



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy sets out the processes that Broadmeadows Valley Primary School (BVPS) will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers. This policy aims to communicate the legal rights of volunteers at BVPS. All schools have a duty of care to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at BVPS. While the School encourages an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages volunteers and visitors, it also recognises that the school has legal obligations to comply with, including its duty of care to its staff and students to provide a safe and secure environment at all times. At the same time, it is important that volunteers and visitors feel welcome and comfortable in a friendly school environment that values their input.

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: 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 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/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 for the welfare of a school, 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

The above are broad definitions. It 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 schoolwork in good faith.

POLICY

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. BVPS recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that they do.

This Policy has been developed to ensure that Broadmeadows Valley Primary School's volunteers are deemed suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a Volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to contact the General Office staff. Some examples of work carried out at the school by volunteers include: - attending excursions or assisting with special events, listening to students read, assisting with fund raising endeavours, joining school council.

The Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC) sets out the minimum requirements for WWC Checks. The Child Safe Standards are another law relevant to schools that requires appropriate screening measures/suitability checks to be undertaken in relation to volunteers and visitors. The following process is to ensure that the school is compliant with both pieces of legislation and Department Policy.

- The safety of children is the highest priority for this school.
- Volunteers are actively encouraged to participate in school activities and will be invited to do so.
- The School will regularly communicate opportunities for Volunteers to participate in activities by publishing notices in the weekly Newsletter, advising parents at year level information sessions and in other informal ways. The compliance requirements outlined in this Policy for Volunteers at the School will be regularly published in the School Newsletter.
- All volunteers must have a current Working with Children Check and this must be recorded at the school office prior to volunteer work being undertaken.
- Volunteers will be required to register at the administration office daily and wear a visitors' badge whilst in the school.
- Prior to the commencement of any volunteering activities, the School will provide appropriate training/orientation programs for Volunteers to enable them to understand their role and to provide clarity about what is expected and how they can positively contribute to the School's programs. This training should cover a range of issues relating to the activity and may include confidentiality, privacy, safety and legal liability.
- As part of this training, all Volunteers are to receive a copy of this policy (and any other relevant School documents) clarifying their obligations as a Volunteer.
- In addition, staff directly supervising Volunteers performing activities either in the classroom or elsewhere will, prior to the commencement (and as required), provide clear direction and support regarding what is required and expected in performing the activities.
- All volunteers assisting in School activities inside the learning neighbourhood are required to sign the School's Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix 1) prior to commencing work at the School.

- It is the responsibility of the School to maintain and keep updated a register of all WWCC/Police Records Checks held by volunteers and visitors. The School Office staff must sight and retain copies of a WWC Card and Police Records Check (where required under this policy or by law) and place them on the School's register.
- The School's Emergency Management procedures will ensure that all Volunteers/Visitors within the School at any time of an emergency or an emergency practice drill will be recognised and included.
- All School staff will be encouraged to be proactive and make enquiries of any unidentified volunteer or visitor (i.e., any person at the School who they believe may fall under the definition of volunteer or visitor and who is not wearing a badge identifying them as such) and refer them to the Administration Office to comply with the School's policy.
- Volunteer workers are covered by DET'S Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in schoolwork or when travelling to or from the place where the schoolwork is to occur.
- Volunteer school workers are not liable in any civil proceedings for anything done, or not done, in good faith in providing a community service.
- If a volunteer suffers damage to his or her property in the course of carrying out schoolwork, the Minister may authorise such compensation as the Minister thinks reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature are to be directed to:

The Manager
 Liability Services Unit
 Executive and Ministerial Services
 Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Level 3, 2 Treasury Place
 East Melbourne 3002

- It is the responsibility of the School Council appointed Coordinator to ensure that volunteers working at working bees comply with OH&S requirements. Please refer to the website below with links to Volunteer Workers and Working Bees.
- It is recommended this Policy be read in conjunction with the school's Child Safe Policy and the Working with Children Check- Volunteers Policy

Suitability Checks Including Working with Children Checks

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, the school is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working with Children Check, proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Kings Park Primary is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card at the General Office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school are required to have a WWC Check 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 regardless of whether their child is participating or not.

- **Parent/family volunteers** who assist with excursions, including swimming and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating 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, volunteering on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete other fundraising groups that may meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At law, volunteers who are not engaged in child-related work (e.g., as per the examples previously mentioned) do not need a WWC Check under the WWC Act. However, the Child Safe Standards require appropriate suitability checks which is at the discretion of the school for any **child-connected** work which is work performed where children are present or reasonably expected to be present. Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have Working with Children or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities.

However, Broadmeadows Valley Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity, Working with Children Checks, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Management and Supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy/Statement of Commitment to Child Safety], our Child Safety Code of Conduct and other relevant school policies such as Statement of Values. 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 make a decision about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at Kings Park Primary School.

Broadmeadows Valley Primary School will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal (or nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Broadmeadow's Valley Primary School child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. BVPS has a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all staff and volunteers should be aware of.

The principal (or nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

Compensation

Personal injury

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

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of 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 staff induction processes and staff training
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/hr/pages/hr.aspx

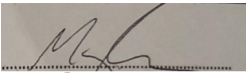
www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/crimcheck.aspx

Suitability for Employment Policy (Manual) 2 February 2016

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/Child Safe Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct

EVALUATION AND RATIFICATION

This policy was last updated August 2021. It will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or before in line with DET requirements or mandates. Amendments or changes to this policy will take place after consultation with staff, school community and School Council.

Policy	BVPS Volunteer Policy
BVPS School Council President	Signed: 
Principal	

	Signed: <u>C. Ziano</u>
Reviewed	August 2021
Ratified with staff on	/ /2021