



# Volunteers Policy

## BANYULE PRIMARY SCHOOL



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school administration team on 03 9459 0732 or [banyule.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:banyule.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

## PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Banyule 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 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

Banyule Primary School is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Banyule Primary School also recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers provide to our school community and the work that we do.

The procedures set out below are designed to ensure that Banyule 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 speak with staff members or respond to requests for volunteer assistance for specific events during the year.

### **Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances**

#### ***Working with students***

Banyule Primary School values the many volunteers that assist in our classrooms/with sports events/camps/excursions/school concerts/other events. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Banyule Primary School is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working with Children (WWC) Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required depending on the volunteer role, such as reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

Where prospective volunteers are required under the law and this policy to have a WWC Clearance, the Principal has the discretion to accept evidence of a WWC check application in order to commence volunteer work, provided the volunteer provides the school with evidence of the final WWC Clearance application outcome (clearance or exclusion) as soon as practicable after the applicant receives it.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Banyule Primary School is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to a member of the administration team for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/carer/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/carer/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/carer/family volunteers** who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- **Parent/carer/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/carers 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, parents/carers 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 WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, Banyule Primary School reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

### **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 reasonable likely to be present, volunteers must familiarise themselves with the policies, procedures and code of conduct referred to in our Child Safety Volunteer 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, Banyule 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 and Wellbeing Policy, 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 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 Banyule Primary 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 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 Principal 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'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'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
- Included as a link in all invitations to prospective volunteers
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

### **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

Banyule Primary School policies and resources relevant to this policy include:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Child Safety Volunteer Induction Pack

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	June 2024
Consultation	School Council – September 2024 – Consultation is mandatory
Approved by	Principal – September 2024
Next scheduled review date	June 2026 - the mandatory minimum review cycle for this policy is 2 years



# Volunteers Child Safety Induction Pack

BANYULE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Purpose

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at our school. The purpose of this induction pack is to ensure Banyule Primary School volunteers are familiar with our policies and procedures relating to child safety and understand the important role they play in maintaining and promoting the safety of our students.

Volunteers must read the suite of policies and procedures in the links below before commencing any work where children are likely to be present.

## Key messages

Helpers are a valuable asset to our school. When working in the school, helpers should do so on the understanding that their role is to support the teachers and the school's program. If you would like to be a helper/volunteer we request that you follow these attached guidelines to ensure a successful experience for all. The success of many classroom programs, relies on the effort and dedication of helpers.

Like all education facilities, Banyule Primary School is governed by various legislation.

The *'Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014'* and the *'Privacy Act 1988'*, the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) contained within the *Privacy Act*, the *'Victorian Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004'* and the *'Victorian OHS Regulations 2007'* are some examples of such legislation. The Department of Education Victoria (DE) has implemented an OHS Management System (OHSMS) in all Victorian Government schools. These laws, amongst others, provide a framework for how we go about collecting, using and sharing information within the school and within the wider community.

We take these laws very seriously and use them as a strict guideline to create an environment that is safe, free from ridicule, respectful of an individual's privacy and at the same time allowing a child to learn and grow as an individual and at their own pace.

- Banyule Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where diversity is supported and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the Regional Office of the Department of Education on 1300 338 691.

## Induction materials – must read

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with. If you would prefer a hard copy of this pack, please contact the team in the office who will happily provide you with one.

- Banyule Primary School's Volunteers Policy
- Banyule Primary School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Banyule Primary School's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Banyule Primary School's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)

- [PROTECT: Identify child abuse](#)

### **Contact**

We value your feedback on ways we can continue to improve and strengthen our child safety approach and encourage you to contact the Principal or Assistant Principal with any comments or questions.

Volunteers are a valuable asset to our school. When working in a classroom, volunteers should do so on the understanding that their role is to support the classroom teacher and the classroom teacher's program. If you would like to volunteer to help we request that read and sign the following Code of Conduct.

In addition to the information contained in the Volunteer Induction Pack, a volunteer at Banyule Primary School will also need adhere to the following:

- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Avoid passing opinions on matters such as behaviour management or teaching styles outside of the classroom.
- Avoid comparing children and their work.
- Do not read any child's communication book or diary.
- Treat all children equally and with respect.
- Give all children equal time and attention where possible.
- Encourage children to be independent - we expect children to try everything themselves before we help them.
- Be aware that you may not always be working with your own child.
- Do not lift, carry or move a child in any way.
- Do not photograph a child other than your own.
- Do not text or approach a parent/carer of a child after assisting in the classroom.

Tell a staff member as soon as possible if a child discusses a matter that concerns you. The teacher will then deal with the matter accordingly. It is vital that you do not share anything about specific children other than with the classroom teacher. The class teacher has the responsibility of informing parents/carers of any concerns about a child. (Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014)

- Ensure that you sign in and out of the classroom register every time.