



VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

WELCOME

Welcome and thank you for your generosity in offering to be a volunteer at Blue Mountains Steiner School. Volunteers are a valuable part of our school community and volunteer work assists us to provide an extensive and rich educational program for our students.

The aim of this handbook is to introduce volunteering at BMSS and provide you with information about the school and our expectations of you when volunteering.

Volunteers are expected to support the schools ethos and support our work in Steiner education.

The nature of volunteer work at the school often involves work and interactions with children, which means that there are obligations and responsibilities as volunteers. You should review this handbook as part of your volunteer induction. Further training or instruction may be required for specific volunteering roles.

PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING

The following nationally recognised principles of volunteering are supported by Blue Mountains Steiner School:

- Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- Volunteer work is unpaid
- Volunteering is always a matter of choice
- Volunteering is a legitimate and rewarding way in which people can participate in the activities of their community
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals to address human, environmental and social needs
- Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others

Reference: Definitions and Principles of Volunteering – Volunteering Australia

OVERVIEW

The BMSS Volunteer Code of Conduct outlines a standard of behavior expected from volunteers at our school. The school recognises our volunteers as one of our greatest assets. The Code of Conduct is to guide and enhance the conduct of volunteers in performing their duties within the school. The Code of Conduct sets out the School's expectations with respect to personal conduct and its intent is to promote integrity and ethical behaviour and to guide individuals' dealings with students and members of the school community.

WHO HAS TO COMPLY WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

All volunteers, whether parents, ex-students, staff or the wider community must comply with the Code of Conduct.

By accepting a volunteer role with the School, you must be aware of and comply with this Code.

Therefore, you must:

- a) conduct yourself in a manner that upholds the ethos and reputation of the School
- b) comply with the School's policies and procedures
- c) act ethically and responsibly
- d) be accountable for your actions and decisions

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU AS A VOLUNTEER?

As a School Volunteer, you are expected to:

- a) perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance
- b) follow reasonable instructions given by staff or your supervisor
- c) comply with lawful directions
- d) be courteous and responsive in dealing with staff, students, parents and members of the public (if applicable)
- e) work collaboratively with staff and your fellow volunteers
- f) ensure that your conduct is consistent with the ethos of the School and does not damage the reputation of the School

WHAT HAPPENS IF I BREACH THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

Actions that may be taken by the School in respect of a breach of the Code include disciplinary actions ranging from a warning to termination of the volunteer role and reporting to the relevant regulatory authorities. The school will reserve the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code.

CHILD PROTECTION

At BMSS the safety, wellbeing and protection of our students is our highest priority. Volunteers should be aware that Child Protection Legislation applies to them in the course of their duties as a volunteer and a breach of the Legislation can lead to criminal charges and being barred from working with children by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

You must be aware of and comply with the School's Child Protection Policy available on the BMSS website at www.bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au.

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)* a volunteer who suspects a child has suffered harm from abuse or neglect is required to report the matter to the Principal as soon as possible (within 24 hours) of becoming aware of the harm or risk of harm. Volunteers who have reasonable grounds for suspecting a child has suffered mistreatment or that there is risk of significant harm, can lawfully make a report without fear of legal repercussion.

Depending on the nature of the situation, the Principal may report or identify the concern to the Department of Family and Community Services. A volunteer may also report suspected child abuse directly.

OBLIGATIONS TO PROTECT CHILDREN

You must report any concerns you may have about any employee, contractor or volunteer engaging in "reportable conduct" or any allegation of "reportable conduct" that has been made to you to the Principal.

Under the *Ombudsman's Act 1974*, as a result of being a volunteer in a school, you may be reported to the NSW Ombudsman if an allegation is received that you have engaged in 'reportable conduct'.

Reportable Conduct is defined as any sexual offence, sexual misconduct (either involves a child or in the presence of a child), physical assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child or any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

The school has an obligation under the Act to investigate any of the above allegations even if the allegation relates to a matter that occurred away from your role as a volunteer. A sustained allegation under the Act may lead to criminal charges and may affect your ability to continue as a volunteer, and your ability to obtain a future Working With Children Check.

If, through your volunteer role, you have concerns about or become aware of a serious crime committed by another person, you are required to report it to the abovementioned staff, who may be required to inform statutory authorities.

As a volunteer, you must report to staff:

- a) any concerns that you may have about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person;
- b) any concerns you may have about the inappropriate actions of any other staff member, contractor or volunteer that involves children or young people;

- c) any concerns you may have about any other staff member, contractor or volunteer engaging in “reportable conduct” or any allegation of “reportable conduct” that has been made to you;
- d) if you become aware that a staff member, contractor or volunteer has been charged with or convicted of an offence involving “reportable conduct”; and
- e) if you become the subject of allegations of “reportable conduct” whether or not they relate to your role in the School.
- f) if you become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

As a volunteer, it is important to understand the boundaries governing your relationship with students. This knowledge is important to protect yourself against any accusations of impropriety and it is vital to protect our students.

As a volunteer, you should avoid situations where you are alone in an enclosed space with a student.

You should never drive a student in your car unless you have specific permission from the school.

You must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of your duties. Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student. Always advise the student of what you intend doing and seek their consent.

You must not develop a relationship with any student (other than your own child) that is, or that can be, interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency and of equality of treatment.

At all times when speaking with students, care must be taken to use appropriate language. You must always treat students with respect and without favoritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.

You must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where you disclose information about yourself. You must not

- a) invite students to your home;
- b) visit students at their home

unless you have the express permission of their parents or caregiver or you are doing so as a normal part of your parental relationship to your child.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING / WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

Under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, you may be required to undertake a working with children check (WWCC) with the Office of the Children’s Guardian depending on your volunteer role and relationship to the school.

A Working with Children Check is a prerequisite for anyone in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and review of findings of workplace misconduct. The Working with Children Check for volunteers does not attract a fee.

Specifically, the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013* contains two exemptions for all parents volunteers:

- (i) Volunteering by a parent or close relative of a child in activities at Knox; and
- (ii) Volunteering by a parent or close relative, with a team, program or other activity in which the child usually participates or is team member.

If you are advised that a WWCC is required in your volunteer capacity, you must provide this to the office administration team (Karen, Lisa or Martin) for their records (see contact information at the end of this document).

To apply for a Working With Children Check go to www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check. Once your application has been completed online you will receive an application number (APP). To complete the application you will need to take your application number, along with proof of identity, to a NSW Motor Registry, RMS Agency, or Service NSW Office. Details on finding a location are outlined at www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre.

A volunteer must have a current WWCC that has been checked by the BMSS office administration team if attending an overnight camp/ or excursion. A copy of the volunteer's WWCC will be kept on file.

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

The School may end your Volunteer Agreement without notice in circumstances of serious misconduct.

Serious misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- a) any serious breach or persistent breach of any of the provisions of this Agreement;
- b) dishonesty;
- c) disobeying any lawful and reasonable direction issued by the School;
- d) deceiving or misleading the School or other staff;
- e) working while intoxicated or under the influence of an unlawful substance to the extent that you are so impaired that you are unfit to be entrusted with your employment duties;
- f) sexual misconduct;
- g) conviction of any criminal offence;
- h) conduct that causes serious and imminent risk to:
 - a. the health or safety of a person; or
 - b. the reputation, viability or profitability of the School; or
 - c. being found by the School to have acted or proposing to act in a manner contrary to the best interests of the School.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Whilst you are working as a volunteer, you may receive or overhear confidential information regarding students, staff or other volunteers. Confidential information received in the course of your volunteering must be kept confidential.

Confidential Information means all information relating to:

- a) the School's business, current and future students and parents, suppliers, financial affairs, commercial, economic and educational policies of the School; and
- b) the methods, processes, systems, techniques, practices and procedures employed by the School.

You must not, either during your assignment or after it has ended, disclose any Confidential Information developed, accessed or acquired by you as a result of your assignment, except:

- a) as required by law
- b) with the School's prior written consent

Discussing information you have received during your volunteer role with staff, students, family, friends or other volunteers inside or outside the school is not acceptable. You must only use the Confidential Information for the purpose of your assignment and must not use or attempt to use any Confidential Information in any manner which may injure or cause loss to the School.

Confidentiality requirements apply to the use of social media and email.

In your volunteer role, you must not contact the media except with permission from the Principal.

Privacy laws protect personal information about volunteers, students and staff. You may need to be told specific detail about a student to enable you to carry out your volunteer role. We will only provide you with information that is necessary for your role. Not all volunteers you are working with may need to be aware of this information, therefore this information needs to be treated as private and confidential.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Privacy is important to our students, staff, parents and school community. We ask that you do not post photos of students, staff, parents or other volunteers to your social media accounts.

In addition, please use social media with caution and ensure that anything you post would match the values and expectations of the school as per the Conditions of Enrolment, available at www.bluemountainssteiner.nsw.edu.au

Volunteers must not use social media to:

- a) post offensive, inappropriate, disparaging or defamatory comments or material about BMSS, its students, staff, parents or volunteers on any social media account;

- b) make false or misleading claims about BMSS, or allow others to make false or misleading comments about BMSS, on their social media account

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

As a volunteer, you have a responsibility under WH&S legislation to take care of your own health and safety. Considerations of safety relate to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

You must report all incidents, injuries, near misses or hazards that you witness or identify immediately to the Principal. If a hazard is identified and requires immediate attention, you should report the hazard to your direct contact for immediate action.

Administration of prescribed medication to students should only be undertaken by staff and in accordance with school policy.

It is important to be aware of the risk of spreading infection. Prevention of the spread of infection is important especially when working with children.

If you have an infection or virus it is important to inform your direct contact prior to commencing your volunteer role as it may be safer for you and our students for you to fully recover before returning to volunteer.

A copy of the Volunteer Work Health and Safety Policy can be found in Appendix 1.

GRIEVANCES

A grievance is a real or perceived cause for complaint. A grievance can be about discrimination, harassment, bullying or any other related decision or behaviour which a volunteer sees as unfair, upsetting or unjust.

If you are not sure who to raise your grievance with, or would like to talk confidentiality about your concerns please contact the Principal or School Chaplain.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

DRESS CODE

Volunteers are not required to wear a uniform. The school however does require you to wear comfortable covered footwear and smart casual clothing suitable to your volunteer role. If your role requires you to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), this will be supplied to you with instructions of use. If PPE is supplied, it must be worn at all times.

SIGN IN PROCESS AND IDENTIFICATION

When attending or volunteering at the School during standard business hours (Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm), please sign in at reception.

You will be required to wear identification provided to you by the school when volunteering. This may be a lanyard or a visitor's badge. The identification should be worn at all times when you are carrying out your volunteer role. The identification must be returned to the office when you sign out following your volunteering role.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

It is the responsibility of each person to ensure that alcohol and drugs do not impair your work or the safety or performance of others. When volunteering at the school you should not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Smoking is not permitted on school grounds or in any of the school facilities or whilst you are accompanying students of the school whether it be on school premises or at another venue.

HEALTH/MEDICATION

Volunteers should never purchase, give medication to or administer medication to a student. If you are required to give food or drink to a student, please check with the staff member responsible beforehand as there may be health issues of which you are not aware.

EXCURSIONS

Risk assessments are completed prior to all excursions. Volunteers will be advised of the details of their role if they attend excursions.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency, the safety of you and any students in your care is our highest priority.

In the event of an emergency, you should obey all reasonable and lawful directions of staff and follow their guidance.

A copy of the school evacuation maps is provided in the Appendix . Please familiarise yourself with the evacuation routes and assembly points.

THANK YOU

We have provided you with a copy of this Volunteer Code of Conduct, with our expectations and supporting policies. We encourage you to read this document and contact us if you have any questions.

Some of the best experiences you can have of your child's schooling, and the opportunity of developing lifelong friendships can be found in immersing yourself in the school community as a volunteer.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy your experience volunteering at Blue Mountains Steiner School and we look forward to the positive contribution you will be able to make towards the Blue Mountains Steiner School.

Thank you for giving your time in a volunteer capacity for the benefit of our students and the wider BMSS community.

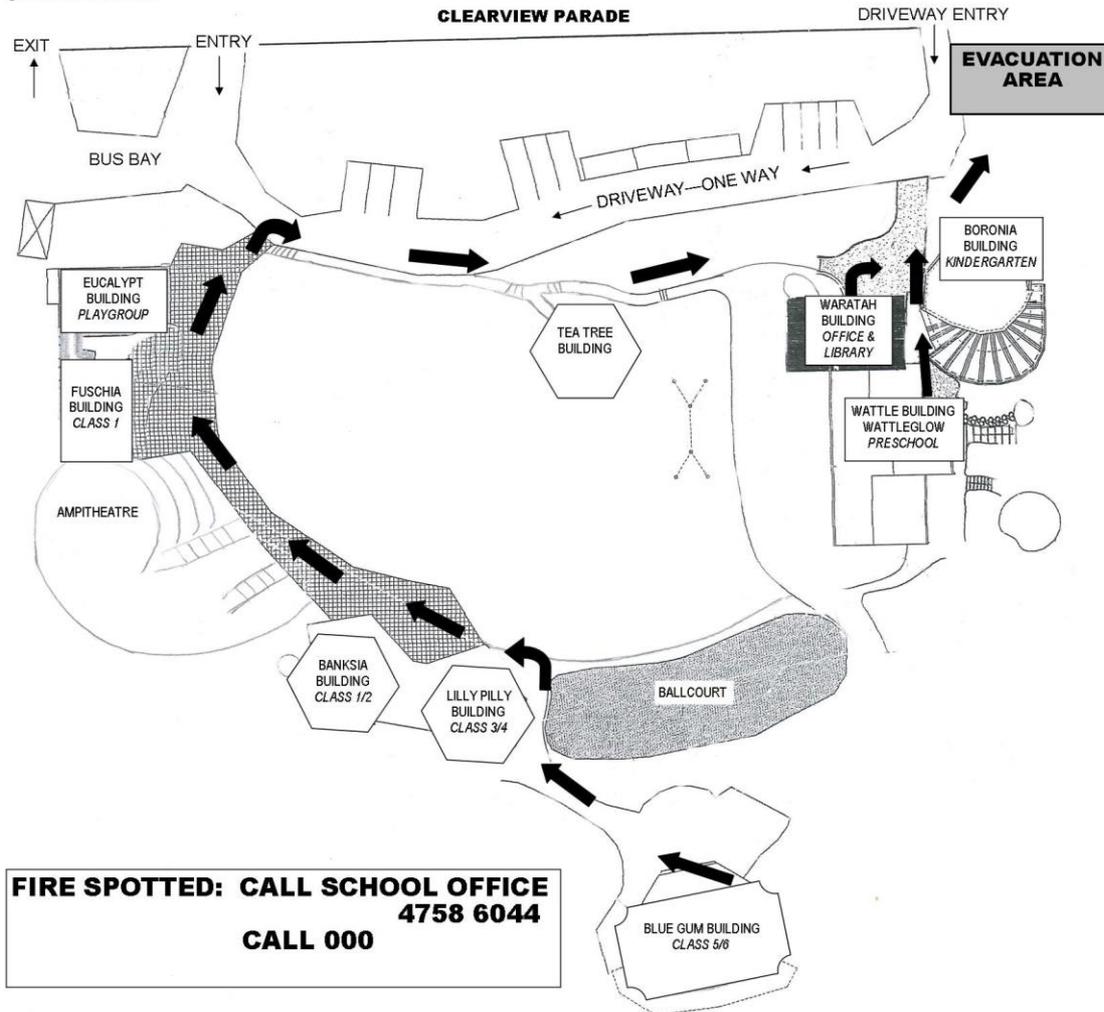
Lisa O'Donnell, Principal

APPENDIX 2

EMERGENCY EVACUATION MAPS

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURES

AS AT 3 FEBRUARY 2019



FIRE ALERT: INTERMITTENT BEEP + announcement advising assembly area: "BMSS Evacuation Area"

TEACHERS line up **CHILDREN** outside room ready to evacuate—keep shoes on and all belongings left behind
TEACHERS close and lock all doors and windows before leaving and take keys and roll (if not already at office)

IF INTERNAL FIRE may be able to be extinguished with available fire extinguisher/fire blanket

TEACHERS walk class in lines to assembly area quickly—no children running ahead of teacher

TEACHERS seat children in class groups at/in assembly area and check roll

TEACHERS report any missing children to P / Fire Duty Officer (FDO)

AWAIT INSTRUCTIONS from P /FDO before going back to class or relocation off site to Hazelbrook Public School