

## **4. Read Write Now! POLICY DOCUMENT**

### **1. Interpretations**

The following terms shall have the following meanings:

- a. The “Program” means the *Read Write Now!* Program as funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development
- b. The “staff” means the paid staff
- c. The “Coordinators” means the voluntary Coordinators
- d. The “volunteers” means the Coordinators, tutors and voluntary administration support people

### **2. Purpose**

The *Read Write Now!* Program exists solely to provide adults with opportunities to access quality one-to-one tuition, free of charge to the student, in order to increase their literacy and/or numeracy skills and fulfill their individual needs and enable them to participate more fully in society.

### **3. Definition of Volunteer Work within the context of the Read Write Now! Program**

Voluntary work may be defined as unpaid work that is chosen freely by a person and is carried out for the benefit of the individual and the community.

Voluntary work does not imply that the work is free from set standards or a regular commitment. Both the standards and time commitment are to be established in consultation between staff and Coordinators to ensure the Program operates effectively.

### **4. Policy Statement**

The scope of the Program is restricted to providing ongoing tutoring services in the areas of literacy and/or numeracy to adults who are making active progress with literacy and/or numeracy skills. The Program will operate within the following parameters:

1. The Program generally defines as adults, people who are over 18 years of age and have left the school system.
2. Any adult wishing to receive tuition is invited to apply without fear of discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic origin, disability or religion.
3. Students will only be considered for the Program if they have applied under their own volition and are motivated to improve their literacy skills.
4. The RWN Program is designed for potential students who already have basic competent oral communication in English but low literacy. Potential students need to have functional spoken English as a basis for the development of skills in reading, writing and spelling and/or basic maths. Priority is to be given to permanent residents. Where

possible, applicants unable to meet these criteria will be directed to other appropriate services that meet their needs. Coordinator's discretion can be used in special circumstances in regions where no other appropriate services exist.

5. Students will initially be accepted into the Program for a period of 12 months with tutoring sessions of approximately 1.5 hours per week. At the end of this period, the volunteer tutor and student will review the progress made, any further literacy goals of the student and the level of expertise of the tutor to assist the student to reach the new goals. If there is a waiting list of students, each case needs to be discussed with the Coordinator before continuing beyond 12 months of tutoring. The Coordinator may be asked to assist in recommending referral options.
6. A student's involvement in the Program may be terminated by the student at any time. The volunteer Coordinator may terminate a student's involvement if the student is not motivated to make progress towards literacy, or if the needs of the student are beyond the level of expertise of volunteer tutors and cannot be met within the Program. Wherever possible, the student will be referred to another agency with the expertise to assist them.
7. The Coordinator will contact both the student and the tutor individually after the first 6 weeks of tutoring to ensure the match is agreeable to both parties.
8. The role of the volunteer is restricted to that of a tutor in the area of literacy and/or numeracy only and must not extend to counselling, social work or the work of a social trainer or any other professional role beyond the scope of the Program. Volunteers should not be seen as depriving others of a livelihood (eg conducting classroom sessions) or constituting a threat to the security and job satisfaction of others or jeopardising the well-being of students by taking on inappropriate roles.
9. The volunteer tutor has the right to decline the offer of being matched with a particular student.
10. Any person wishing to register their interest in becoming a volunteer tutor is invited to do so without fear of discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, religion or race. However, due to the limited range of work and the type of work to be undertaken and the specific needs of adult learners, not all applicants can be accepted. The success of the Program relies on the principle of "the right person in the right job". Wherever possible, if this Program is not appropriate for an applicant, other options are to be recommended.
11. All tutors must agree to RWN! applying for a Police Check on their behalf. They will sign an Application for Volunteer National Police Check form at the time of interview. Costs involved in obtaining Police Checks will be covered by RWN! when done through our system.

12. If the Police Check shows the applicant has current convictions, the manager has the right to request further information before deciding if the applicant is appropriate for this Program. This request will be made to the applicant by Central Office staff only and may take the form of requesting the applicant to obtain a Police Certificate from a Police Station at their own expense.
13. If tutors have an existing Police Certificate that is less than 2 years old, a copy of this can be submitted to RWN! instead of applying for a new check.
14. Re-checks of Police Checks will be done every three years.
15. For procedures relating to Police Checks please see Coordinator's manual, Section 6 "Admin", Part 1(b) "Tutors - Police Checks".
16. Central Institute of Technology will provide the "RiskCover" insurance policy for volunteers while on duty. Volunteers are not covered while engaging in duties outside their Job Description. See *Section 3 The Tutor - Tutor Job Description*.
17. It is recommended that tutoring takes place in a "neutral venue", eg public library, on TAFE premises, community centres, coffee shops etc rather than in private homes.
18. The Program's funding allows for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for volunteer Coordinators only. Telephone and travel expenses can be reimbursed on the production of receipts and a travel log. Other expenses such as catering for Tutor Meetings can also be claimed as long as they fall within the group's budget, and do not include alcohol. The Program does not have the resources to pay out-of-pocket expenses for volunteer tutors.
19. Volunteers are given a "Welcome to New Tutors" brochure upon interview, giving a clear statement of their entitlements, rights and responsibilities. They can also access the Policy and procedures for grievance resolution through the RWN! website, which is listed on the brochure.
20. Volunteers are requested to undertake the high quality training by professional trainers to prepare them for their work and to enable the volunteer to make informed choices on the type of student they can assist within their level of expertise.
21. Volunteers are provided with the necessary teaching resources (within budget).
22. The work of volunteers is recognised with a system of rewards and recognition in return for their efforts based on milestones of continuous active service.
23. All information on students is to be treated as confidential, and only released/discussed with the consent of the student.

## **5. Procedures**

All procedures in relation to the involvement of volunteers and students including interviews, selection, assessments, Police Checks, unsatisfactory performance, grievance procedures and rights and responsibilities are to be clearly documented in plain English and freely available on the RWN! website.

## **6. Non Profit**

The assets and income of *Read Write Now!* shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above mentioned objectives and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.

## **7. Policy Review**

This Policy should be reviewed annually. Proposed amendments are to be circulated to all staff and Coordinators for open discussion and input.