

BELMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL

VOLUNTEERS POLICY



Belmont Primary is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. We recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community. This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

AIM

- To outline the processes that Belmont Primary School will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment.
- To ensure the legal rights of volunteers is understood.

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 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
- 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Belmont 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

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to respond to invitations extended through the school newsletter or via school notices to assist in classrooms, at special events or on excursions. Volunteers are regularly invited to assist with school fundraising and other organisational matters (eg book covering) and enquiries are always welcomed at the school office.

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, Belmont 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.

The school will refer to the Department of Education and Training (DET)'s Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools on the *School Policy and Advisory Guide*, to ensure that our school processes for requiring *Working with Children Checks* are compliant with current legislation and DET requirements.

Working with students

Belmont Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms and with sports events, camps, excursions, special school events and specific programs. We also value the community members who volunteer their time to assist with fundraising, working bees, the school fair and other special projects throughout the school year. Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Belmont Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the administration staff 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 or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any one-off 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 where the volunteer assumes the supervisory role of a small group or is included in the staffing ratio, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities throughout the school year including the classroom helpers program and Parent Club organised student events (e.g. school disco), regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **School Council members** - The school recognises the role that volunteers on School Council and Sub-Committees have in making important decisions about our school. This also complies with the Child Safe Standards requirement for appropriate suitability checks for any **child-connected** work.

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 club coordination, 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.

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, Belmont 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 their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, 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 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 Belmont Primary School.

Belmont Primary School will provide any appropriate induction, briefing 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. Volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Belmont Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures in accordance with our Child Safety Reporting procedures.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed. This will depend on the nature of the volunteer work and whether or not it will require working directly with students. The school's Duty of Care and Visitors policies will be adhered to in relation to any volunteer working in direct contact with students.

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 or damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

- Statement of Values and Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- *Duty of Care Policy (under development)*

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every 3-4 years in accordance with the school's policy schedule or as required if regulations or circumstances change.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in.....

September 2018

Review Date: 2021