



Honor Excellentiae Debetur

St Thomas Aquinas College
**Volunteer Engagement
Handbook**



Vision

The aim of the College is to form in each youth the true and perfect Catholic

Mission

To achieve the Vision, the College will provide a complete education taking in the whole of human life spiritual and physical

intellectual and moral

individual, domestic and social

in accordance with the example and teachings of Christ.

Values

Faith: To firmly believe in God and all He has revealed to us through His Holy Catholic Church.

Hope: To trust in God; His infinite power, His goodness and His promises

Charity: To love God above all things; and neighbour as self for the love of God

Prudence: To form a calm and well balanced judgment, capable of discerning between truth and error, good and evil, justice and its opposite, then to act in accordance with that judgment.

Justice: To give to God and to give to man what is strictly owing to them

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Welcome

Welcome and thank you for your generosity in offering to be a volunteer at St Thomas Aquinas College. Volunteers are a valuable part of the St Thomas Aquinas College community and volunteer work assists us to provide an extensive and rich educational program for our students.

The aim of this handbook is to introduce volunteering at St Thomas Aquinas College and provide you with information about the College and our expectations of you when volunteering. Volunteers are expected to support the College's vision, mission, values and principles.

The nature of volunteer work at the College often involves work and interactions with children, which means that there are obligations and responsibilities as volunteers. You should review this handbook as part of your volunteer induction. Further training or instruction may be required for specific volunteering roles.

Definition of a volunteering

Volunteering is an activity that involves willingly spending time to help benefit a person, people, environment or community.

Principles Of Volunteering

The following nationally recognised principles of volunteering are supported by St Thomas Aquinas College:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- Volunteer work is unpaid
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- Volunteering is a legitimate and rewarding way in which people can participate in the activities of their community
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals to address human, environmental and social needs
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others

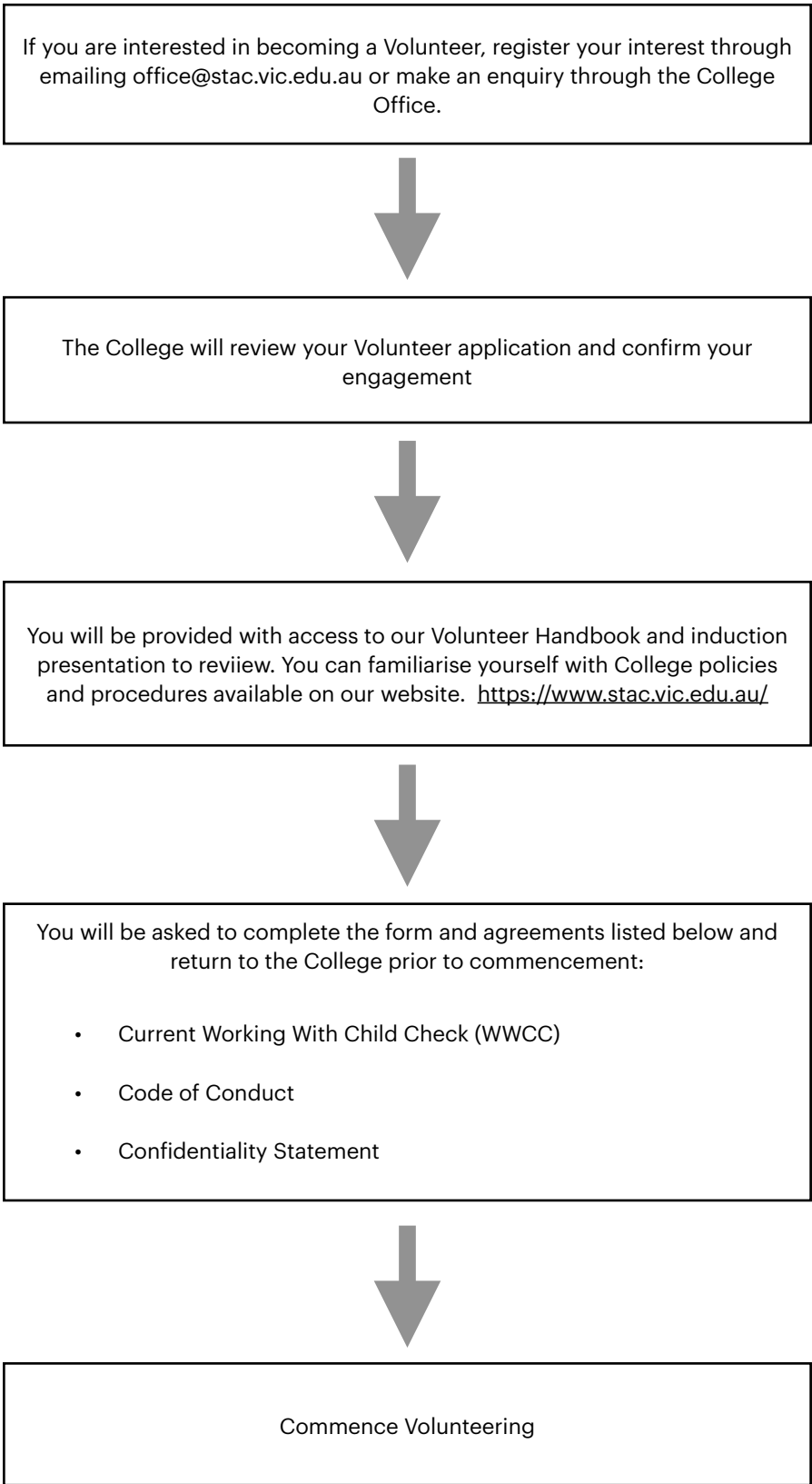
Reference: Definitions and Principles of Volunteering – Volunteering Australia

At St Thomas Aquinas College, all volunteer work must receive approval from and be directed by the College Management. All volunteers are responsible and accountable to the College Management during the period of any volunteer work.

Process Overview To Become a Volunteer

Every year, any St Thomas Aquinas College community member wishing to be a Volunteer must undertake this process to ensure our information is accurate and we are adhering to Child Safety requirements.

Thomas Aquinas College – volunteer process



General Volunteer Information

1. Child Safety Policy

Every school will have its own Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct. It is important that you read and understand St Thomas Aquinas College's documentation as it provides clear guidelines as to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards all children. View documents on our College website. www.stac.vic.edu.au

2. Induction

As part of your induction, you will be provided with information as a supportive way of introducing you to St Thomas Aquinas College. The online Volunteer Induction Presentation (VIP) is an opportunity to communicate the College's ethos, policies and procedures to the volunteers. The Presentation can be viewed on our website.

3. Volunteer Information Form

The Child Safe Standards require schools to gather, verify and record a person's history of work involving children. St Thomas Aquinas College is committed to ensuring the safety of all children and for this reason, volunteers are required to list all work history involving all children, including volunteer work.

4. Pre-Engagement Checks

All volunteers at St Thomas Aquinas College are required to hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC). If you do not already have a current WWCC, you will be required to obtain this and present a copy of the WWCC card prior to continuing your work as a volunteer.

5. Volunteer Checklist

- Read the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Code of Conduct included in this handbook
- Watch the presentation and check the declaration that you have viewed the VIP
- Complete the Volunteer Information Form included in this handbook
- Signed Confidentiality Statement
- Provide a copy of your WWCC and proof of identity (e.g. copy of your driver's licence) Return completed forms and agreements, with all requested documentation, to St Thomas Aquinas College via office@stac.vic.edu.au

6. Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Make an informed decision to work as a volunteer with St Thomas Aquinas College
- Undertake work induction as required and work on tasks suitable to their skills and experience
- Comply with St Thomas Aquinas College's Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct, and Confidentiality Statement
- Behave in an ethical manner
- Keep St Thomas Aquinas College matters confidential, including those relating to students and staff
- Be committed to St Thomas Aquinas College's Mission, Vision and Values
- Use appropriate information channels within St Thomas Aquinas College when needing information, support, backup, supervision or review
- Be aware of and understand your role and responsibilities whilst undertaking the role of a volunteer at St Thomas Aquinas College and seek clarification on any points you are unsure of.
- Be aware of their duty of care to all students
- Comply with Occupational Health and Safety Policies and practices
- Maintain a current Working with Children Check

- Be aware of the volunteer protocol when representing St Thomas Aquinas College

7. Understanding the contents of each document

Volunteers are to contact the Volunteer Coordinator through the College office if they do not fully understand all aspects of the documents relating to being a volunteer at St Thomas Aquinas College.

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Declaration

As a volunteer at St Thomas Aquinas College,

I have read and understood the information provided in the Volunteer Engagement Handbook.....

I have provided the following documents and forms:

Completed Volunteer Application Form

Provided Your Current Working With Children Check.....

Signed Code of Conduct

Signed Confidentiality Statement.....

Viewed the Volunteer Induction Presentation.....

Name of Volunteer: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PERSONAL DETAILS.

Title..... First Name/sSurname.....

Address Postcode

Home Telephone..... Mobile.....

VOLUNTEER ROLE. Please provide details of the volunteer position/s that you are interested in.

EDUCATION / TRAINING / CERTIFICATION e.g. Relevant qualifications, first aid certificate, etc.

PREVIOUS CHILD RELATED EMPLOYMENT

Employer's Name and Address

Position Period of Service (From/To).....

Duties

*Please provide all previous employers. If more space is required, attach a separate sheet***PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER WORK.**

Employer's Name and Address

Position Period of Service (From/To).....

Duties

*Please provide details of all volunteer work involving children. If more space is required, attach a separate sheet.***SIGNATURE**

Signed..... Date.....

The personal information you have provided will help us to assess you as a valued volunteer of St Thomas Aquinas College and will be treated as confidential. Information provided by you in this form may be checked by St Thomas Aquinas College with any relevant authorities, previous employers, volunteer organisations and/or referees or sources. Information provided will be treated in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

Completed forms are to be returned to Liz Alexander: liz.alexander@stac.vic.edu.au

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

- promote child safety and wellbeing in the St Thomas Aquinas College environment;
- set standards about the ways in which individuals working in the St Thomas Aquinas College environment are expected to behave and conduct themselves when interacting with all students - regardless of the ability, gender, race, creed or other differentiating feature;
- outline the possible consequences should this code of conduct be breached.

SCOPE

All individuals who are working in the St Thomas Aquinas College environment are required to comply with this Code Of Conduct. Such individuals include those who are:

- directly engaged or employed or come in contact with students at St Thomas Aquinas College.

The St Thomas Aquinas College environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by St Thomas Aquinas College for use by a child during or outside College hours, and includes:

- our 1 Tynong Road Campus in Tynong;
- online College environments including our email and intranet systems; and
- Other locations provided by St Thomas Aquinas College for our student's use, including locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

CHILD SAFETY TEAM

Under the Principal, the Child Safety Team will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
3. Nominate a Child Protection Officer to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

All reports of child abuse or child safety by members of the College Community should be made to a member of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Team. The members of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Team are documented in PP610 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure (current Version).

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

St Thomas Aquinas College (the College) staff and volunteers are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and are expected to behave with children by:

- working towards the achievement of the vision and mission of the College
- adhering to the College's child safe policy at all times and upholding the College's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- upholding their duty of care towards the children in their care;

- establishing and maintaining a child safe environment in the course of their work;
- respecting each child's privacy;
- protecting each student from violence, abuse, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect;
- avoiding covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with students;
- maintaining appropriate physical and emotional boundaries when in the students presence;
- refraining from using or possessing illegal drugs or alcohol when working with the student;
- being positive role models;
- treating everyone with respect;
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and strengths of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home
- promoting the safety, participation and growth of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
- immediately reporting any allegations or concerns of child abuse to a member of the College's Child Safety Team;
- ensuring that wherever possible no adult is left alone with a child;
- responding promptly if an allegation of child abuse is made and as quickly as possible, ensuring that the child(ren) are safe;
- encouraging students to have a voice and participate in all relevant College activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them;
- using online contact with students and their families only for educational or relevant College purposes;
- will not tolerate racism within the College and report any instance of racism to be dealt with by the College according to the Consequences of Breaches policy.
- Supporting all children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- will build and maintain an inclusive culture, which is respectful of different family structures in order to support all children to feel safe and be safe.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

St Thomas Aquinas College staff and volunteers, must not engage in specific inappropriate behaviours with children that includes but are not limited to the following:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily or inappropriately
- put children at risk of abuse
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views in a discriminatory or demeaning way in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, because of (but not limited to) culture, race, sex, ethnicity or disability
- fail to inform the principal or child safety officer of any unbecoming or inappropriate behaviour that would endanger the safety of any St Thomas Aquinas College child or their family
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter

- consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to one of St Thomas Aquinas College's Child Safety Officers.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Coaches, staff members and volunteers involved in coaching, training or assisting students during sporting and recreation activities should adopt practices that assist children to feel safe and protected, including:

- using positive reinforcement and avoiding abusive, harassing or discriminatory language
- coaching students to be "good sports"
- if physical contact with a student by a coach or other adult is necessary during a sport or other recreational activity then explaining the reason for the contact and asking for the student's permission
- avoiding (where possible) situations where an adult may be alone with a student such as in a dressing or change room, first aid room, dormitory or when the student needs to be transported in a vehicle.

BREACH OF THIS CODE

Staff, volunteers contractors and visitors who breach this code of conduct will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with St Thomas Aquinas College's disciplinary policies.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal and if the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact the Chairperson of the Board

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The College community will be informed about this Code of Conduct. It will be publicly available on the St Thomas Aquinas College website and communicated in the College's newsletters.

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed at least every year and every time there is a reportable incident or otherwise as often as circumstances require.

SIGNATURE AND AGREEMENT

Each staff and volunteer member will be asked to sign off on this Code of Conduct each year. By signing the Code of Conduct below, the signatory is committing to ensuring they follow St Thomas Aquinas College's Code of Conduct when working with our students.

Signatory's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

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Whilst you are working as a volunteer, you may receive, overhear, or observe confidential information regarding students, staff or other volunteers. Confidential information received in the course of your volunteering must be kept confidential. Confidential Information means all information relating to:

- a) the College's business, current and future students and parents, suppliers, financial affairs, commercial, economic and educational policies of the College; and
- b) the methods, processes, systems, techniques, practices and procedures employed by the College.

You must not, either during your role or after it has ended, disclose any Confidential Information developed, accessed or acquired by you as a result of your role, except:

- a) as required by Law
- b) with the College's prior written consent

Discussing information you have acquired during your volunteer role with staff, students, family, friends or other volunteers inside or outside the College is not acceptable. You must only use the Confidential Information for the purpose of your role and must not use or attempt to use any Confidential Information in any manner which may injure or cause loss to the College.

Confidentiality requirements apply to the use of social media and email.

In your volunteer role, you must not contact the media except with permission from the Principal (or other member of the College Executive).

Privacy Laws protect personal information about volunteers, students and staff. You may need to be told specific detail about a student to enable you to carry out your volunteer role. The College will only provide you with information that is necessary for your role. Not all volunteers you are working with may need to be aware of this information, therefore this information needs to be treated as private and confidential.

The following statement should be read and the document signed:

I acknowledge that any information received from students or staff records placed in my charge or custody during the course of my volunteer work with St Thomas Aquinas College Limited may not be disclosed to any person without the authorisation of the Principal.

Any unauthorised disclosure of confidential information, whether deliberate or otherwise, will result in immediate termination of my volunteer work and may also result in criminal or civil proceedings against me.

Signatory's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

St Thomas Aquinas College is to provide a complete education that takes in the whole of human development, spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical in accordance with the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. For this reason Child Safety and Wellbeing are an integral part of the College's commitment. We want children to be safe, pure, happy and equipped to protect their purity and wellbeing; therefore we are committed to the safety, participation and equipping of all students, including any children in our care beyond school enrolments, so that they can feel safe, protected and formed in the love of holy purity after the example of the saints.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse. Our Lord Jesus Christ abhorred anything that would endanger the purity of children and entrusted adults with the duty of protecting them from anything that would harm their innocence. (Matt 18:6) Therefore, every person involved in the College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

St Thomas Aquinas College has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety. Therefore when allegations of abuse concerning children and young people are raised our College will take prompt action to have them appropriately referred and investigated according to the College's policies and procedures.

St Thomas Aquinas College is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, removing and reducing these risks. To this purpose the College has human resources and recruitment practices in place to ensure Child Safety and Wellbeing is at the forefront of any decisions made when recruiting staff and other volunteers. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments; and we are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on minimising child abuse risks. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Summary of St Thomas Aquinas College's commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

- Our College, places the safety and wellbeing of all children first and has zero tolerance for all forms of harm and child abuse
- Our College actively works to listen to and support children against any dangers of abuse
- Our College has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns seriously and respond to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- Our College is committed to promoting physical, emotional and cultural safety for all children
- Our College is committed to providing a safe environment for all children
- Our College is committed to support, encourage and enable College staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report Child Safety and Wellbeing matters;
- Our College is committed to support and assist children who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse;

Key strategies to ensure a child safe environment

In its planning, decision-making and operations St Thomas Aquinas College will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety and Wellbeing;
2. Value and form children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures while keeping Child Safety and Wellbeing paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know whom to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.