



## VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Approved by School Council – November 2018

### PURPOSE

To outline the processes that Bentleigh 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.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the recruitment, screening, supervision and management of all people who volunteer at our school.

### DEFINITIONS

*Child-related work:* work that usually involves direct contact with a child (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) 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, carer's parent, 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

Bentleigh Secondary College is committed to implementing and following practices which protect the safety and wellbeing of children and our staff and volunteers. Bentleigh Secondary College 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 Bentleigh Secondary College'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 contact the school. The school will ask for volunteers when assistance is needed for specific events, and detail the process for becoming a volunteer.

#### Suitability checks including Working with Children Checks

##### *Working with students*

Bentleigh Secondary College values the volunteers who assist our school. To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, Bentleigh Secondary College 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.



Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Bentleigh Secondary College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to the 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. This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.
- **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 are required to have a Working with Children Check. This is a legal requirement under the *Working with Children Check Act*.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating 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 on the weekend for gardening, maintenance, working bees, parents and friends club coordination, school council, participating in sub-committees of school council, fete coordination and other fundraising groups that meet in the evenings. If student leaders are present in these meetings, school staff members must also be present to supervise students attending the meeting.

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. However, Bentleigh Secondary College reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including proof of identity and 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 Child Safety Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. 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 Bentleigh Secondary College.

Bentleigh 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 with induction in relation to Bentleigh 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.

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

#### **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last approved by school council on 20 November 2018 and is scheduled for review in November 2021.