

VOLUNTEER POLICY



Help for non-English-speaking persons is available. Please contact the school administration on 9707 7799

PURPOSE

This document outlines the processes that Berwick Chase Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise, and manage volunteers to provide a safe environment for children and explains the legal rights of volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision, and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: As defined by the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), child-related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Closely related family member: parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father-in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother, or sister, including step or half-siblings.

Volunteer worker: A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in schoolwork or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work: School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out by the school council, any parents' club or association, or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school.



- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council.
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten.
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support.

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (i.e. indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Berwick Chase Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices that protect the safety and well-being of children, staff, and volunteers.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Berwick Chase Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to contribute to our school community positively.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer must read the Child Safe Standards information and sign the code of conduct.

Suitability checks, including Working with Children clearances.

- See the school Working with Children clearance check policy.

Working with students

Berwick Chase Primary School values the many volunteers that assist e.g.: in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/other events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Berwick Chase Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Berwick Chase Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the office for verification in the following circumstances:

- Volunteers who are not parent/family members of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.



- Parent/family volunteers who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is not participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- Parent/family volunteers who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- Parent/family volunteers who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- Parent/Community School Council members sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their child is a student member or not.

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our school may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Non-child-related work

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child related. For example, they may volunteer on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, parent and friend club coordination, school council, participating in subcommittees of the school council, fete coordination, and other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings during which children will not be or would not reasonably be expected to be present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work, and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Berwick Chase Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any activities or circumstances.

Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards volunteers must have an appropriate induction and training in child safety and wellbeing.

To support us to maintain a child safe environment, before engaging in any work where children are present or reasonably likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Induction Pack and ensure the actions and requirements in these documents are followed when volunteering for our school. Volunteers will be given training around Child Safety Issues and responsibilities during induction courses held on a regular basis at the school by teacher in charge of Volunteers in the school.



Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Berwick Chase Primary School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to, our Child Safety Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine the level of school staff supervision required for volunteers, depending on the type of work being performed, and with a focus on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students.

The principal has the discretion to decide about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether a person is suitable to volunteer at Berwick Chase Primary School.

Privacy and information-sharing

Volunteers must ensure that any student information they become aware of because of their volunteer work is managed sensitively and in accordance with the Schools' Privacy Policy and the Department's policy on Privacy and Information Sharing.

Under these policies, student information can and should be shared with relevant school staff to:

- support the student's education, wellbeing, and health.
- reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm to the student, other students, staff, or visitors.
- make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the student's disability; or
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

Volunteers must immediately report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a member of staff to ensure appropriate action. There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police. For further information on child safety responding and reporting obligations refer to: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures.

Records management

While it is unlikely volunteers will be responsible for any school records during their volunteer work, any school records that volunteers are responsible for must be provided to Jodie Day to ensure they are managed in accordance with the Department's policy: Records Management – Schools.



Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury while engaging in schoolwork.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property while carrying out schoolwork, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the **Department's Legal Division**.

Public liability insurance

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in schoolwork is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website Included in induction processes for relevant staff.
- Included in our staff handbook/manual.
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting.
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Berwick Chase Primary School policies:

- *Statement of Values,*
- *Visitors Policy,*
- *Child Safe Policy,*
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Sexual Harassment](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools](#)



- [Volunteer OHS Management](#)
- [Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Workplace Bullying](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2024
Consultation	School Council/Administration
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027