



**Emmaus
Christian
School**

Visitor & Volunteer Policy

General Policy GEN 3-6

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Visitors & Volunteer Policy

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1.4	November 2021	Update and revisions by APO/APTAL

Related Documents

- GEN 3-5 Code of Conduct – Parents, Visitors & Volunteers



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Vision/Purpose

Emmaus exists to partner with parents, in providing a Christ-centred, Biblically-grounded and academically-rigorous education, which enables students to grow in wisdom and character, to the glory of God.

Values

1. Caring for Others

At Emmaus, we value, care for and respect each other because we are all made in the image of God. We partner with parents to care for and develop the whole person- body, soul and spirit. We foster a sense of belonging, celebrate one another's achievements and choose to be grateful for our school and each other. We are a community that learns in a fun, creative, encouraging and generous environment.

2. Striving for Mastery

At Emmaus, we encourage students to strive for excellence in all aspects of life: in study, work, and in relationships with God and with people. We believe God equips every person with gifts and abilities. We seek to instil in our students a strong desire to apply their utmost to what they do, an attribute that will long outlive their school years. Students are encouraged to master and apply academic and life skills in order to make the most of their opportunities in later life. Our goal is to equip students with the necessary skills and understanding to make wise and Godly choices, and to live resilient, fulfilled, and productive lives.

3. Equipping for Service

At Emmaus, our motivation for service is the love that Christ has shown us: his life of servant leadership is the example we seek to follow. Staff at Emmaus model integrity, accountability and the value of excellence in our work.



We strive to equip students with both the desire and the skills to make a difference in the lives of others. We aim to grow students who are rich in Godly wisdom and noble character and find their security in the love of Christ.

Definition

Volunteers – This policy uses the term ‘Volunteers’ to refer to non-staff adult helpers who have volunteered as a part of the Emmaus Christian School Canberra’s teaching and learning program, or activities on or off the school grounds.

This also included students on tertiary practicum placements.

Volunteering begins at the time the visitor signs in at the school office and ends when they sign out at the school office. The school does not keep a volunteer register.

Visitors – This policy uses the term ‘Visitors’ to refer to people who attend the school for learning and developmental needs such as:

- parent and community volunteers
- invited speakers
- sessional instructors
- music tutors
- representatives of community, business and service groups
- local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments

Those who are visiting to undertake a business or statutory requirement such as:

- booksellers
- official school photographers
- commercial salespeople
- trades people
- child protection workers

Visitors also includes prospective parents and employees.

It should be noted that, under the ACT’s Reportable Conduct Scheme, volunteers, contractors or employees of another organisations engaged by ECS are considered to be employees, in relation to Reportable Conduct, where a volunteer is engaged to provide services to children.



Christian Rationale

Emmaus Christian School (ECS), as a Christian community, represents the body of Christ, with the command to love one another as Christ loves each one of us. Therefore, the instructions in Scripture for building up the body of Christ are foundational to the ethos, aims and philosophy of the school, and are reflected in its policies, procedures and other documents.

As ambassadors of Christ, Christians are exhorted to live a life of exemplary behaviour in all circumstances. All actions of staff and volunteers towards children must be motivated by a desire for the welfare of the child, bearing in mind that

.....love always protects. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

This Policy concerns relationships, not rules; its principles can be summed up:

Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)



Policy

Regarding Access to the School Grounds

Visitors and Volunteers to the school must abide by the following:

1. Report immediately to the Front office
2. All visitors are required to read the Visitors and Volunteers Policy and sign to acknowledge they have read it.
3. All visitors/volunteers arriving and departing during school hours to use the sign in function at the Front Office to record their details and the purpose of the visit.
4. All visitors must acknowledge, as part of the sign in, that they are aware that volunteering is covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
5. Volunteers must carry a current WWVP card on their person.
6. All visitors/volunteers must wear identification, either sticker or lanyard, provided by the school office.

Lawful and Reasonable Directions

Volunteers and visitors must comply promptly and conscientiously with all lawful and reasonable decisions and directions given by the organising teacher or other ECS staff member in attendance.

Volunteers must not knowingly impede compliance with, a decision or direction from ECS staff.

When making decisions or giving directions, volunteers must make what they believe to be competent decisions, and give fair and reasonable guidance and directions.

Professional and Ethical Conduct

- Volunteers must follow GEN 3-5 Code of Conduct – Parents, Visitors & Volunteers
- Volunteers must be seen to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the school's Statement of Faith, and Christian ethos in providing a Christian role model for students.
- Volunteers should not act in ways which are contrary to the beliefs of the school.
- Volunteers are required to read, and ensure that they understand, all information and instructions provided to them. If uncertain about their responsibilities, they should seek advice from the Organising Teacher.
- Volunteers must act promptly in reporting any breaches of the law or school instructions, as well as any misconduct according to this Volunteer Policy, to the Organising Teacher or the Principal.
- Volunteers are expected to behave always in ways that promote the safety, welfare and well-being of students, staff members and others on the excursion. Volunteers shall protect their own health, safety and welfare, and seek appropriate measures to ensure personal well-being.



Duty of Care

Teachers and volunteers have a particular duty of care towards students. There are two principles:

1. The responsibility to cause no harm to self, or others
2. To actively promote the good of self, and others

Harm includes any significant detrimental effect to the student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being by any cause. It includes minor harm that is cumulative in nature and which would result in a detrimental effect of a significant nature to the student if allowed to continue.

Volunteers must actively seek to maintain a physically safe environment for students.

Volunteers must take reasonable steps to prevent harm to students and to support students who have been harmed.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable conduct is defined in s 17E of the Ombudsman Act (1989). The reportable conduct scheme is allegation based. ECS as covered by the scheme must report allegations, offences or convictions relating to child-related misconduct by an employee or volunteer (where the volunteer, contractors or employees of other organisations engaged by ECS are engaged to provide services to children). A volunteer at ECS must sign in and out and is only considered a volunteer for the period that they have been engaged to volunteer.

Reportable conduct includes:

- sexual offences and convictions where a child is a victim or is present
- offences against the person, including physical offences and convictions, where a child is a victim or is present
- conviction, or finding of guilt, under a territory law or a state or Commonwealth law, involving reportable conduct
- offences against the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 (inappropriate discipline or offences relating to protecting children from harm)
- ill-treatment of a child (including emotional abuse, hostile use of force/physical contact, neglect and inappropriate, restrictive intervention)
- psychological harm
- misconduct of a sexual nature.



Discrimination and Harassment

ECS is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

All volunteers at ECS have the responsibility to act fairly and consistently towards other volunteers, students, staff and the general public in accordance with School's policies and relevant legislation.

Discrimination, victimisation or harassment, intimidation, bullying and the breach of appropriate boundaries, or abuse of power, are a violation of relationships, and will not be tolerated.

Any allegation of discrimination, victimisation or harassment against an individual, shall be thoroughly investigated.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

- Support the core values of the school
- Exercise diligence in all responsibilities for the activity
- Affirm students' sense of value and worth as made in the image of God
- Model effective leadership and respect
- Comply with the law and lawful instructions of the Organising Teacher and other ECS
- Observe duty of care, particularly in relation to supervision
- Report any risks of harm, and incidents occurring, to the Organising Teacher or Principal
- Hold a current ACT Working with Vulnerable People Card (WWVP), carried when at the school or involved in an activity
- Sign in and out as outlined above.

Appropriate Relationships

Volunteers must act in a professional manner, modelling appropriate relationships to all members of the school community at all times. Behaviour should never be that which a reasonable person would consider to be offensive.

Students should be treated by volunteers with Christian love and respect:

- **Speech** - polite, affirming; not sarcastic, demeaning, abusive or threatening; not blaming or making a scapegoat of a student, nor unfair criticism
- **Actions** - respectful; not embarrassing or victimizing
- **Expectations** - reasonable, achievable; and within the instructions of the Organising Teacher
- **Treat** students with respect without favouritism, and be consistent in treatment
- **Avoid** situations that require being alone with a student in an enclosed space
- **Promote** the safety, welfare and well-being of staff, other volunteers and students in all things

Appropriate professional relationships between volunteers and students must be maintained at all times. Volunteers should be alert to avoid any behaviour which may lead to an allegation of grooming or other sexual misconduct.



Discipline

- Corporal punishment is prohibited at ECS. Volunteers must never punish a child using physical force, or strike a student, for any reason.
- Volunteers must refer discipline matters to the teaching staff attending the school activity.

Physical Contact

Physical contact must never be inappropriate.

If necessary, volunteers should only touch students on the shoulders, arms, upper back; though never in a way that could be construed as sexual.

Volunteers must never touch students on the thighs, buttocks, genitalia or breast except in extreme events threatening the life or safety of the student or others.

Physical Restraint

In general, physical restraint is not to be used.

In limited circumstances, Volunteers may use appropriate physical force in order to restrain a child, only if they reasonably believe that the child may cause harm or further harm to themselves, another person or equipment.

Physical force must be mild unless immediate danger. Appropriate restraint may be:

- Gentle pressure applied to the student's shoulder or arm in order to guide or settle the student
- To hold a student to stop them running away into possible danger.

Dragging or pushing a student is not acceptable.

Hugging

Volunteers should refrain from hugging or embracing students. If a student is upset, take them to a staff member.

Medical Treatment

Where students require medical attention to private areas of their bodies and they are incapable of doing it themselves (under instruction):

- assistance should be given, where practicable, by female volunteer member or,
- in the case of secondary school boys either by a male or female volunteer member, always ensuring that a suitable witness is present.
- Volunteers should not administer medication to students

Physical Assistance

Physical assistance, if required, should be:

- appropriate to the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the child
- in accordance with any specific management plan for the child
- performed in accordance with the standard expressed throughout this Policy



Supervision of Students

Volunteers must endeavour not to be alone with a student, but to always be in view of others.

Volunteers should make every attempt to be visible at all times.

In an overnight stay at least two adults should always be present in the room with the children.

Volunteers should not normally enter areas where students are changing. Exceptions:

- To help a student in need (e.g. helping children to change)
- Or where the change area is a communal one, such as at public swimming pools

If a volunteer also needs to use the facilities being accessed by the students, they should take reasonable steps to avoid causing embarrassment or offence. E.g. Warning students upon entering; turning their back; or making reasonable efforts to change in an area physically separated from that of the students

On excursions, where students are required to change, volunteers should ensure that students can change in privacy.

Communications

- Present a courteous manner to all as a representative of ECS.
- No photography or filming may be done secretly or without consent of the Organising Teacher.
- Volunteers may not post photos or comments that contain details/images of the ECS event or students on social media. Authorised photos may be forwarded to the Organising Teacher for publication by the school, in accordance with the school's photo consent documentation.
- Derogatory comments in any form, oral or written, including electronic communication, to students, parents, colleagues or the general public is unacceptable behaviour.
- Volunteers must not offer their personal electronic devices for student use or view.

Communication with Students

- All communications from volunteer members to students must be appropriate.
- Volunteers must not have conversations with students that are of a lewd or sexually suggestive nature.

Other Social Media

- Volunteers must not correspond with students via text/SMS messages, email, or social media during a school event. Given the nature of volunteering, it is suggested that parents are not "friends" with students, other than their own children, on social media.

Dress

Volunteers should always dress modestly and practically for the activity. Dress, personal appearance and hygiene are important examples to students of appropriate adult behaviour.



Disclosure Requirements

Volunteers must notify the Principal if they:

- need to make a report in relation to their WWVP status or have their WWVP revoked,
- become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order or reportable child offence conviction,
- have ever been in breach of another organisations child/vulnerable persons protection and code of conduct policies,
- have ever had concerns raised about their behaviour towards children or vulnerable persons,
- have ever been subject to an investigation or convicted of a criminal offence relating to abuse or inappropriate behaviour,

Volunteers must report to the Organising Teacher, or Principal, any allegation of inappropriate sexual conduct towards students, or evidence of child abuse, of which they become aware.

Other Matters

Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking

- Volunteers may not purchase or consume alcohol at any time during a school excursion.
- Smoking is not permitted in school facilities or grounds, nor while volunteers have direct responsibility for, or contact with, students.
- The illicit use of drugs at any time whilst engaged in school-related activities, on campus or off campus, is strictly prohibited.
- Volunteers must ensure their capacity to perform their duties is not impaired by any substance – even if prescription medication. The activity Coordinator must be informed if this may be the case.
- Volunteers must not supply, offer or administer to students (including those over 18) any illegal drug, restricted substance, alcohol or tobacco.
- Volunteers must not condone the use, or use by students, of illegal drugs, restricted substances, tobacco, or alcohol.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Volunteers at ECS may be entrusted with access to information of a sensitive nature to enable them to carry out their role. The requirements of the Privacy Act, and school procedures are detailed in the school's Privacy Policy. Please discuss with the Assistant Principal - Operations any concerns or need for further information about this.

No personal or medical information may be disclosed to another source without the express permission of the school; except in a medical or other emergency during the event, to authorised emergency personnel.

Contact details for students, families or teachers provided for the event may not be used or shared with others for any other events or reasons.



In Event of Breach of Policy

This Policy applies to all volunteers, and students on tertiary practicum placements. This Policy must be agreed to by any person volunteering to accompany staff and students to a school-related excursion or event on or off school grounds. A breach of this Policy, either apparent or alleged, will be dealt with in accordance with principles of procedural fairness.

Depending on the nature of the breach the school may seek legal advice or refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

If a staff member believes this Policy has been breached by a volunteer during the course of an activity or excursion, he/she must refer the matter to the Organising Teacher, or to the Principal.

If a volunteer is in doubt about anything contained in this Policy they should speak to the Organising Teacher.



