

VOLUNTEER POLICY



on 9707 7799

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

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 usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child, which is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional 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.
- Aiding in the work of any school
- 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 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.

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 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.

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 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 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.

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 [insert staff member] 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