Purpose

To minimize risk of harm to students and ensure Buninyong Primary School is meeting the Child Safe Standards. Buninyong Primary School requires staff and volunteers to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation and Department policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all school staff, volunteers and school community members. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school and school council-run events, activities and services, including our Base 1270 (Outside of School Hours Care).

Buninyong Primary School will assess and verify the suitability of staff and volunteers who will work with children. Unless an exemption applies to a person, a valid Working With Children Check (WWC Check) is the minimum standard for all adults working with children. If a volunteer’s occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWC Check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption. In addition to a WWC Check, Buninyong Primary School may also require a criminal record check. This may be considered necessary when certain offences are relevant to the duties of the volunteer or staff member, for example checking for dishonesty offences may be required for a role that involves managing finances or petty cash.

Policy

It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. Prior to employing a person, the Principal must be satisfied that the person meets the required Suitability for Employment Checks. See Suitability for Employment Policy:


2. To maintain high standards of conduct and professionalism in our school, Buninyong Primary School will ensure that the Department’s procedures for criminal record checks are implemented.


3. Buninyong Primary School will adhere to the Department procedures for conducting criminal records checks:

- for all school-based employees
• including arrangements that allow for the acceptance of the criminal records check conducted by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
• WWC Checks to meet the Department’s pre-employment suitability for employment requirements.

Volunteers

WWC Checks are required by all volunteers who will be working with students for school activities whether or not supervised by a teacher and whether or not the activity is on school grounds or during school hours.

For example, a volunteer who is assisting at a school camp or any other approved school activity outside of school grounds will require a WWC Check.

See Buninyong Primary School’s Volunteers Policy for further information.

A volunteer can commence work at Buninyong Primary School when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWC Check with the Department of Justice and have otherwise been considered by the school to be suitable.

Working with Children Check

The WWC Check is a minimum checking standard set by the Working with Children Act 2005 for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis. It checks for serious sexual, violent and drug-related offences as well as disciplinary findings of professional agencies such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Maintaining Records

A copy of the staff member or volunteer’s WWC Check will be kept on file at the school.

Buninyong Primary School will implement procedures to ensure staff members and volunteers hold a valid WWC Check card; at a minimum annually at the commencement of the school year.

It is the responsibility of the staff member or volunteer to:

• provide Buninyong Primary School with the successful WWC Check card prior to commencement
• notify the Principal if there has been a relevant change in circumstances, for example, if they have been charged or found guilty of a new relevant offence or if their WWC Check has been suspended
• apply for a new WWC Check before their card expires

Privacy

Buninyong Primary School will apply privacy principles when collecting, using, retaining or disposing of personal or health information in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) and the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic).
Exemptions

The Working with Children Act identifies categories of individuals who are exempt from the requirement to have a WWC Check. Buninyong Primary School reserves the right to nevertheless require a WWC Check if the principal considers it necessary in the circumstances. The exempt categories are:

A child

Someone under the age of 18 is considered a child and don’t require a check. However, if that person is supervising other children in paid employment who are under 15 years of age, they will require a check.

A student volunteer

A student who is 18 or 19 years old doing volunteer work organised by or held at Buninyong Primary School

A police officer

A Victoria Police officer or an Australian Federal Police (AFP) officer does not require check. However, if this officer is suspended or dismissed from the Victoria Police or the AFP, the exemption no longer applies.

A visiting worker

A person outside of Victoria, who holds an equivalent Check from their home State/Territory, can do child-related work in Victoria without a Check for a maximum of 30 days in a calendar year, which can include one or several events or occasions.

Further Information and Resources

- Commission for Children and Young People: Child Safe Standards
- Buninyong Child Safe Framework Child Safe Policy
- Buninyong Primary School: School Values
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: Duty of Care
- Buninyong Primary School: Duty of Care Policy (Link to come)
- Buninyong Primary School: Child Safety Responding and Reporting (Including Mandatory Reporting) Policy (Link to come)
- DET School Policy and Advisory Guide - Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors
- Working with Children Check Victoria
- Victorian Institute of Teaching

Review Cycle

This policy was last updated on 27th of May, 2019 and is scheduled for review in May, 2020.
Appendix A: Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools (DET)