



## **Student Policy**

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### **Version Control**

Contact names	Role / position	Version number	Date	Review date
Joanna Fanos	Policy Coordinator	1	12/08/2015	12/08/2016
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## Policy Statement

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Support Services (Support Services) welcomes the active participation of students in services and programs as visitors, volunteers or on placement, as appropriate. Such opportunities allow students to develop:

- An understanding of the Society's work and the challenges faced by people experiencing disadvantage; and
- Skills and experience associated with service or program delivery.

High school students visiting or volunteering as part of a school group activity are supervised by a teacher at all times. Independent high school student volunteers are supervised by an adult volunteer leader or Support Services staff member. Students undertaking a placement as part of a TAFE NSW or university course requirement are usually adults and are supervised onsite by Support Services staff. High school students may also participate in work experience at suitable services or programs as part of their school curriculum under the supervision of Support Services staff. All work experience and placements are arranged in collaboration with the student's placement advisor and are approved by the school, TAFE NSW institute or university.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW [Youth and Young Adults Policy](#), [Youth and Young Adults Procedures](#) and [Volunteer Policy](#).

## Scope

This Student Policy applies to all St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Support Services staff, volunteers and members.

## Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that students' learning, safety and wellbeing is supported and the experience is a positive one for both students and Support Services.

## Definitions

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b><i>Student on placement</i></b>	An unpaid person who is required to partake in workplace experience as part of an approved course of academic or practical study, or is a participant in a recognised student workplace learning program.
<b><i>Volunteering</i></b>	An activity which takes place through not-for-profit organisations or projects and is undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to benefit the community and the volunteer</li><li>• of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion</li><li>• for no financial payment</li><li>• in a designated volunteer position.</li></ul>

## Policy Framework

All students under the age of 18 will require written parental/guardian consent before they can visit, volunteer or participate in work experience at Support Services.

Student volunteers or those on placement aged under 18 do not require criminal history or Working with Children Checks. In line with the Society [Volunteer Policy](#), when a student turns 18 during their commitment to Support Services, a criminal history check and Working with Children Check will be required for certain roles. These checks should be completed as soon as practicable following the student turning 18. See the [Child Protection Policy](#) and [Police Check Policy](#) for further information.

Student volunteers and students undertaking placements must be given appropriate induction into the program or service. Topics to be covered include:

- St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Code of Conduct
- Privacy, confidentiality and boundaries
- Professional presentation
- WHS and manual handling
- Policies and procedures
- Training specific to the service/program
- Support, feedback and grievances.

Support Services will appoint a supervisor to supervise students on placement or independent student volunteers. The supervisor should:

- Allocate meaningful work and well-defined tasks
- Provide a realistic framework for completion of work
- Create an environment where a student feels comfortable asking questions
- Provide regular guidance and constructive feedback on performance.

When there is conflict involving students in the workplace or where a student has a grievance, it is preferable to resolve such issues informally. Where it has not been possible to informally resolve a grievance, refer to the [Volunteer Grievance Policy and Procedure](#) and/or the [Workplace Manual](#) (where employees are involved). Where the student is under 18 years of age a parent/guardian or responsible adult must be present to support the student while the grievance is being discussed.

### ***Students on placement***

Support Services is committed to providing an environment for students that is conducive to learning, values the contribution of the student and is in line with current strategic objectives and organisational priorities. Student placement opportunities may be initiated by either Support Services staff to meet organisational goals or requests may come from students direct to service/program Managers or Senior Operations Managers.

An Internship Agreement should be completed with details of the project to be undertaken by the student on placement and obligations of all parties. Where there is not standard documentation from the educational institution the [Internship Agreement template](#) can be adapted for this purpose.

The following guidelines apply to student placements:

- Students on work experience or undertaking student placements are not paid by the Society, are not employees and are not to be placed in established positions.
- Prospective students should meet with service or program staff to ensure a good fit and to discuss expected outcomes for student and Support Services prior to confirmation of the placement.
- The student's educational institution must agree to the placement to ensure the placement is a required component of their course as a whole, or an individual subject.
- Students must be covered by their educational institution's insurance policies whilst on placement, and confirmed in writing.
- National Criminal history checks and Working with Children Checks, where required, are to be provided by students over 18 years of age. The educational institution should assist the student in obtaining these checks.
- Support Services will liaise with the educational institution's Placement Advisor to assist when necessary with a range of issues including:
  - Development of a clear learning agreement
  - Resolving difficulties that may occur during placement
  - General problem solving on matters related to the student's placement.
- Placement documents should only be signed off by the relevant Senior Operations Manager, unless delegated to the program or service Manager.
- Students are not to be placed in situations where there is direct, unsupervised contact with clients. Where appropriate, students should be issued with duress alarms.
- Students are to be provided with sufficient resources to undertake the placement and encouraged to be part of the team, including participating in staff meetings or training where appropriate.
- Support Services will make every effort to support a placement through to the agreed conclusion date but reserves the right to terminate a placement at its discretion. Situations which may lead to termination of a placement include:
  - A breach of the Society Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees
  - Behaviour that does, or potentially, brings the Society into disrepute
  - Unexplained absenteeism
  - Failure to follow professional guidance
  - Continued inability to meet agreed learning outcomes.

- Support Services also recognises the right of students to withdraw from the placement at their discretion.
- At the end of the placement, students should be encouraged to provide feedback on the placement experience including suggestions for improvement.
- Upon request, the placement supervisor may provide the student with an appropriate reference detailing their contribution to Support Services, such as number of hours, range of activities and achievements.

The following requirements apply for students from NSW public schools and TAFE NSW institutes undertaking workplace learning programs:

- Staff working with these students should read and follow the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) [Workplace Learning Guide](#).
- Pages 2 and 3 of the [Student Placement Record](#) must be completed by the appropriate Support Services Senior Operations Manager or service/program Manager.
- Further information on the DEC's Workplace Learning Policy can be found [here](#).

### ***High school student visitors and volunteers***

It is at the discretion of each individual service or program whether to allow volunteering by high school students. Guidance should be sought from the service or program Manager as to appropriate volunteering options. High school students must always be under the supervision of a teacher, adult volunteer leader or Support Services staff member as appropriate.

Requirements for school student volunteers and visitors:

- School groups are not to be given tours of services which provide accommodation to clients, but may be given a presentation about the service and the Society.
- The minimum age for student volunteers must be appropriate for the nature of the service or program. Professional judgement should be used when evaluating volunteer requests from students under 18.
- High school students visiting or volunteering as part of a school group activity will be supervised by a teacher at all times and will be covered by their school's insurance policy. The activity must comply with the school's policies and procedures. The school will obtain parental consent for all participants.
- Applicants for volunteering positions are asked to complete an application form outlining their motivations and skills for the volunteer position. Support Services may not have the capacity to accept every person who applies to volunteer.
- Volunteers are asked to provide two referees as part of the application process. Where the volunteers are part of a school group, the school will act as their referee.

- National Criminal history checks and Working with Children Checks, where required, are to be provided by student volunteers aged over 18.
- Volunteers who are not part of an official school group are covered by the Society's insurance policies when undertaking approved responsibilities.
- Volunteering duties must be appropriate for the maturity level of the student.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers.
- Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback on their experiences in order to improve the volunteering experience at Support Services.
- Where a volunteer's performance does not meet expected standards, the supervisor will advise the volunteer of what is expected in the role and what steps can be taken to assist in meeting expectations. Continued failure to meet expectations may result in release from the volunteering role.
- Volunteers may end their volunteering activities at any time by providing notice to their supervisor.
- Volunteers can request a reference letter from their supervisor outlining their volunteering contribution after an agreed amount of time in the role.

## Related Documents

[Internship Agreement Template](#)

[DEC Workplace Learning Guide](#)

[Student Placement Record](#)

## Related Policies, Procedures and Legislation

Society policies and procedures relating to this policy include:

- [Child Protection Policy](#)
- [Client Access and Eligibility Policy](#)
- [Client Assessment and Case Planning Policy](#)
- [Client-Centred Service Delivery Policy](#)
- [Client Charter Policy](#)
- [Client Transition and Exit Policy](#)
- [Client Review Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees](#)
- [Critical Incident Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Cultural Safety and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Members and Volunteers Grievance Policy](#)
- [Police Check Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Quality Management Policy](#)
- [Trauma Informed Care Policy](#)
- [Volunteer Policy](#)
- [Workplace Manual](#)
- [Youth and Young Adult Policy](#)
- [Youth and Young Adult Procedures](#)

Legislation relating to this policy includes:

- *Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014* (NSW)
- *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW)
- *Community Welfare Act 1987* (NSW)
- *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* (NSW)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW)
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986* (Cth)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
- *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994* (Cth)
- *Work, Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW)

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

These policy requirements will be followed by all people included within the scope of this policy.

## **Effectiveness and Review**

This procedure is scheduled for review yearly from its date of endorsement and every two years thereafter, or more frequently as needed to align with legislative or practice changes.

## **Further Advice or Assistance**

Please speak with your Manager if you have any questions regarding this policy. You may also contact the Support Services Policy Coordinator to provide feedback on this policy.

<b>Approval and Amendment History</b>	<b>Details</b>
Original Approval Authority	SVdP Society Support Services EO 12/08/2015
Amendments V2	Added clarification that professional judgement should be used to determine the appropriate minimum age for student volunteers at each service or program.