contribution.

The role that volunteers play in children's services varies and can include working with groups of children, preparing materials or food, assisting with administrative tasks or working one-on-one with individual children. The children's service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Prior to participation at the service, a volunteer (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Check card, unless they are under the direct supervision of an educator who is over 18 years of age and holds, or is actively working towards, an approved diploma-level education and care qualification (Regulation 358) (refer to *Staffing Policy*).

Parents who have children enrolled at the GKA service are not required to hold a Working with Children (WWC) Check card when they are in attendance at the service.

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, services should not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers 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 commencing work at the service, all volunteers should be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, the tasks they will be undertaking, and to assess whether the volunteer's goals can be achieved. The interview process also provides an opportunity for volunteers to have their questions answered. Reference checks must be undertaken by GKA as the Approved Provider or a nominee of the Approved Provider, to confirm work abilities or character attributes. Good practice in volunteer management includes acknowledgement and recognition of volunteer contributions, and this can involve a mixture of formal and informal recognition strategies.

It is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* that GKA as the Approved Provider uses the staff record to document the details of all students and volunteers. The staff record must include the full name, address and date of birth of each student or volunteer who participates at the service. GKA must also keep a record for each day on which the student or volunteer participates at the service, including the date and the hours of participation. In addition to this, it is recommended that students and volunteers undertake an induction to the service and complete an induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1), which should also be stored with the staff record.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 169
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 123, 145, 149, 157, 355, 358, 360
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
  - Standard 4.1: Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)

- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic)

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

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, 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, but also their relatives, friends or business associates.

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.

Volunteer: A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a children's service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include direct contact with children, administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Working directly with children: For the purposes of the National Regulations, working directly with children is defined as being physically present with children and directly engaged in providing them with education and/or care.

Working with Children (WWC) Check: The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work in Victoria and is a measure to help protect children from harm arising as a result of physical or sexual abuse. The Department of Justice assesses a person's suitability to work with children by examining relevant serious sexual, physical and drug offences in a person's national criminal history and, where appropriate, their professional history. A WWC Check card, notice or document (valid for five years), is granted to a person under working with children 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.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au
- National *Early Years Learning Framework*: http://www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/policy_agenda/quality/pages/earlyyearslearningframework.aspx
- Working with Children Check Unit, Department of Justice, Victoria: www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren/

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Determining Responsible Person Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

GKA as the Approved Provider is responsible for:

- developing guidelines in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators for accepting applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer/student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor
- 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, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service
- ensuring that the staff record contains information for all volunteers/students attending the service with details of name, address, date of birth, days and hours of participation and details of the Working with Children (WWC) Check (Regulations 145, 147, 149)
- ensuring that volunteers/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/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 GKA as the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor 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/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/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
- developing an induction checklist for volunteers/students attending the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students) in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- assisting GKA as the Approved Provider to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- assisting GKA as the Approved Provider with decisions in relation to accepting/rejecting a potential volunteer/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, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service, and that details are included on the staff record
- ensuring that volunteers/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/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 the Approved Provider, 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/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/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 GKA as the Approved Provider to develop an induction checklist for volunteers/students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students)
- ensuring that volunteers/students have completed the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1) and have been provided with a copy of the staff handbook, if applicable.

Certified Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service.

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- assisting GKA as the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work 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/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/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
- complying with the requirement that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- complying with the requirement that volunteers/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 to 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 GKA as the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop an induction checklist for volunteers/students at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students)
- assisting volunteers/students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for:

- ensuring they have provided all details required to complete the staff record
- undertaking a Working with Children (WWC) Check and presenting a current WWC Check 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*, while at the service
- undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1) 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.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- 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*, 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.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, GKA as the Approved Provider will:

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students and volunteers are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Geelong Kindergarten Association, as the Approved Provider on 27 October 2015

REVIEW DATE: 31 August 2017

ATTACHMENT 1
Sample induction checklist for volunteers/students

Name: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by all volunteers/students participating at a GKA Service and returned to the Nominated Supervisor prior to commencing at the service.

	Please tick
I have been given access to all the policies and procedures at the service as listed in GKA's *Induction Manual***.**	
I understand the content of service policies and procedures, including those relating to:	
• conduct while at the service (*Code of Conduct Policy*)	
• emergency, evacuation, fire and safety, including locations of fire extinguishers and emergency exits (*Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)	
• accidents at the service (*Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*)	
• dealing with medical conditions (*Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Diabetes Policy*, *Epilepsy Policy* and *Administration of Medication Policy*)	
• good hygiene practices (*Hygiene Policy*)	
• dealing with infectious diseases (*Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*)	
• first aid arrangements for children and adults, including the location of the nearest first aid kit (*Administration of First Aid Policy*)	
• daily routines	
• the importance of OHS and following safe work practices (*Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)	
• interacting appropriately with children (*Interactions with Children Policy*)	
• reporting of serious incidents and notifiable incidents at the service (*Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*, *Complaints and Grievances Policy* and *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)	
• reporting hazards in the workplace (*Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)	
• handling complaints and grievances (*Complaints and Grievances Policy*)	
• child protection (*Child Safe Environment Policy*)	
• privacy and confidentiality of information (*Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)	

	Please tick
I am aware of the non-smoking policy of the service	
The expectations of my placement/engagement, my role and responsibilities (including attending to the requirements of children with additional needs) have been clearly explained to me by my supervisor	
I am aware that I am expected to participate in general tasks, including maintaining the environment in a clean, safe and tidy condition	

Volunteer/student name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Nominated Supervisor's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____