

Volunteer Handbook

Guidance and information for Ardoch volunteers



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Welcome

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Ardoch. As a volunteer, you play a vital role in helping children and young people facing disadvantage to engage in learning and believe in a future of possibilities.

At Ardoch, we celebrate the diversity and uniqueness each person brings to make our organisation brighter. Your individual knowledge, skills, life experiences and ideas all contribute to building a robust and strong program at Ardoch. We welcome and look forward to your input to help shape a better future for all children.

We hope your volunteer experience is a rich and rewarding one, which provides many opportunities for you to develop skills and networks and achieve personal and professional growth. Our aim is to create a safe and inclusive space where you can also benefit, while bringing all you have to offer to making a meaningful contribution to Ardoch.

This volunteer handbook has been prepared as a resource for you. It is intended to be a convenient summary of information about Ardoch and an overview of our volunteer policies and procedures. We hope your association with Ardoch is a valuable and fulfilling experience.

Thank you for joining us to help children realise their full potential.

Lisa Jones, CEO



About Ardoch

One in three children facing disadvantage starts school developmentally behind their peers. As a national, not-for-profit organisation, Ardoch seeks to address this gap by offering educational programs that build children and young people's confidence, aspirations, social skills, and wellbeing.

These are essential elements for enabling full engagement in education and a love of learning. Engagement in education is the key to opening future pathways and possibilities. Without it, the cycle of disadvantage and inequity continues. Ardoch's approach brings together schools, students, volunteers, corporates, experts, and community to identify needs and design how best to create impact.

Vision

Every child's potential is realised through full participation in education.

Purpose

To support children and young people from disadvantaged communities to engage in learning and believe in a future of possibilities.

Values

- **Empowerment:** We recognise people's strengths and uniqueness, amplify their voices, and support them to make their own choices.
- **Learning:** We value the power of education to change lives, and continually learn from research, students, partners, communities and each other.
- **Impactful:** We strive to create the most meaningful change for the students we support.
- **Community:** We connect diverse voices and perspectives and collaborate to respond to the unique needs of schools and their communities.
- **Accountability:** We own our actions and take responsibility for creating a fair, respectful and positive environment.

Strategic priorities

1. Deepen Ardoch's impact for more students through meaningful, evidence-based programs.
2. Give students a voice and greater agency in program design, delivery and evaluation.
3. Work closely with schools to contribute to school-led change for improved educational outcomes.
4. Advocate for improved education policy, practice and investment to address systemic inequity.

You can view Ardoch's Strategic Plan (2023-27) [here](#).

Ardoch's Program Framework

All Ardoch programs are designed to contribute to Ardoch's CAWSE program framework.



Important Child Safety information

Commitment to Child Safety

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

Some children are more vulnerable than others, that's why we actively promote the safety and wellbeing 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+

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.

You can access our full Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy [here](#).

Responding to a disclosure of harm or abuse

If you are in a situation of receiving a disclosure from a young person, the following steps (Listen, Support, Document, Report) should help you to appropriately support the young person through that process. Remember that you may be the first or only person that they have shared the information with, so it is important to take it seriously and act on the disclosure.

Listen

- Ensure the situation is safe. Stay in sight, but out of hearing of others.
- Listen carefully to what the child or young person is saying; let them take their time and use their own words.
- Do not interview or probe the child or young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what the child or young person wants to tell you or make observations – not to conduct an investigation.
- If you need to – ask for permission to write things down or encourage the child to write it down for you.

Support

- Tell the child or young person they did the right thing by telling you and that it was brave.
- Tell the child or young person it is not their fault, and they are not responsible for the abuse or other people's behaviour.
- Tell the child or young person you are pleased they told you.

- Let the child or young person know what will happen next. Be honest and let them know that you will need to tell someone and that it's important for them to feel safe.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone.

Document

- After the conversation, write down all your recollections of the conversation.
- When taking notes, consider recording the following:
- Use the young person's own language and words where possible. Differentiate direct quotes from general statements.
- Information that has led to concerns about the child's safety (e.g., physical injuries, student behaviour, adult behaviour).
- The source of the report (e.g., observation of behaviour, report from child or another person).
- Who was present, and any other discussions you've had or actions already taken because of the concerns (e.g., consultation with school, Ardoch line management, child protection etc.).

Report

- Follow the Ardoch reporting procedure to submit an incident report (and report it to the school if applicable).
- With support from the Ardoch Child Safety Officer, complete any reporting to external bodies, such as police or child protection.

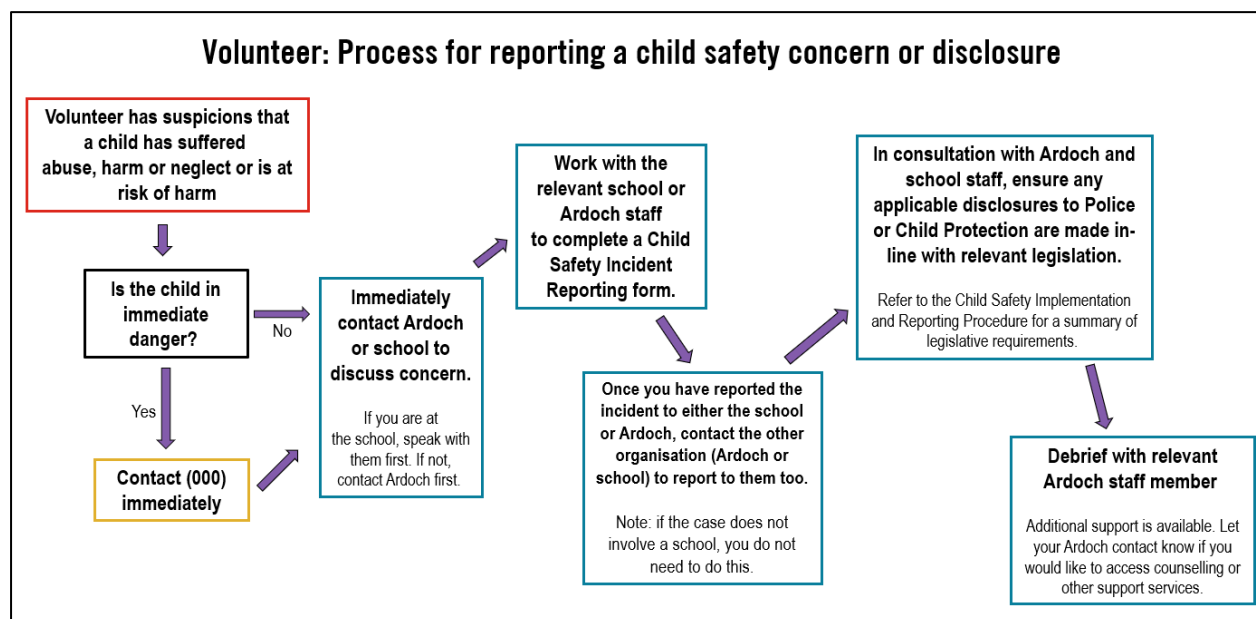
Reporting child safety concerns and/or disclosure of child abuse

- Mandated reporting laws for certain child safety concerns exist in all states and territories.
- Ardoch's approach is that everyone, regardless of their legal mandate, has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect.
- The Ardoch Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy requires the **immediate reporting of all concerns**, disclosures and indicators of abuse or inappropriate behaviour.
- All reports will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child or young person.
- Ardoch will always support staff and volunteers to report (and will never stand in the way of reporting of concerns about child safety).
- Once you have formed a reasonable belief that a child is at risk or in need of protection you need to 'report' to Ardoch.
- Ardoch and/or school staff can help you to complete any external reporting where it is required.

- If you need to speak to someone, to debrief or need some advice, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We can also provide you with external counselling and support if required.

The following flowchart and step-by-step guide outline how to report a child safety concern or disclosure.

If you need any assistance, you can contact Ardoch on 03 9537 2414 or 1300 273 624 and ask to speak to the Child Safety Officer or email childsafety@ardoch.org.au



No.	Action	Who
	Emergencies: In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000). Once the report to police has been made or the immediate danger resolved move to the next step. All concerns that do not involve immediate danger start at the next step.	Volunteer who has identified a potential child safety concern.
1	Note down any initial recollections or notes of what occurred, so you can refer to them for reporting to Ardoch and/or school, as well as external bodies if needed.	Volunteer who has identified a potential child safety concern.
2	Are you at a school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No (not at a school): Proceed to Step 3. • Yes (at a school): Discuss your concerns/disclosure with contact at school as soon as possible (before leaving the school). Then contact Ardoch as per Step 3. Note: Please protect the privacy of the child when practical and minimise the risk of an increase of any distress for the child if they are nearby.	Volunteer who has identified a potential child safety concern.

3	<p>Contact the Ardoch Child Safety Officer as soon as possible (ideally within 24 hours) about your concern.</p> <p>You can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • call (03) 9537 2414 • email childsafety@ardoch.org.au or • report online: https://www.ardoch.org.au/incident-report 	Volunteer who has identified a potential child safety concern.
4	If the incident involves a school and has not been reported to them yet, they will also need to be informed at this stage.	Child Safety Officer or volunteer
5	<p>In consultation with Ardoch Child Safety Officer, complete any external reporting if required (such as to police or child protection).</p> <p>To confirm if external reporting is required, refer to Ardoch Child Safety Procedures. Regardless of legislative standards, Ardoch takes the stance that all Employees and Volunteers have a moral and ethical obligation to report concerns to the relevant authorities. If there is any uncertainty about whether reporting is needed, it is better to make a report.</p> <p>To make an external report you may need to gather necessary information from Ardoch or the school beforehand including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person. • The details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns. • The individual employee, volunteer, or contractors' involvement with the child and young person. • Details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person, if known. <p>If you're unable to get all the information, we still encourage you to report with the information that you can obtain.</p>	<p>It is best for external reporting to be completed by the person who observed the incident.</p> <p>Support can be obtained from the school, Ardoch Child Safety Officer or Ardoch line manager.</p>
6	<p>Make a written record of when and how you reported which includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported. • The name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report. 	Ardoch Child Safety Officer
7	<p>Debrief and access support or counselling services as required. Ardoch employees have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Ardoch will coordinate access to counselling services for volunteers if needed.</p>	Volunteer who has identified a potential child safety concern.

Volunteering at Ardoch

Volunteers are essential to Ardoch in all areas of our work. The positive impact our programs are having for thousands of children each year comes down to the dedication and compassion of our volunteers. To put it simply, volunteers are integral to what we do, bringing immense value and impact to our program delivery.

Volunteers are engaged in a variety of roles ranging from ongoing Education Volunteers working weekly with students in class, to engaging with students in one-off events such as Mock Interviews and Learning through Lunch. Our volunteers bring a suite of brilliant and varied experiences, skills, and knowledge to Ardoch, contributing to our vision in wonderful ways, from a highly talented volunteer board of directors and several skilled and committed Program Support Volunteers who provide administrative support to our program coordination.

Ardoch utilises the Volunteering Australia definition of volunteering as *"time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."*

Ardoch is committed to delivering impactful programs that best utilise the skills and knowledge of our volunteers to support and enhance the engagement with schools and students.



You can access Ardoch's Volunteer Management Policy ([here](#)).

Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Ardoch places great emphasis on creating strong, respectful internal and external relationships focussed on enhancing our own and others' capabilities.

My rights as an Ardoch volunteer

- To work in a healthy and safe environment.
- To be provided with training and orientation.
- To have a position description and clarity regarding my role and working hours.
- To have the necessary support and direction to carry out designated duties.
- To be kept informed about topics relevant to my volunteering and role.
- To have clear lines of accountability and responsibility to Ardoch and the relevant partners.
- To have access to support, supervision, and de-briefing from Ardoch staff.
- To be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.
- To ask questions and request guidance and support.
- To have access to conflict resolution procedures.
- To be respected and treated as co-workers.
- To be adequately covered by insurance
- To receive appropriate recognition and acknowledgement for one's contribution.

Please note: Ardoch is unable to provide references for volunteers but can provide a statement of service outlining role undertaken, duration and hours of volunteering.

Responsibilities of all Ardoch volunteers

- Adhering to the Ardoch [Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and other relevant policies.
- Supporting student learning, wellbeing, and participation through your volunteering.
- Conscientiously fulfilling your volunteer duties, that is: to be punctual, reliable, flexible, open, and friendly.
- Regular checking and responding to correspondence from Ardoch (within maximum of one week).
- Providing feedback or raising any issues or concerns promptly to Ardoch staff.
- Respecting student confidentiality, except in cases regarding concern for student wellbeing.
- Working cooperatively as a team member.
- Participating in training and professional development opportunities, when provided.
- Observing all Ardoch requirements relevant to your program (which may include wearing a uniform or name badge, bringing your WWC card or recording your volunteering hours online).

Volunteer safety

Ardoch is committed to volunteer safety. The safety of everyone who is involved in our organisation, is a priority. Ardoch has an obligation to provide and maintain a safe working environment and system of work for our volunteers.

Ardoch undertakes risk assessments of all programs and plans mitigations to reduce the likelihood of an incident or the severity if an incident does occur.

As a volunteer, you play a key role in helping keep yourself and other people around you safe through your volunteering at Ardoch.

As an Ardoch volunteer you must:

- Follow the health and safety standards of Ardoch and any school where you volunteer.
- Notify your on-site contact if you observe any hazards or incidents (for example injuries, near misses) during your volunteering.
- Advise Ardoch and the contact at your volunteer site if you have any injuries and/or limitations of movement. This allows for activities to be modified or avoided to reduce the risk of re-injury.
- Notify Ardoch as soon as possible (on the same day ideally), if you are injured or involved in an incident while volunteering.
- Follow the COVID-19 safety procedures of Ardoch and any site where you volunteer.

You can view Ardoch's Workplace Health and Safety Policy [here](#).

Insurance

As an Ardoch volunteer, you are covered for personal accident insurance and public liability insurance.

Personal accident insurance covers volunteers for specified expenses following an accidental injury, disability or death whilst carrying out their voluntary work on behalf of Ardoch or other activities organised by Ardoch, as well as including direct and uninterrupted travel to and from those work and activities. This cover is provided through the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority and covers people between the age of 12-100.

Ardoch's public liability insurance provides cover to Ardoch for personal injury or property damage to third parties arising from accidents or negligent acts caused by employees or volunteers. This cover is also provided through the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority.

Please be aware that COVID-19 has been exempted from the insurance policies, similar to travel insurance policies. As such, you will not be able to be covered by the Ardoch insurance policies if you become unwell from catching COVID-19 as part of your volunteering.

Your privacy

Your privacy is very important to us. We only collect personal information if it is necessary for one of our functions or activities. The type of personal information we collect will depend on the reason for collection.

Generally, the types of personal information we collect will include name, contact details and records of communication with us. We do not share your details with a third party. You can view our Privacy Policy [here](#).

Confidentiality

As part of your volunteer duties, you may become aware of confidential information about students, school staff or school operations, Ardoch volunteers, donors or employees and Ardoch operations.

As outlined in the Code of Conduct, volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality, not disclosing or misusing the organisation's information.

Breaching confidentiality by sharing private information about students, school staff, volunteers, or anyone else whose information Ardoch holds is strictly prohibited.

Inclusion and diversity

Ardoch recognises and celebrates the value and contribution each individual brings to our workplace and appreciates the value of attracting and retaining employees and volunteers from different backgrounds.

Ardoch is committed to creating a working environment that is fair and flexible; promotes personal and professional growth and benefits from the capabilities of its diverse workforce. We recognise that diversity in our workforce contributes to our organisation's success and enriches the work that we do.

We strive to ensure that our policies, procedures and behaviours promote diversity and inclusion and create an environment where individual differences are valued.

Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment

Ardoch is committed to providing volunteers with an environment that is free from discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Ardoch encourages volunteers to bring any incidents of discrimination, harassment or bullying to the immediate attention of the volunteer team or Chief Executive Officer.

You can view Ardoch's Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment policy [here](#).

Feedback and Complaints

Everyone who engages with Ardoch has the right to express their views, give feedback, make complaints, or provide compliments regarding services provided by Ardoch, and its employees and volunteers.

This is part of ensuring that child safety is maintained, everyone who engages with Ardoch can do so in a safe, inclusive and supportive environment, and that our program delivery and services are delivered to a high standard.

Key points on process:

- Anyone providing feedback or a complaint will be treated respectfully, courteously and sensitively.
- Ardoch will accept feedback and complaints through multiple, easily-accessible channels.
- Ardoch will provide a fair and reasonable process for the person making the complaint and the person being complained about.
- Ardoch will carefully consider and respond to all feedback and complaints within a reasonable timeframe that matches the nature of the feedback or complaint.
- Ardoch will let the person providing the feedback or complaint know what actions Ardoch has taken, and any changes made as a result of their feedback or complaint.

You can read the Feedback and Complaint Management Policy and Procedure [here](#).

Feedback or complaints regarding any matter can be made:

- Via email (info@ardoch.org.au)
- Via post (4/85 Queen St, Melbourne, Vic, 3000)
- Via telephone (1300 273 624)

Online via our website:

- If you are reporting a child safety concern, please use this form: <https://www.ardoch.org.au/incident-report/>
- If you are providing feedback or making a complaint about any other matter, please use this form: <https://www.ardoch.org.au/feedback-form>

Expenses and reimbursement

Ardoch is incredibly grateful for the generous contribution of your time, but is unable to make payments, in cash or kind, that relate to your volunteering.

Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses may be made in some circumstances but must be pre-approved by an Ardoch Manager.

Ceasing volunteering

Stopping volunteering

Volunteering is not a contractual relationship, and you may leave your volunteer role at any time and for any reason. To support Ardoch and the schools, we request that you advise Ardoch of your intention to leave as soon as possible. It is preferred that you provide two weeks written notice.

Extended leave

If you need to take extended leave, but intend on returning to volunteer with Ardoch, please let our Ardoch team know as soon as possible. We will put you as On Hold on our system until you return. You will need to check-in with Ardoch on your return to confirm if there are any additional tasks required before your resume volunteering. We will continue to keep you in the loop with our regular emails during this time.

Volunteer engagement

Ardoch is committed to volunteer engagement and will seek to provide opportunities for volunteers to have input on broader decision-making.

Volunteering steering committee

Ardoch has established a Volunteering Steering Committee as a volunteer-led advisory body to guide our volunteer engagement. If you're interested to get involved, please reach out to us at volunteers@ardoch.org.au

Volunteer recognition

Volunteers are extremely valued at Ardoch, and we recognise their contributions in several ways, including:

- Volunteer events – both central and local, including National Volunteer Week, International Volunteer Day and end-of-year celebrations.
- Certificates – Ardoch recognises volunteer contributions and service and provides certificates recognising volunteer achievements and milestones.
- Statement of services – We can provide a statement of service that outlines role undertaken, duration and hours of volunteering. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide references for volunteers.

Thank you!

The positive impact our programs are having for thousands of children each year comes down to the dedication and compassion of our volunteers. Thank you for taking the step to volunteer with Ardoch.

We hope you find your Ardoch volunteer journey a rewarding experience.

