

VOLUNTEERS PROCEDURE [®]

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- This document provides details for SCHN Volunteer Managers/Coordinators/Officers ('Volunteer Managers') with details for engaging, supporting and managing volunteers.
- This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the [NSW Health Policy Directive Volunteers – Engaging, supporting and managing volunteers](#).
- The Volunteer Managers are provided with these guidelines for the engagement, management, support and record-keeping and of Volunteers.
- This Procedure relates to volunteers at SCH, CHW, Bear Cottage and SCHN Community Health sites. It is not applicable to third parties, fundraising/event volunteers, consumer representatives or Honorary Medical Officers.
- Mandatory compliance with this Procedure is required.

CHANGE SUMMARY

This document has been updated to incorporate:

- Hospice volunteers at Bear Cottage
- SCHN volunteers may be required to support specific fundraising events at their nominated hospital/hospice site and will work closely with the Fundraising Manager.

READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Volunteer Managers and staff working with Volunteers must read and acknowledge they understand the contents of this document.
- All staff with the SCHN should be aware of this document.

Approved by:	SCHN Policy Procedure and Guideline Committee	
Date Effective:	1 st April 2020	Review Period: 3 years
Team Leader:	Project Officer	Area/Dept: Nursing and Midwifery

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1 Scope

This document details the guidelines and processes required for Volunteer Managers to recruit, engage and manage volunteers within the SCHN.

2 Definitions

Volunteer

A Volunteer is a person who undertakes activities which:

- are of benefit to the children and families under the care of the SCHN;
- are undertaken without remuneration freely and for no financial payment or benefit; and
- are designed as Volunteer tasks which are not tasks usually undertaken by a paid employee of the SCHN.

Volunteers must abide by the NSW Health Code of Conduct. Although not paid employees, Volunteers are required to meet the same standards of employment as paid employees, in relation to maintaining the safety of the public and our patients.¹

Volunteer Manager

The term Volunteer Manager is used to describe the positions across the SCHN, which have direct responsibility and management of Volunteers within their Position Description. Volunteer Managers can include but is not limited to the Community Relations Officer, Volunteer Coordinators, Carer Support Officer, Social Worker, Tours Coordinator and Volunteer Project Officers.

Only a staff member in these positions may recruit, engage and manage Volunteers.

Third Party Visitor / Volunteering Organisations

This Procedure is not applicable to Third Party Visitors or volunteering organisations such as the Starlight Foundation or the Clown Doctors. A Third Party Visitor is a non-hospital/hospice Volunteer, contractor, individual, group or organisation that requires access to an SCHN facility for reasons other than caring for or visiting a patient or a family member. Third party organisations normally fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Media;
- Fundraising;
- Family support services; and
- Entertainment.

¹ NSW Ombudsman (2010) *Improving the probity standards for funded organisations: A special report to Parliament under section 31 of the Ombudsman Act 1974*, available at https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/3381/SR_ImprovingProbityStandards_Dec10.pdf

Consumer Representative – SCHN

This Procedure is not applicable to Consumer Representative. The [SCHN Policy Consumer Engagement – Governance](#) is relevant to this group. A consumer is any person who uses or has used SCHN patient and family services, including the patient themselves and the patient's family.

3 Volunteer Programs

The following Volunteer Programs are in place across the SCHN:

- Hospital/hospice Volunteers (CHW, SCH, Bear Cottage)
- Ward Grandparents (CHW, SCH)
- Palliative Care Family Support Volunteers (CHW and SCH)
- Carer Support Program Volunteers (CHW)
- Home Crisis Support Volunteers (Bear Cottage)
- Tour Guides (CHW)
- Camp Volunteers (SCH)
- Biography Project (SCH, CHW, Bear Cottage)
- Ngala Nanga Mai pARenT Group (SCH)

Any requests for new Volunteering roles or programs must be directed through to the SCHN Network of Volunteer Managers. For new programs executive approval may be required.

4 Recruitment and on-boarding of volunteers

4.1 Applying as a volunteer

Information about the different volunteer programs, including email addresses of the appropriate point of contact are available on the SCHN internet website and Bear Cottage Website. Volunteers may also be recruited by media advertising, self-referral, liaison or other advertising.

Interested applicants must complete all forms in the application pack.

4.2 Selection Criteria of Volunteers

The SCHN treats all Volunteer applications equally. Applicants will be assessed based on their suitability to complete the requirements of the specific volunteering position, detailed in the Volunteer Duty Statement.

Volunteers must have the skills to gain an understanding of and adhere to their Duty Statement and to the SCHN CORE values of Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment.

Applicants *must* comply with the Code of Conduct, SCHN Volunteer Agreement, SCHN Volunteer Handbook and the SCHN Position Description.

4.3 Volunteer Duty Statement

Each Volunteering role within the SCHN has a Duty Statement that outlines the duties a volunteer may be requested to assist with and should be clear about those duties a Volunteer should not assist with. The immunisation category for volunteers is A and this is also detailed on the Duty Statement. It also highlights that volunteering is not a substitute for paid work and that volunteers do not replace paid workers.

4.4 Interview

Once a volunteer applicant has completed an application pack, and a position is available, the Volunteer Manager will arrange an interview to determine the appropriateness and suitability of applicants for the Volunteering role. The [SCHN Procedure Recruitment, selection and appointment of staff \(non-Medical\)](#) can be used to *guide* the interview process of a Volunteer. Minimum requirements for interviewing a Volunteer include:

- Two panel members (ideally of different genders or gender appropriate to the applicants);
- Documented interview questions;
- Two documented referees that have been followed up by the Volunteer Manager;
 - Examples of appropriate referees for a Volunteer include a person from previous employment, community roles or Volunteering roles, or a person who directly supervised the applicant.
 - Teachers or lecturers are not normally appropriate referees due to the lack of direct contact and supervision.
 - Family members or friends are not to be solely used as referees.
- This process of referee checking can also include previous employment checks, such as whether there was any performance issues or disciplinary action.²

4.5 Pre-appointment requirements

Volunteer Managers must comply with the following when on-boarding Volunteers:

- Appendix 1 – SCHN Volunteer Appointment Flowchart;
- SCHN Procedure [Recruitment, selection and appointment of staff \(non-medical\)](#);

² NSW Ombudsman (2010) *Improving the probity standards for funded organisations: A special report to Parliament under section 31 of the Ombudsman Act 1974*, available at https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/3381/SR_ImprovingProbityStandards_Dec10.pdf

- [SCHN Policy Employment checks – Criminal record checks and working with children checks](#);
- SCHN Policy [Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination against Specific Infectious diseases](#).
 - All newly recruited Volunteers must be Category A.

4.6 On-Boarding

A Volunteer is 'on-boarded' under the category of a Contingent Worker in StaffLink under the relevant Volunteer Manager and on a one year contract. The Volunteer is provided with the following documentation for review, acceptance and signature:

- NSW Health Code of Conduct;
- SCHN Volunteer Agreement Letter;
- SCHN Volunteer Handbook; and
- Relevant Volunteer Duty Statement.

The Volunteer is required to sign acceptance of these documents. Copies of all Volunteer records must be kept on file by the Volunteer Manager.

Volunteers are assigned in StaffLink as Contingent Workers for a period of one year, however are commenced on a three month trial. The Volunteering role will continue where duties have been attended to in accordance with the above documents.

The Volunteer Manager will undertake a face to face annual review or feedback session with each Volunteer to confirm suitability to continue volunteering. The date of this is documented in StaffLink in the Performance Review section. Following completion of this, the Volunteer's assignment in StaffLink will be renewed by the Volunteer Manager.

4.7 Unsuccessful applicants

Applicants that are assessed as being unsuitable must be notified. These applicants are to be recorded in a database kept by the Volunteer Manager.

When the volunteering programs are full, successful applicants will remain current for twelve months and will be contacted by the Volunteer Manager if a volunteering opportunity arises within twelve months.

5 Volunteer records

All SCHN Volunteers must have their details recorded in StaffLink prior to commencement. Volunteer Managers may have separate databases for the recording and storage of Volunteers':

- Availability; and
- Skills or special requests for volunteer roles/programs.

Copies of original records are kept by the Volunteer Manager.

Files for Volunteers who have left the service are to be kept for seven years by the Volunteer Manager. After this time, records should be destroyed using the Confidential Waste bins.

The records of Volunteers who have been dismissed due to a complaint or investigation must be kept indefinitely.

6 Education of volunteers

6.1 Orientation

Compliance is required with the [SCHN Policy Mandatory Training](#).

Each volunteer program has unique skill-sets and requirements. To meet these requirements, each program provides face-to-face information sessions and for some programs, buddy shifts with either an experienced Volunteer or the Volunteer Manager.

The Volunteer Managers are responsible for providing detailed information sessions regarding professional boundaries and confidentiality. A Volunteer must not commence in an unsupervised capacity until this orientation has occurred.

6.2 Ongoing Education, Training and Supervision

Ongoing training and updates are provided to Volunteers via scheduled educational sessions and at Volunteer meetings, coordinated by the Volunteer Manager. These sessions also provide opportunities for identifying educational needs, supervision and debriefing.

6.3 Support for volunteers

Working as a Volunteer is a rewarding experience. However, this can be emotionally challenging and Volunteers need to be supported in their role. The Volunteer Manager is the initial point of contact for any Volunteer that requires support. In their absence, the After Hours Nurse Manager or hospital/hospice staff In Charge of the relevant area may be consulted initially, with follow-up by the Volunteer Manager at the next convenient time.

Support is provided to Volunteers at various forums, including educational sessions, regular team meetings and debriefing sessions. The Volunteer Manager is to be consulted by any volunteer who requires additional support. Volunteers are provided with access to the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)

7 Work Health and Safety

Volunteers are covered by and are required to comply with the [NSW Health Workplace Health & Safety: Policy and Better Practice Guide](#) and the [SCHN Policy Work Health and Safety Statement of Commitment](#).

If a Volunteer has an accident or injury while volunteering for the SCHN, the Volunteer Manager must be notified immediately. After hours, the After Hours Nurse Manager may be notified initially, with follow-up to occur by the Volunteer Manager the next day. An IIMS is to be completed, as per the [SCHN Policy Injury Management and Recovery at Work](#).

Volunteers are requested to report any hazard, accident, near miss or injury to the Volunteer Manager or staff in the location.

When attending to volunteering duties in the patient's home, under the Home Crisis Support Program or the Family Support Program, Volunteers should be aware of their personal safety. The Volunteer Manager should undertake a Home Visiting Safety Risk Assessment prior to sending a Volunteer to a patient's home for volunteering duties. As a guide, the Volunteer Manager may also refer to the resources available in relation to Community and Home Visits (<http://intranet.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/files/attachments/4569/home-visits-toolboxtalk-whstemplate-v1.pdf>).

7.1 Manual handling

Volunteers may not undertake any duty that involves strenuous physical activity. Refer to [SCHN Manual Handling and Ergonomics Procedure](#).

7.2 Transport of patients by volunteers

This duty can be undertaken only within the Family Support Volunteer Program (SCHN) and Bear Cottage, by suitably assessed volunteers, as outlined in the [CHW Policy Family Support Volunteer Program: Volunteers working off-site from CHW](#).

8 Infection control

Volunteers must comply with:

- [SCHN Policy Hand Hygiene](#); and
- where appropriate:

[SCHN Personal Protective Equipment for Infection Control Precautions Practice Guideline](#).

9 Volunteer management

9.1 Rosters

Volunteers provide their availability to the Volunteer Manager, allowing a roster to be generated. The roster will be available and accessible within the hospital/hospice for hospital/hospice-based Volunteers. The Volunteer Managers for off-site Volunteer programs retain rosters for their respective programs.

9.2 Sign-in and Sign-out Systems

Volunteers are required to sign-in and sign-out from the facility where they are volunteering. The Volunteer Managers can monitor this attendance/non-attendance. Records of rosters and sign-in/out sheet are to be kept by the Volunteer Managers for seven years.

For Volunteers attending to off-site Volunteer programs, the Volunteer text-messages the dedicated hospital/hospice mobile phone, advising of safe arrival and safe departure from the site visited. This mobile phone is the main point of contact for families utilising the off-site

Volunteer Program. The hospital/hospice mobile phone is managed by the Volunteer Manager.

9.3 Uniforms and Identification (ID)

Mandatory compliance with the [SCHN Policy Uniforms, Dress Code and Appearance](#) is required.

All hospital/hospice SCHN Volunteers are required to wear the uniform supplied upon commencement to the role. For volunteering programs located outside of the hospital/hospice, the dress code is required to be adhered to in the aforementioned policy.

A photo ID, supplied by the SCHN, is to be worn at all times while volunteering in SCHN facilities.

9.4 Volunteer Absences

Volunteers are requested to notify the Volunteer Manager of any absences, whether planned or unplanned.

Volunteers may be provided with up to six months leave of absence from volunteering, upon request. Where the absence is greater than six months, the volunteer agreement will cease, and the volunteer can re-apply at a later stage. Under special circumstances an agreement may be reached for extended leave.

9.5 Volunteer Separation

Following cessation or termination of the volunteering arrangement with the SCHN, the [Separation Checklist](#) must be completed in conjunction with a Separation eForm in StaffLink.

10 Complaints Management

10.1 Complaints

Any issues, concerns or complaints regarding volunteers must be referred to the relevant Volunteer Manager. The Volunteer Manager will assess the complaint and determine management and reporting requirements.

The Volunteer Manager must notify the site Director of Nursing of any serious complaints.

Complaints about Volunteers from patients or families will be managed in accordance with the [SCHN Patient Complaints Management Policy](#).

10.2 Managing non-adherence to duties and requirements of a volunteers

Where the Volunteer has not adhered to the documents agreed to upon on-boarding, the NSW Health Policies, [Managing misconduct](#) and [Grievance: Effective workplace resolution](#) may provide *guidance* for the Volunteer Manager. The application of principles within these policies shall take place in consultation with the site Director of Nursing and, where appropriate, the SCHN Workforce Services Team.

The following measures may be recommended by the Volunteer Manager and require endorsement by the site Director of Nursing:

- moving the Volunteer to a different work area;
- restricting the Volunteer's contact with staff, patients, families or carers; and/or
- suspending the Volunteer from service for a defined period.

10.2.1 *Withdrawal of the Volunteering Agreement*

Engagement of a Volunteer may be withdrawn in a number of circumstances which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Failure to address poor performance;
- Criminal activity including theft, intoxication at work, use of illegal drugs and assault;
- Misconduct or insubordination (such as verbal abuse of children, families or staff, wilful misuse of equipment endangering safety of children, families or staff); or
- Breach of patient privacy;
- Engaging in reportable conduct, as defined by the NSW Ombudsman, as:
 - (a) Any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence), or
 - (b) Any assault, ill treatment, or neglect of a child, or
 - (c) Any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child, whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.

The Volunteer Manager will submit a recommendation for withdrawal of engagement to the site Director of Nursing and to the Network Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Education and the Director of Workforce for approval. Details of Withdrawal of Engagement must be kept on the Volunteer's personnel file.

11 Recognition of volunteers

The SCHN has a variety of recognition events and awards that take place throughout the year. The SCHN recognises the hard-work and commitment of all the Volunteers. The various events recognise the important contributions that Volunteers make to the SCHN to benefit the organisation, the patients and their families. These are in addition to the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards.

12 Volunteer Consultation

The sites across the SCHN have established a Volunteer Managers Meeting for consultation between the Volunteer Managers. The role of the Volunteer and training needs are identified at these forums.

In addition, a Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) is in place at SCH to allow for consultation between the Volunteer Managers, Volunteers and SCH management. This allows for enhanced partnership between Volunteers and staff, working together to maintain the CORE values of the SCHN. CHW and Bear Cottage also hold regular meetings with volunteers to allow for consultation to be achieved.

13 Volunteer fundraising and donation management

Volunteers run various stalls throughout the year, selling a range of goods to the public, staff and patients. Stalls are managed in consultation with the Volunteer Manager.

SCHN volunteers may be requested to support specific fundraising events at their nominated hospital/hospice site and will work closely with the SCHF Fundraising Manager and/or Volunteer Manager.

Funds raised are declared at the VAC and at Volunteer meetings. Funds are recorded in the minutes from the meetings and managed by the Volunteer Managers at SCH, CHW and Bear Cottage.

14 Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses

The SCHN recognises that Volunteers may occasionally incur costs in the course of their role, particularly when involved with programs where they are placed in patient's homes.

Prior approval needs to be obtained for the reimbursement of some expenses and information regarding this will be provided by the Volunteer Manager. Receipts for proof of purchase or road toll readouts are to be presented for reimbursement.

15 Bibliography

1. NSW Ombudsman (2010) Improving the probity standards for funded organisations: A special report to Parliament under section 31 of the Ombudsman Act 1974, available at https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/3381/SR_ImprovingProbityStandards_Dec10.pdf
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3. Royal Children's Hospital (2015) Volunteer Program Framework, version 4.0
4. Women's and Children's Health Network (2015) Volunteer Handbook, available at <http://wch.sa.gov.au/support/volunteer/index.html>
5. Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children (2016) Volunteer Services: Operational Guidelines

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Appendix 1 – SCHN Volunteer Appointment Flowchart

SCHN Volunteer Appointment

