



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Belmore 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 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.

Schoolwork: Schoolwork 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

Belmore School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Volunteers add significant value to the human resources available to the school, and consequently deserve encouragement, effective management, support and recognition.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Belmore 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 engage in school activities and will be invited to do so.
- Volunteers will be inducted into the school by a member of the Leadership Team. This induction includes discussions on confidentiality and Occupational Health and Safety.
- Volunteers will be provided with any support or instruction necessary to help them perform their tasks at school in a confident and effective manner.
- Volunteers will be sought formally through the newsletter, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.
- The school will seek to provide a variety of opportunities for volunteer participation, particularly for family members, and opportunities for volunteers to be involved in classes or specialist classes.
- Volunteers will be provided with an appropriate induction as well as any support, professional development or instruction necessary to help them carry out their tasks at school in a confident and effective manner.
- Volunteers are expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.
- Volunteers will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable or untrained.
- Volunteers may be sought to assist with excursions and school camps.
- Volunteers will be required to register at reception daily, and wear a visitors badge whilst in the school.
- Volunteers will be invited to use the staff room and facilities.
- A morning tea will be provided in term 4 to thank volunteers for their contributions throughout the year.
- Volunteer workers undertaking schoolwork on behalf of, and with the approval of, the school council or principal are indemnified as to their personal liability in similar terms to teachers.
- Volunteer school workers are covered by the DET Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.
- The Principal of the school or the School Council may terminate any invitation to a person to volunteer.

COVID-19 vaccination information

Our school follows Department of Education and Training policy with respect to the requirements relating to attendance on school sites and COVID-19 vaccinations.

For further information, refer to:

- [COVID-19 Vaccinations – Visitors and Volunteers on School Sites](#)



Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

- Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment.
- In compliance with the Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000 and Health Records Act 2001, volunteers are to maintain complete confidentiality regarding issues that relate to students, staff and/or other members of the school community.
- All volunteers must provide a current Working with Children check prior to their participation.
- Volunteers will be registered on a school data base for volunteer workers which is approved by School Council.

Working with students

Belmore School values the many volunteers that assists 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 *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Belmore 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, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Belmore School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Administration officer or person conducting the induction process 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 (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 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 Belmore, 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, 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.

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, Belmore 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.

Training and induction

Under the Child Safe Standards, Belmore School will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers 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.

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

All volunteers will be taken through an induction process by the Principal or nominee. See Volunteer Induction OHS Checklist.

Depending on the nature and responsibilities of their role, Belmore School may also require volunteers to complete additional child safety training.

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.

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 and Wellbeing Policy,** Belmore School Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Meal time Assistance Policy, Statement of Values and School Philosophy and Volunteers Induction OHS Handbook.

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.

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 Belmore 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 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 Belmore School 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*.

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

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 Sofia Yannacopoulos 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 ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Discussed in an annual staff briefing/meeting

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Belmore School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values
Visitors Policy
Meal Time Assistance Policy
Statement of Commitment to Child Safety/
Child Safe Policy
Child Safety Code of Conduct
Volunteer Induction
OHS Checklist

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

Policy last reviewed	5th September 2023
Consultation	Community feedback via School website
Approved by	Principal - 5th September 2023
Next scheduled review date	September 2025