
Bendigo Regional YMCA Children’s Services – Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy

Mandatory – Quality Area 4

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| Policy Number | CS 4.3 | Version | 1 |
| Drafted by | JB | Approved by CEO on | 22.03.2017 |
| Responsible Person | CSM | Scheduled Review date | 22.03.2018 |

1. OBJECTIVES

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at Bendigo Regional YMCA Children’s Services (BRYMCA), while ensuring children’s health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

BRYMCA 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.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of YMCA.

3. POLICY

BRYMCA is committed to:

- Reducing the risks of abuse and harm to children and young people, ensuring all personnel, including volunteers and students, understand and adhere to the Safeguarding Children Young People Policy, Code of Conduct Policy, and Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy
- 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
- encouraging and valuing 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
- 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.

The role that volunteers play in children's 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 children's 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

Parents/guardians and family members closely related to children attending the service are exempt from needing a WWC Check. However a service may decide, as a demonstration of duty of care that all parents/guardians who volunteer at the service are required to undergo a WWC Check.

4. PROCEDURES

BRYMCA is responsible for:

- accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer/student based on the circumstances of the service at the time
- 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 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 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 BRYMCA, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the law (Regulation 157)
- developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- 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*, *Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy* and *Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy* while attending the service
- ensuring that all aspects of the *BRYMCA Recruitment and Selection Policy* have been completed and adhered to and the appointment has been approved by the Community Services Manager before the commencement of all volunteers/students

The Nominated Supervisors (ELC Director/OSHC Supervisors/ Occasional Care Team Leader) 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 (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- 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 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 BRYMCA, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the law (Regulation 157)
- ensuring strategies are in place to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service

- 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, Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy*, while attending the service

Educators 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, Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy* while attending the service
- complying with the requirement 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
- complying with the requirement 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 to 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/students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the service.

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

- 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, Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations 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 *Guidelines for Parents* in the Parent Handbook.
- following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

5. DEFINITIONS

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

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.

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 children’s service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include direct contact with children, administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Working directly with children: For the purposes of the National Regulations, working directly with children is defined as being physically present with children and directly engaged in providing them with education and/or care.

Working with Children (WWC) Check: The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work 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 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, notice or document (valid for five years), 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.

6. LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 169*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 123, 145, 149, 157, 355, 358, 360*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Safe Standards*
- *BRYMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy*
- *BRYMCA Code of Conduct Policy*
- *BRYMCA Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy*
- *BRYMCA Recruitment and Selection Policy*

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| Role/ Decision/ Action | Responsibility |
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| Educators, Supervisors, Directors and Coordinators | <p>BRYMCA Nominated Supervisor and/or Service Management will oversee the implementation and service adherence to this policy (ie policy compliance).</p> <p>Nominated Supervisor and/or Person with Management and Control will seek individual community feedback and</p> |

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| | <p>facilitate an active consultation process with service users as appropriate.</p> <p>All Educators are responsible for the daily implementation of the policy when directly supervising children.</p> |
| Community Services Manager | <p>Is responsible for ensuring suitable resources and support systems to enable compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Drive the consultation process and provide leadership and advice on the continuous improvement of the policy.</p> <p>Authorising the appointment of all Volunteers/Students</p> |
| CEO | Policy Approval |

