

# Volunteer/Student Handbook



**GOONAWARRA**  
**NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE**

## Welcome statement

Volunteers are vitally important to the successful running of the Goonawarra Neighbourhood House programs. We welcome volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and skills.

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House welcomes your vital contribution and we look forward to working with you.

## Benefits of volunteering for Goonawarra Neighbourhood House

Volunteering with Goonawarra Neighbourhood House is an opportunity for personal and professional growth. We aim to provide meaningful connections for our volunteers to utilise their unique skills and attributes.

Some benefits of volunteering with Goonawarra Neighbourhood House include:

- The opportunity to practice skills being learned at TAFE or university
- The opportunity to practice unutilised skills you already have
- The opportunity to assist program participants to build their capacity
- Improve your awareness of community development
- Create lasting friendships
- An opportunity to connect with your local community

## Purpose of this handbook

This handbook is designed to contain all the information an individual will need to successfully and safely volunteer at Goonawarra Neighbourhood House.

*Goonawarra Neighbourhood House's Volunteer policies and procedures are aligned with the Australian National Standards for Volunteering.*

## About us

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House is a place-based community development organisation that provides inclusive programs to the local community and surrounds. Current programs include playgroups, social activities, recreational courses, engagement programs for at-risk children and teenagers, and well-being programs.

Our programs are developed in response to community needs, based on direct feedback and community needs assessments.

Goonawarra has historically been socially isolated with community members consisting of first-home buyers, young families, long-term residents and retirees. Goonawarra has a mixture of private and public housing, with community members coming from low and middle socio-economic backgrounds. However, the surrounding region is on the verge of a population boom with several new housing estates emerging at present. In response to the growth and resulting change in demographics, we are adapting and changing our programs to reflect emerging needs. This includes providing programs to families that will improve the trajectory of their children's life outcomes.

## The Role of a Volunteer at Goonawarra Neighbourhood House

### Qualifications

Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and as such can have an array of qualifications. All we ask for is a valid Working with Children Check. You can apply for one as a volunteer for free from this website: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

### Supervision

The Manager will provide you with supervision and support, offer suggestions and be your primary contact person. It is up to the volunteer and the Manager to negotiate what tasks the volunteer will complete, but in line with the Fair Work Ombudsman's rules, you will never take the place of a paid staff member.

If you have any questions or concerns about your role, your health and safety or if there is any assistance you need please contact the Manager as soon as possible.

### Roles and Responsibilities

All volunteers have the right to a clearly defined role, or position description, which is included in your kit. If you have any questions, please contact your supervisor.

### Volunteer Rights

In undertaking their responsibilities volunteers have a right to:

- a) A task, which best suits individual skills, interests and capabilities.
- b) An individual job description.

- c) Adequate orientation, training and support to enable the successful completion of such jobs.
- d) Information about Goonawarra Neighbourhood House's principles, objectives, functions, policy & procedures.
- e) Be treated with respect at all times as if a member of salaried staff.
- f) Insurance and information about the arranged cover.
- g) Voice queries, concerns and complaints directly to the House Managers.
- h) Negotiate assistance with out-of-pocket expenses for authorised volunteer tasks.
- i) Participate in the evaluation of the volunteer program and the quality of individual work.
- j) Participate in the governance of Goonawarra Neighbourhood House by membership
- k) Say 'no' to requests they feel inappropriate or outside the individual contract.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

- a) Undertake voluntary work according to training, the policies and practices of Goonawarra Neighbourhood House
- b) Participate in the co-operative team effort to achieve the goals of Goonawarra Neighbourhood House
- c) Fulfil the individual contract with Goonawarra Neighbourhood House in a reliable and dependable manner.
- d) Be willing to accept direction from the relevant supervisor.
- e) Accept the privacy and dignity of clients and fellow volunteers, and follow APYCC guidelines for privacy and confidentiality.
- f) Advise the relevant supervisor or staff as soon as possible with respect to any change in availability.
- g) Maintain a positive, optimistic and non-judgemental attitude.
- h) Undertake training, evaluation, and participation in support groups as required

## Induction and Orientation

Volunteers will undergo an orientation which will include induction to Goonawarra Neighbourhood House's policies and procedures, as well as an introduction to their specific work site. This orientation will occur before volunteers commence in their program.

## **Goonawarra Neighbourhood House Policies**

The following is a list of policies and procedures to which all GNH Employees, Volunteers and students on placement must adhere to:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Workplace Safety and Wellbeing
- Conflict and Grievance Procedure
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Misconduct Policy
- Bullying Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy

The following policies must be signed and returned before the student or volunteer can start:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct

### **Goonawarra Neighbourhood House's commitment to child safety**

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability. Goonawarra Neighbourhood House takes all concerns and allegations seriously and will respond in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House values the support of volunteers and applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of volunteers. All volunteers must undergo a comprehensive screening process, including an interview and referee check and hold a current Working with Children Check.

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements will be included in all advertisements and we have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our volunteers on the expectations of our playgroup community and our commitment to child safety.

### **Children's rights to safety and participation**

We will encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns that children, or their parents, raise with us.

### **Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices and welcome families and children from all backgrounds and with all abilities to our playgroup. To achieve this, we:

- will actively promote and support the participation of children with a disability and their families

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families

### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House expects all staff and volunteers to respond to any child safety concerns or complaints made by parents, carers, staff or volunteers.

In the first instance, volunteers are to report their concerns to their supervisor. If necessary, the report may be made directly to the House Manager for action.

If there is an immediate risk to a child staff and/or volunteers are to call 000 without hesitation.

## **Support and Development**

The student or volunteer will be regularly supported by the supervisor.

The volunteer program will be constantly monitored and evaluated by the House Manager to ensure consistently high standards.

All volunteer workers will participate in an annual discussion about their job description. This process of focused negotiation may:

- Change jobs allocated to a volunteer.
- Identify needs for further support or training.
- Modify the contract with the trained volunteer.

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House will make available opportunities for training to its volunteers and set specific expectations for training in job or task descriptions dependent upon the needs of the program.

## **Workplace Safety and Wellbeing**

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House considers the occupational health and safety of all persons employed, contractors and volunteers to be of the utmost importance. Goonawarra Neighbourhood House will make resources available to comply with the relevant Acts and Regulations associated with occupational health and safety and to ensure that this association is safe and without risk to health.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (the Act) is the cornerstone of legislative and administrative measures to improve occupational health and safety in Victoria. The Act sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to occupational health and safety. The general nature of the duties imposed by the Act means that they cover a very wide variety of circumstances, do not readily date and provide considerable flexibility for a duty holder to determine what needs to be done to comply.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007* are made under the Act. They specify the ways duties imposed by the Act must be performed or prescribe procedural or

administrative matters to support the Act, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, keeping records, or notifying certain matters.

Regulations specific to the Goonawarra Neighbourhood House work environment are:

- First aid in the workplace - Compliance Code (PDF 1063kb)
- Workplace amenities and work environment - Compliance Code (PDF 966kb)
- Communicating occupational health and safety across languages - Compliance Code (PDF 1053kb)

Occupational health and safety risk is a subset of overall risk management and this procedure should be read in conjunction with the risk identification and management procedure. OH&S risks are, by definition, risks to staff volunteers or contractors in and from the work environment.

In meeting its obligations Goonawarra Neighbourhood House will ensure:

- All contractors to the organisation have current insurances and all relevant coverage and registration to undertake the work. The organisation will keep a record of current insurance coverage for all its contractors and update these annually.
- Its staff are fully familiar and implementing its OH&S procedures.
- All team meetings incorporate OH&S as a standard agenda item.
- Quarterly OH&S Committee meetings are held which review all OH&S risk identification and management reports and provide an audit of satisfactory mitigation.
- An OH&S noticeboard is in the workplace and updated with current Workcover and other OH&S documentation.
- Manual Handling and Fire training as a minimum are conducted for all staff.
- That at least one of its staff always has current training in OH&S.
- All purchases of goods and equipment meet Australian and other relevant standards.
- Essential services equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire hoses, fire blankets, sprinklers, emergency lights, emergency exit doors, thermostatic mixing valves and backflow valves will always be regularly inspected and maintained and available for use.
- Extinguishers, hoses and blankets will be used only in an emergency and only in accordance with instructions.

## Conflict Management and Grievance Procedure

### *Dispute Resolution*

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House will ensure fair and just procedures are in place to resolve disputes involving volunteers. These disputes include:

- Complaints by a volunteer
- Complaints about a volunteer
- Complaints or conflicts between volunteers and/or staff

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House will ensure that volunteers are aware of the dispute resolution procedures and of their rights of appeal.

## Making a complaint

Attached is a copy of our Complaints brochure with a link to the complaints form.

## Reimbursement

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House recognises that volunteers incur expenses when providing a service. Such reasonable expenses will be reimbursed by prior agreement with the Manager of the relevant program the volunteer is involved with. This means volunteers anticipating claiming such expenses should discuss the matter in advance.

## Volunteer insurance

We are committed to providing adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst carrying out their volunteering roles that have been approved and authorised by us.

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House has the following insurances:

- Public and Products Liability – VMIA
- Personal Accident – VMIA

To ensure this insurance covers you for any incidents that occur while you are volunteering with us, you need to:

- sign in each time you volunteer
- report an incident as soon as it has occurred

We want to let you know that the following events are unlikely to be covered by our insurance:

- actions that are beyond the scope of your volunteer role, or that occur without appropriate authority or permission from us
- criminal activity (including criminal charges arising out of driving incidents)
- dishonest or reckless activities

## Resignation

Volunteers are an invaluable resource to Goonawarra Neighbourhood House, but it is recognised that due to changing circumstances the volunteer may need to resign from their voluntary position. Goonawarra Neighbourhood House asks all volunteers to give as much notice as possible to their supervisor and/or the Manager before leaving. The supervisor should then notify the Manager. All volunteers are asked to provide their supervisor with an update on the progress of their work and to return any property, books, materials or files (electronic or otherwise) belonging to Goonawarra Neighbourhood House before they leave.

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House is committed to constantly improving the Volunteer Program and all feedback regarding the volunteer's experience would be appreciated.



## Discontinuation of Volunteers

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House reserves the right to cease placement if:

- The volunteer is deemed a risk to the families, children, or other members of staff.
- If they are not meeting the conditions agreed upon, for example not presenting themselves to the placement on time or dressing inappropriately.
- If the placement is preventing regular operations from taking place.

Goonawarra Neighbourhood House will make every effort to work with the volunteer to resolve any problems, however, we reserve the right to cease the placement when necessary.

All discontinuation of placements by either Goonawarra Neighbourhood House or the volunteer must be in writing and be provided to the relevant groups at least 2 hours before a placement commences.

## Volunteer Checklist

Task	Date Submitted/Actioned
Signed and returned Volunteer Agreement	
Completed Volunteer Information Form.	
Signed and returned the Code of Conduct Agreement.	
Signed and returned the Confidentiality Agreement.	
Read and understood Goonawarra Neighbourhood House's policies surrounding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child Safety and Wellbeing</li><li>• Workplace Safety and Wellbeing</li><li>• Conflict and Grievance Procedure</li><li>• Sexual Harassment</li><li>• Misconduct</li><li>• Bullying</li><li>• Anti-Discrimination</li><li>• Equal Opportunity</li></ul>	
Provided Goonawarra Neighbourhood House with a valid copy of your Working With Children Card	
Submitted National Police Check form	