



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

Volunteering

Volunteering is unpaid activity that is willingly done for the benefit of a person or organisation (Bocsi et al., 2017). Students volunteer for a variety of reasons that can typically be categorised as altruistic (e.g., helping others), utilitarian (e.g., skill building or personal growth), or social motivations (e.g., making friends or networking) (Handy et al., 2010).



Why is it important?

- Youth involvement in volunteerism provides early opportunities for civic engagement and offers long-term benefits, including fewer risk-taking behaviours and better mental health in adulthood (Ballard et al., 2019).
- Adolescent volunteering is positively associated with one's future level of education and personal earnings (Kim & Morgül, 2017).
- Students who volunteer regularly during adolescence are more likely to volunteer as adults (Moorfoot et al., 2015).

In Practice

School leaders can help make volunteering a part of school culture by regularly highlighting opportunities for student volunteers.



What can schools do?

There are a range of opportunities for students to volunteer in their communities, and schools can seek to align students with those opportunities.

- [Volunteering Australia](#): The national body for volunteering aimed at supporting inclusive volunteer opportunities across different sectors and communities.
- [GoVolunteer](#): A national online platform where volunteers can search for volunteering opportunities in Australia across various fields and locations.

Beyond these, schools may also consider local opportunities through charitable organisations, sports associations, leadership programs and town or community offices.



In the Classroom

All students can benefit from volunteering. School personnel can help prepare students for volunteer service through the following actions:

- Use case studies and personal experiences to illustrate how volunteering can make a difference in the world.
- Openly discuss the benefits associated with volunteering, including gaining new experiences, skills, and friendships.
- Develop rewards systems and awards ceremonies to motivate student participation in volunteering.
- Form connections with local community organisations in order to build out potential opportunities for student volunteers.
- Align volunteer opportunities with the skills and interests of students.
- Encourage secondary school students to start early when arranging volunteer opportunities to meet graduation requirements.

References

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