



Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy

In this policy, words in *italic* text are defined terms which have the specific meanings set out in *Gowrie Victoria Policies and Procedures – Definitions and Abbreviations*.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidelines for the safe and respectful engagement of *students* and *volunteers* at Gowrie Victoria. It ensures their participation supports a positive learning environment while protecting *children's* health, safety, and wellbeing at all times. The policy aligns with Child Safe Standard 6, promoting child empowerment and safety in all interactions.

Scope

This policy applies to all *Board members, staff members, volunteers, students on placements, parents/guardians, children and contractors/labour hire employees* at Gowrie Victoria.

Policy Statement

Gowrie aims to provide a range of opportunities for *families, volunteers and students* to participate in programs and experiences while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with *staff*, other adults and *children*.

Students

Gowrie Victoria encourages the participation of *students* in programs and experiences in *services* when appropriate, including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care.

Gowrie Victoria aims to support as many *student* placements as possible noting that consideration must be given to the overall number of placement and trainee *students* at any one time. The following principles guide Gowrie Victoria's approach to *students* in order of preference.

Vocational Students

- Prioritise *students* and trainees who are studying with Gowrie's RTO.
- Support placements for *students* from TAFE's located close to our *services*.
- Support placements for *students* who may not otherwise be able to complete placement elsewhere (e.g. Vic College of the Deaf).
- Support placements for new employees of the organisation who have already commenced their studies at another reputable RTO.
- Consider all other placement requests, taking into consideration the capability and needs of the *service*.

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Students

- Prioritise undergraduate/postgraduate *students* who are currently employed with Gowrie to complete placements as applicable to their placement requirements.
- Provide opportunities for undergraduate *students* from Australian Universities to complete placements.
- Gowrie mentors (teachers) will not take on more than 2 *students* at any one time.

Volunteers

Gowrie Victoria values the participation of *volunteers, parents/guardians*, family members, and members of the community for the voluntary contribution they make to the education and care of their own and others' *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 role that *volunteers* play in *services* can include but are not limited to:

- working with groups of *children*
- preparing materials or food
- assisting with administrative tasks or
- working one-on-one with individual *children*.

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid *staff*. They are not counted in child-to-staff ratios. Accordingly, *services* must not engage *volunteers* to fill the place of an employee who is ill, on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Responsibilities of Gowrie Victoria

At Gowrie Victoria, *students* and *volunteers* may participate in programs and activities at the *service* when appropriate, including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care.

Gowrie Victoria will:

- ensure that *students* and *volunteers* are suitable to work with *children*, and that *children's* health, safety and wellbeing is always protected
- ensure that *children* being educated and cared for by the *service* are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are met
- check the status of the Working with *Children* Check (WWCC) or Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT) for all *volunteers* and *students* where applicable
- ensure that the *staff* record contains the name, address and date of birth of *volunteers and students* attending the *service*
- keep a record for each day on which *each student or volunteer* participates with the date and the hours of participation
- ensure that *volunteers, students and parents/guardians* are always adequately supervised, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of *children* at the *service* is protected
- ensure that *volunteers, students and parents/guardians* are not left with sole supervision of individual *children* or groups of *children*
- provide *volunteers and students* with access to the following policies, the Code of Conduct and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and ensure that these are adhered to:
 - Code of Conduct
 - Child Safe Policy
 - Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
 - Use of Technology Policy
 - Supervision Procedure
 - Interactions with *Children* Policy

- provide an induction checklist for *volunteers and students* attending the *service*
- ensure that any volunteer or student reads the visitor information upon arrival and acknowledges it.

Responsibilities of *students* and *volunteers*

Students and *volunteers* will:

- complete the *staff* the *student/agency/volunteer* form and provided this to the Responsible Person at the site and provide a WWCC card/VIT card
- understand and acknowledge the requirement for confidentiality of all information relating to *staff and families* within the *service*
- comply with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and with all *service* policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct, while at the *service*
- undertake the induction process and complete the induction checklist prior to commencement at the *service* (on *staff* record form)
- always follow the directions of *staff* at the service to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of *children* is protected
- speak up to a leader or manager if there are any concerns or clarifications required regarding their placement, child safety or understanding of the organisation's ways of working.

Authorisation

Approved by	Chief Executive Officer
Name	Karen Weston
Signature	
Date	12 September 2025

References

Policy Status	Mandatory
NQS Quality Area	QA2 <i>Children's</i> Health and Safety QA4 <i>Staffing</i> Arrangements QA6 Collaborative Partnerships
Relevant Legislation	Education and Care <i>Services</i> National Law 2010 Education and Care <i>Services</i> National Regulations 2011 Prescribed Regulation 168(2)(i)(iii) Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) Working with <i>Children</i> Act 2005 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
Related Policy	Code of Conduct Policy Child Safe Policy Early Learning <i>Staff</i> Policy Family and Community Engagement Policy

	The Use of Technology Policy Conflict of Interest Policy Discrimination Sexual Harassment and Bullying Policy Social Media Policy Interactions with <i>Children</i> Policy Learning and Development Policy Work Health Safety Policy Hazardous Manual Handling Procedure
Related Procedure	Statement of Commitment to Child Safety Procedure Child Safe Reporting Procedure Child Safe Investigations Procedure Supervision Procedure Cultural Awareness and Inclusion Procedure Photographic and Video Image Procedure Grievance and Dispute Resolution Procedure Emergencies Procedure

Office Use Only

Policy Reviewed	Month/Year August 2025	Next Review 3 years	August 2028
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