

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: EDUCATION VOLUNTEERS



Ardoch recruits, screens, trains and places volunteers in schools and early years services in disadvantaged communities. Please read on to find answers to some frequently asked questions about volunteering with Ardoch.

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HOW TO BECOME AN ARDOCH VOLUNTEER

What does being an Ardoch Education Volunteer involve?

Ardoch's Education Volunteers program places screened and trained volunteers into early years centres and primary and secondary school classrooms at the request of our education partners. Education Volunteers commit to attend weekly for two hours for at least six months to the partner site they are matched to.

In a school setting, volunteers usually work one-on-one with a student or a group of students who need extra help with their literacy skills, however depending on the needs of our education partners, volunteers may also support a range of other in-class activities.

In the Early Years centres the volunteering involves delivering our Early Language and Literacy and/or Curious Young Minds STEM program with children. This involves planning and running activities with the resources provided by Ardoch to each centre.

[For more details on the volunteering opportunities at Ardoch go to get involved.](#)

How can I apply to volunteer with Ardoch?

You will need to complete an online application form. Please ensure you answer each question on the form. [Click here to apply.](#)

What are the steps in the application process?

Ardoch is strongly committed to Child Safety and has a comprehensive screening and induction process for volunteers. As part of the process, you will be required to:

- Complete an online application form
- Complete a virtual interview with Ardoch staff
- Complete and pass several online training modules
- Attain a current Working with Children Check in your state with Ardoch named
- Receive a National Criminal History Check (via Ardoch)
- Receive an International Check if you have resided overseas in past 12 months (via Ardoch)
- Provide three referees for Ardoch to conduct reference checks
- Participate in two half-day training courses led by Ardoch staff (via Zoom)
- Supply COVID-19 vaccination certificate or valid medical exemption

How old do I have to be?

You need to be over 18 years of age to volunteer with Ardoch.

Do I need to have experience in the education sector?

Although experience in the education sector is valued, it is not mandatory. All training will be provided to undertake the requirements of the role

What time commitment do I need to give to volunteering?

As an Education Volunteer you need to commit to volunteering for minimum two hours a week for a minimum of six months. The volunteering will be at the same time and same school/early years service each week, and will be during school hours. Most people continue beyond six months, which enables you to build a stronger bond with the children, young people, educators and the school/early years service community.

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Do I have to attend the centre/school on the same day and time?

Yes. To maintain relationships and consistency, we ask that our volunteers are at the early years service or school at the same time and day each week.

Can Ardoch's Education Volunteer role be considered a tertiary placement for university students?

We do not usually take individual tertiary placements at Ardoch as we cannot provide the level of supervision required for most courses. However, in some cases, we have partnered with education providers upon agreement of the terms and conditions of the placement. If you are an education provider and would like to discuss this option further, please contact us.

What happens after I have completed Instructor-Led training?

We wait for all your checks (WWCC, CrimCheck, referee checks) to be returned, which can take from between three days to one month, depending on each person. Once the compliance requirements have been met, you will receive an email.

Do I need to attend the Instructor-Led training, if I apply for the Program Support Volunteer role?

The Program Support Volunteer role involves on-the-job training, rather than participating in the Instructor-Led Training. This will vary depending on the duties you will be undertaking. You will however still be required to undertake some online training modules around Child Safety and Volunteering with Ardoch, and meet the other child safety compliance requirements.

Do I have to pay for anything when I become a volunteer at Ardoch?

Ardoch pays for every volunteer's Police Check (via CrimCheck). A Working with Children Check is free for volunteers in Victoria and NSW. However, volunteers need to pay for their travel to the partner school or early years service. We are not able to reimburse travel expenses for volunteers.

Who should I nominate as my referees? Do they need to have an email address?

You should try to nominate three people who you have known for at least one year. Preferably, one referee should know you professionally and ideally at least one referee should have seen you interact with children. We do not accept immediate family members as referees. You need to include correct phone number and email addresses of all referees in your application. Referees need to be local, not international.

ONCE YOU BECOME AN ARDOCH VOLUNTEER, WHAT NOW?

How will I know that I have been matched with a school/early years centre?

Once you are fully screened and trained, one of our Education Partnership Coordinators will confirm your placement with a school/early years centre. They will contact you once it is arranged with possible induction dates. This will then be confirmed with the school/early years centre and you will be advised via email of the time, date and person to meet at your school/early years centre.

Can I choose my own school or early years service to volunteer at?

You can advise of a preference to volunteer with a particular age group (Primary, Secondary or Early Years). You will be requested to choose 3 to 4 site preferences based on your location. Ardoch will place you at an Ardoch partner site within your preferred area. We try to organise a placement as conveniently located as possible to you. Placements depend on capacity and availability at our sites at the time. Volunteers who can drive will have a wider range of options. However, if you cannot drive, you must let us know and we will try to match you with a partner site reachable by public transport.

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What times do the volunteer sessions occur?

All of our Education Volunteer sessions are within school hours and during the school term. The Program Support Volunteer role occurs within business hours.

How often do I need to log my hours?

After each volunteering session you are requested to log in and record the hours of volunteering you have done on that day. We request it to be recorded ideally on the same day, and within a maximum of 24 hours after the session.

What do I do if I can't log my hours?

If you cannot login on the day, please record your hours as soon as possible afterwards. If you are having technical issues logging-in or recording your hours, please email volunteers@ardoch.org.au so we can try and resolve the issue and/or record the hours manually.

What do I do if I can no longer volunteer? Who should I inform?

Inform your local Ardoch liaison staff member and school/early years centre that you can no longer volunteer and when you will be finishing.

What do I do if I want to return to volunteering with Ardoch after one year break?

Email volunteers@ardoch.org.au for further details. You will be required to complete a new Police Check (CrimCheck) as well as any updated online trainings. If you have any other questions regarding volunteering, please contact our Programs Coordinators, Education Volunteers & Training on 03 9537 2414.

Can I get involved in ways other than volunteering?

There are plenty of other ways you can support Ardoch and children in disadvantaged communities. This includes making donations, through community fundraising, donating books and resources, workplace giving and more. [If you want to see the ways in which you can support Ardoch, please visit Get involved webpage.](#)

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK AND POLICE CHECK QUESTIONS

What is a Working with Children Check?

A Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a card issued by the Department of Justice in Victoria, or a number issued by the Office of the Children's Guardian in NSW. It is issued after checking the history of an applicant with regards to child safety. It is a "live document" which means that it remains active for five years. During this period if the applicant is involved in any legal infractions relating to working with children the Department of Justice/Office of the Children's Guardian will inform the agencies volunteered at (namely, Ardoch) about it.

For more information about the relevant legislation go to:

Victoria - <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

New South Wales - www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check

how do I apply for a WWC check?

Volunteers must apply for the WWC check relevant to the state in which they volunteer:

- For Victorian Instructions [please see here](#).
- For NSW Instructions [please see here](#).
- For Queensland Instructions [please see here](#).
- For WA Instructions [please see here](#).

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How much does a WWC check cost?

For volunteers in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales the WWC check is free. For volunteers in Western Australia there is an \$11 cost for volunteers when lodging the check.

Can I volunteer and start the program without a WWCC?

It is a requirement at Ardoch to have a WWC check before commencing volunteering. It can take 3-4 weeks for a WWC check to be processed, so we recommend you apply early.

What do I need to do if I have a VIT (Victoria Institute of Teaching) card?

You do not need a separate Working with Children's Check (WWCC) in Victoria if you have a current VIT registration. Your VIT registration will need to be linked to Working With Children Check Victoria (WWCCV) prior to commencing volunteering.

Why do I need a Working with Children Check and a Police Check?

The Working with Children Check is an ongoing assessment of a person's eligibility to work or volunteer with children. It is a 'live' check which means that it is updated on an ongoing basis for five years and Ardoch will be contacted if any problem arises. It is a state-based check, based on the guidelines for that state around relevant offenses.

A Police Check (at Ardoch done via CrimCheck) is only current on the day of issue and is a list of offences from a person's criminal history which can be disclosed. It does not involve an assessment by a government agency. It is used to help Ardoch to determine the suitability of a volunteer for a role though, as it can identify offenses (for example theft, fraud, some drug offenses, and driving offenses) that might not prevent someone from getting a WWC check but do mean a volunteer is not suitable for the Ardoch role.

I have a previous criminal offence. Can I still volunteer at Ardoch?

Having a criminal history does not automatically mean you cannot volunteer at Ardoch. All volunteers and staff at Ardoch are required to receive a WWC check. If you are ineligible for a WWC check, you will not be able to volunteer with Ardoch. Other criminal offences will be assessed by Ardoch on a case-by-case basis, considering things like the type, frequency and recency of the offences.

Is my existing Police Check/CrimCheck valid?

No. A CrimCheck (or Police Check) is a list of offences that is only current on the day of issue. When you become an Ardoch volunteer, we need to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information. We therefore will always carry out our own Police Check during the application process at no cost to you. You may also be required to complete an International Police Check if you have recently moved to Australia.

CHILD SAFETY QUESTIONS

What is Ardoch's commitment to Child Safety?

Ardoch is committed to protecting children's and young people's right to safety and well-being. We know children have a right to be kept safe at all times, so we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse.

We know that some children are more vulnerable than others. That's why we actively promote the safety and well-being of children and young people who:

- are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- have a disability
- identify as LGBTIQ+

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Everyone who works with or represents Ardoch is responsible for ensuring that children are safe, feel safe, and are involved in decisions that affect their lives.

What are my responsibilities as an Education Volunteer to promote child safety?

As an Education Volunteer you are required to be a positive role model and be respectful in all your interactions with children. You will need to promote a child safe environment by being respectful of boundaries and always keeping an open mind. As part of your role, you will be required to report any concerns relating to a child's safety or wellbeing to the school/early years centre and Ardoch. You will be provided with all the necessary training to carry out your child safety duties.

Do I need to contact Ardoch in the event of a child safety disclosure?

Yes, once you have discussed the disclosure with the supervising teacher or school/early years centre contact prior to leaving the school/centre premises; you must notify Ardoch staff about the concerns/disclosure on the same day.

How should I contact Ardoch regarding a disclosure or incident report?

For reporting incidents, please call us so we can receive your information immediately. You can contact the Ardoch Head Office Monday to Friday during business hours on 03 9537 2414 or if you are interstate you can call 1300 273 624. Please ask to speak to the Child Safety Officer or Programs Manager, Volunteer Programs. If neither are available, you can speak to someone in the Programs Team or the CEO.