



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Florence Street Blackburn 3130

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Blackburn Lake Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers 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 our school.

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 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 school work 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

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 (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

POLICY

Blackburn Lake Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Blackburn Lake Primary School recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do. Our Volunteers Program enables volunteer parents, guardians, members of the community to participate as valued members of the Blackburn Lake Primary school community with a goal of enhancing student learning.

Our Volunteers Program aims to:

- Enable the learning of students by providing additional support to the classroom program
- Increase partnership between students, teachers and parents/guardians
- Help facilitate the variety and breadth of experiences that students can have whilst at Blackburn Lake Primary School by offering additional skills and experiences.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Blackburn Lake Primary School's volunteers are suitable to work with children and are well-placed to make a positive contribution to our school community.

Becoming a volunteer

The school encourages the involvement of parents through newsletters, parent planners and teacher requests. All volunteers must possess a **Working with Children Check** valid for the duration of the current school year. This will be recorded in a register by the office staff.

Working with students

Blackburn Lake Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms, with sports events, excursions, camps, school concerts and other community events and programs. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Blackburn Lake Primary 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 Blackburn Lake Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require all volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card the school 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 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, 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 own 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, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination, other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings, during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Participants in these committees or groups or volunteers at these activities and events will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, we believe that it is important that our volunteers who are involved in making important decisions about our school which will have an impact on students do have a valid WWC Check.

In addition to this Parents and other members of the school community who volunteer during the day or evening at school held community events not directly related to student learning, but where they come into contact with students are required to have a WWC Check. These events include, but are not limited to Mother's Day Stall, Christmas Concert BBQ, SpringFest, Colour Run, Foodie Days, Canteen Duty etc. It is expected that Coordinators of these fundraising events and community-based activities ensure that all volunteers have a current Working With Children Check.

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

Policy. 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 Blackburn Lake Primary School.

Blackburn Lake Primary School will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal (or their 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 child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. It is an expectation that all volunteers have read and understand our Child Safe Policy and obligations pertaining to this as volunteers.

The principal (or their 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 school work.

Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, 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 school work is legally liable for:

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

RELATED POLICIES

*Statement of Values,
Child Safety Policy*

EVALUATION

This policy is due for review in September 2023.

RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL: November, 2020.

PRINCIPAL: Loisia Steed SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT: Jennee Chan