

PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Policy Number	P-Q4-M003	Version Number	3.00
Drafted by	Director of Education	Approved Date: Review Date:	April 2025 April 2026
Responsibility	The Board of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Association (Inc.) (See definitions)		
Related Service Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Environment Policy Code of Conduct Policy Complaints and Grievances Policy Delivery and Collection of Children Policy Determining Responsible Person Policy Interactions with Children Policy Occupational Health and Safety Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Staffing Policy Supervision of Children Policy Inclusion and Equity Policy 		
Legislation and Standards	<p>Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Standards Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) 		
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being, Becoming: www.acecqa.gov.au A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (The Commission for Children and Young People) www.ccyp.vic.gov.au Working with Children Check unit, Department of Justice & Regulation – provides details of how to obtain a WWC Check: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au 		

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board of Governance on 15th of August 2016.

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre, while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

PRINCIPLES

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre is committed to:

- supporting connections with educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to undertake practicum placements as part of their studies
- building relationships with community members and providing suitable opportunities to engage volunteers to contribute to the programs and activities of the service
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the service through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students (refer to *Definitions*), volunteers (refer to *Definitions*), parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

BACKGROUND

Students may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time including observing and experiencing the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre where appropriate and possible.

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and the voluntary contribution they make to the education and care of their own and other children. "In genuine partnerships families and educators value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making" (*Early Years Learning Framework* – refer to Sources).

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers and students to participate in programs and activities while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with staff, and other adults and children at the service (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*).

The role that volunteers play in education and care services varies and can include working with groups of children, preparing materials or food, assisting with administrative tasks or working one-on-one with individual children. The service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, services should not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers must **not** be asked to perform tasks:

- that they are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
- that put the children or themselves in a vulnerable or potentially unsafe situation
- where there is a conflict of interest.

Prior to participation at the service, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Check.

Parents/guardians whose children usually attend the service are exempt from needing a WWC Check.

In line with Child Safe Standard 6, volunteers are required to be trained and supported to effectively implement Bubup Womindjeka's Child Safety Environment Policy. Volunteers are required to receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other children, information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Child-related work: In relation to the WWC Check, child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.

Conflict of interest: (In relation to this policy) refers to an interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of the volunteer, or may impair their independence or loyalty to the service. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the volunteer, but also their relatives, friends or business associates.

Staff record: A record which the Approved Provider of a centre-based service must keep containing information about the Nominated Supervisor, the Educational Leader, staff, volunteers, students and the Responsible Person at a service (Regulations 146–149).

Student: A person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised early childhood qualification. This student will be supported by an educational institution in the completion of their placement.

Volunteer: A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include child-related work (refer to *Definitions*), administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Working with Children (WWC) Check: The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work (refer to *Definitions*) in Victoria and is a measure to help protect children from harm arising as a result of physical or sexual abuse. The Department of Justice and Community Safety assesses a person's suitability to work with children by examining relevant serious sexual, physical and drug offences in a person's national criminal history and, where appropriate, their professional history. A WWC Check card is granted to a person under working with children legislation if:

- they have been assessed as suitable to work with children
- there has been no information that, if the person worked with children, they would pose a risk to those children
- they are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider (Board of Governance) are responsible for:

The Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board is the Approved Provider and has ultimate responsibility for the management and control of the service.

The Board delegates operational responsibility and day to day management of the service to the Nominated Supervisor and monitors the performance of the organisation, including responsibilities contained in this policy, through regular reporting and by ensuring appropriate resources are available to carry out the organisation's functions.

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day to Day Charge are responsible for:

- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor
- reading the Working with Children (WWC) Check of volunteers and students where required, and ensuring that the details are recorded in the service register

- ensuring that the staff record contains the name, address and date of birth of volunteers and students attending the service (Regulations 145, 149(1))
- keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (Regulation 149(2))
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that educators and other staff, volunteers and students on placement at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children (Regulation 83)
- developing and ensuring a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the law (Regulation 157)
- providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers and students have completed the induction process and have been provided with any other relevant information.

Educators and all other staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the safety, health and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- enabling parents/guardians of children attending the service access the service premises at any time the child is being educated and cared for except where this poses a risk to the safety of children and/or staff
- encouraging the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- assisting volunteers and students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for:

- undertaking a WWC Check and presenting a current WWC Check card or other notification, as applicable
- understanding and acknowledging the requirement for confidentiality of all information relating to educators and families within the service (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while at the service
- undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist prior to commencement at the service.
- following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* while attending the service
- following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Nominated Supervisor will:

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students, volunteers and where appropriate parents/guardians are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 2: Induction checklist for volunteers

Relevant Forms/Documents	
Working With Children Check Application	
Student/Volunteer Induction	

Version History			
Date	Version	Author/s	Details
July 2014	1.00	Public officer	New policy
April 2016	2.00	Chief Executive Officer	Revision for updated format, document ID, related policies and relevant legislation and

			standards. Addition of definitions and evaluation.
August 2019	3.00	Director of Education	Policy updated
January 2021	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and minor editorial amendments made.
February 2022	3.00	Director of Education	Policy updated to include information about students and volunteers providing COVID19 vaccination certificate.
February 2023	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and updated to remove COVID19 vaccination requirements and reflect updated Child Safe Standards requirements for volunteers
January 2024	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and updated.
April 2024	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and updated.
April 2025	3.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed and no changes made.