



## VOLUNTEERS POLICY

### BLACKBURN LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

12 - 14 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-connected work:* work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

*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 members:* 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, and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children 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.

At BLPS, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check.

School council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide evidence of a valid WWC Clearance. Whilst we acknowledge that these volunteers will not be engaging in child-related work as part of their role, even when there is a student sitting on the School Council, 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 Clearance

## **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.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Blackburn Lake 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 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 (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.

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.

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 BLPS.

## **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 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 the school's office 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 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.

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions if held
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## RELATED POLICIES

- [BLPS Statement of Values and School Philosophy](#)
- [BLPS Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- *Visitors Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy,*
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct,*
- *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy,*

Department policies:

- [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Privacy and Information Sharing](#)
- [Records Management – School Records](#)
- [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**

This policy was last updated in September 2020 and is scheduled for review in September 2023.

Policy last reviewed	June 2023
Consultation	Staff School Council
Approved by	Principal David Dowson
Next scheduled review date	June 2025