



Volunteers Policy

INTRODUCTION

All staff members of Bairnsdale Secondary College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children. Bairnsdale Secondary College embraces the entire school community and the following values:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for the environment
- Be the best you can be.

Additional staff values are:

- Students are the focus
- Working together
- Honour and celebrate diversity.

Our College values provide a strong foundation for this policy.

AIM

To outline the processes that Bairnsdale Secondary College will follow to recruit, screen, supervise and manage volunteers to provide a child safe environment, and to explain the legal rights of volunteers.

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 (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.

POLICY

Bairnsdale Secondary College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. The College recognises and values the significant contribution of volunteers. Volunteers shall be treated with respect and engaged in activities that are safe, appropriate and supported by designated staff.

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to complete the Volunteer Application Form (see Appendix 1), available from the Administration Office.

The Principal or College Council may seek volunteers formally through the school newsletter, written invitations or personal approaches, as well as informally through conversations.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

Working with students

Bairnsdale Secondary College values the many volunteers that assist in our breakfast program, canteen, classrooms, sports events/camps/excursions, 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, Bairnsdale Secondary College is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check (WWC Check), proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Bairnsdale Secondary College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the Administration 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 (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 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 for garden days, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council or other groups/events that meet in the evenings during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

At Bairnsdale Secondary College, volunteers for this type of work will still be required to provide a valid WWC Check and may be required to undertake suitability checks such as proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

School Council members and volunteers on any sub-committee of School Council will be asked to provide a valid WWC Check. While 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 it is important for our volunteers who are involved in decision making that impacts BSC students to have a valid WWC Check. These volunteers may be also required to undertake suitability checks such as proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

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 *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Child Safety Policy*, *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and *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, Occupational Health & Safety, Privacy and Confidentiality.

Volunteers should maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times – this includes speaking style/language, respect for personal space and care with any physical contact.

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 Bairnsdale Secondary College.

Bairnsdale Secondary College 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 Bairnsdale Secondary College'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.

Volunteers will be required to register at the Administration Office on their arrival.

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

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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.

OTHER RESOURCES / CONTACT NUMBERS

- Volunteer Workers:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/volunteers.aspx>
- Volunteer Checks
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/volunteers.aspx>
- Contractor and Volunteer Worker OHS Management
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/safetyhw/Pages/contractormgtohsms.aspx>
- Child Safe Standards Resources
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/chilsafestandards.aspx>

RELATED DOCUMENTS / KEY REFERENCES

BSC Documents:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct.

APPENDIX 1:



BSC Volunteer Agreement

As a volunteer at BAIRNSDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE, I agree to:

1. Work as a volunteer in the area/s of
2. Discuss any concerns in relation to college matters with a member of the Principal team.
3. Keep all college related matters confidential and under no circumstances approach parents or community members in relation to issues arising at the college. I understand this is the responsibility of the Principal.
4. Abide by the terms and conditions detailed in the volunteer policy which include a Working with Children Check.

As a Volunteer

- I have participated in an induction program and I understand my responsibilities regarding mandatory reporting, occupational health safety & welfare procedures, duty of care to students and confidentiality. I have also received training specific to my area of volunteer work.
- I understand that if I breach any of the above agreements my services as a volunteer may be terminated.

VOLUNTEER

Signed.....

Name..... Date

PRINCIPAL

Signed.....

Name..... Date

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