

OSHC Staff Recruitment & Retention Policy

Policy Statement & Commitments

The Brunswick East Primary School Council will ensure that the workplace operates on the principles of fairness, equality and merit in all aspects of employment and teamwork. Staff will be employed on merit and qualifications and experience in children's services.

Brunswick East Primary School Outside School Hours Care Service (BEPS OSHC Service) understands how the recruitment and retention of educators affects the health, wellbeing and Safety of children, families and the community. We seek to promote diversity and equity, and, in this regard, consider it crucial to establish legal and ethical recruitment and selection practices, and retention initiatives.

BEPS OSHC Service upholds equal employment opportunity legislation, the Fair Work Act and the relevant industrial conditions, and the requirements for staffing contained within the Education and Care Services National Law.

There is a general acceptance within the children's services industry of the principle that quality care is dependent on relevant staff training. The need for qualified staff is based on recognition of the fact that the care of children requires specialist knowledge and skills. The ratio of diploma-qualified educators to minimum-trained educators meets the National Regulations, with qualified educators and early childhood teachers leading the high quality programs that are on offer across the Service.

BEPS OSHC Service also understands its responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, the *Child Safe Standards 2017* and *Reportable Conduct Scheme 2018* to ensure employees are suitably qualified for their work, and are given adequate supervision and on-the-job training to enable them to work within the law.

This policy is designed to provide clear guidelines and establish processes for the recruitment and retention of educators, including students and volunteers, at BEPS OSHC Service.

BEPS OSHC Service is committed to:

- providing children with continuity of care; a child-safe environment; warm and caring educators; and educators with appropriate knowledge to provide educational learning programs and developmentally appropriate routines.
- providing families with confidence that BEPS OSHC Service only appoints suitable educators, students or volunteers

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- providing existing and potential educators with fair selection procedures; secure employment; fair conditions of employment; people who can work as part of a team; and that there is formal recognition of qualifications and experience
- Attracting suitably qualified and experienced child-care professionals to BEPS OSHC Service; to appoint the best applicants to the positions available; to oversee an ethical and non-discriminatory selection process; and to ensure continuity of educators to maintain quality education and care for children and families.
- Ensuring that recruitment is fair and equitable, retention initiatives are implemented, and that any occurring resignation of educators can be managed without disruption, and used as an opportunity to drive continuous improvement.

Definitions

Educator – All staff employed to provide education and care for children.

Minimum Trained – An educator holding a Certificate III Level Education and Care Qualification as approved by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), as prescribed in the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* in accordance with regulation 137 (1) (c); or holding a qualification assessed as equivalent to those included in the List of Early Childhood Qualifications for Children’s Services by ACECQA.

Qualified Educator – An educator holding a diploma level education and care qualification as approved by ACECQA, as prescribed in the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* in accordance with regulation 137 (1) (b); or holding a qualification assessed as equivalent to those included in the List of Early Childhood Qualifications for Children’s Services by ACECQA

Student – A person who attends an educational institution to learn.

Volunteer – A person who is considered to be serving the community through their own interest, personal skills or professional learning.

Working with Children Check

All educators engaged at BEPS OSHC Service are to maintain a valid Working with Children (WWC) Check card at all times throughout employment, in accordance with the *Working with Children Act 2005*, and validity will be periodically checked and documented through the Service by the Coordinator.

The WWC Check creates a mandatory minimum-checking standard across Victoria as a mechanism to help keep children safe. It is designed to complement good recruitment, selection (including reference checking), supervision and training practices for educators and volunteers who work with children.

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Procedures for recruitment

The recruitment process is conducted by the OSHC Coordinator in consultation with the School Principal/ and or representative of the OSHC Sub Committee of Management. Applications must be submitted in writing, and include three referees. The selection panel includes the BEPS OSHC Coordinator and representatives of the OSHC Management Sub-committee and parent community.

Appointments are subject to Police Checks, a WWC Check card and an appropriate qualification. First aid, asthma, anaphylaxis or food safety qualifications are beneficial, and information provided by referees and previous experience associated with child-care programs if relevant.

Advertising for jobs are as follows:

- notices displayed at education and training institutions close to the program
- word of mouth by current staff members
- OSHC networks
- via Moreland City Council
- local and state newspapers.
- Job seeking websites
- DECD Recruitment online website

Staff induction includes provision of a range of OSHC documents such as policies, procedures and staff handbook and student behaviour management practices. Each new staff member is mentored by the program Coordinator or senior staff members, and given regular opportunities for feedback.

A one-month qualifying (trial) period applies for all positions with a three month probationary period.

Criteria for assessing recruitment needs

The following situations indicate a need for recruitment:

- resignation or departure of an educator
- changes to service approval and other regulatory requirements in line with the Education and Care Service National Law Act
- the need for specialised skills, abilities or knowledge for children with additional needs, volunteers with special skills or office assistant
- maintaining a quality program through appointment of additional educators or volunteers over the legislated educator-to-child ratios during busy periods of the day such as meal times or excursions
- development or review of a list of reliable casual relief educators who may be required when permanent educators are unable to work.

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Process for recruiting staff

Advertising

- All positions shall be advertised internally and externally concurrently for at least two weeks.
- All applicants shall receive a job description upon request and any other relevant information required.

Position descriptions

- Position descriptions ensure the OSHC management committee, along with current and prospective staff members, are clear about their duties, accountability and standard of expected performance allowing the service to maintain a quality standard of professional practice.
- Position descriptions will clearly specify the tasks involved in the job and qualifications, skills and experience essential or desirable for the job.
- Position descriptions shall be reviewed periodically and approved by the OSHC Management Sub-committee.
- Position descriptions will be reviewed for each recruitment to ensure the document accurately details the position aim and objective, key responsibilities and duties, accountability, required qualifications, desired experience, and information on professional development and performance appraisal processes.

Selection panels

- The members of a recruitment selection panel will be appointed by the OSHC Management Sub-committee.
- The selection panel will include the OSHC Coordinator and a minimum of one (1) educator representative and one (1) member of the OSHC Management Sub-committee.
- The OSHC Management Sub-committee shall appoint a convenor of the selection panel.
- All members of the selection panel shall be present at all meetings of the panel.
- The OSHC Coordinator is responsible for organising selection panel meetings, for planning short lists and interviews, contacting applicants and/or referees, arranging interview venues and times.
- The selection panel first has a briefing session regarding the selection process. This is to be arranged by the OSHC Coordinator, and shall include informing inexperienced members of the selection panel of their duties and responsibilities.
- All members of the selection panel shall be supplied with a copy of this policy.

Receipt of written applications

- Completed applications are to be treated confidentially and processed by the OSHC Coordinator.

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- Applications received after the closing date shall be considered at the discretion of the selection panel.

Statement of interest

- If any member of the selection panel has more than a professional relationship with the Applicant, they are to declare this to the panel as soon as possible.
- It may be appropriate for the selection panel member who has a close personal (or hostile) relationship with an applicant to step down.

Short listing

- Applicants shall be shortlisted on the basis of their applications and how the application illustrates their ability to carry out the job and meet the essential criteria.
- All Applicants who meet the essential criteria are interviewed except in the event that there are too many to interview, in which case further selection is done using specified criteria.
- Shortlisting will be the responsibility of the selection panel.
- Shortlisted applicants are to be contacted by phone, if possible, to arrange an interview time and given reasonable notice.

Interviewing

- At an appropriate time prior to interviews, the selection panel will meet to plan the interview process and work out an agreed set of questions to be asked.
- For the interviews, the panel will select a Chair, who is responsible for the introduction and conclusion of each interview, including the panel members, background of the position, the interview and selection process, the notification process, etc.
- The OSHC Coordinator is to ensure that interviews take place in a private space without interruptions, and that someone is on hand to receive Applicants as they arrive.
- Questions are designed to elicit information as to how the applicant meets the job criteria.
- Within the interview process the Applicants knowledge and experience of child protection issues will be determined
- All applicants are to be asked the same core questions to ensure fairness.
- All members of the selection panel will have a list of the questions to be asked.
- After each interview has concluded, each panel member individually assesses the applicant on the essential and desirable criteria, on the basis of the information gained from the interview.
- Time will be allowed for discussion of each applicant at the end of each interview.
- Comparison of Applicants will be done on completion of all interviews.
- The desirable criteria will only be used if there is more than one suitable Applicant on the basis of the essential criteria.

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- Irrelevant information or hearsay is not to be considered.
- Before making a final decision as to the preferred Applicants, referees will be contacted. Referees will only be contacted prior to the interviews if considered necessary by the selection panel in order to reach a decision.
- The employment of educators at BEPS OSHC Service will ideally reflect the nature of the wider community, therefore within the framework of equal employment opportunity.
- Fluency in languages other than English will be considered positively when recruiting educators.

Contacting Referees

- At least three referees must be contacted to discuss the suitability of the Applicant
- Referees must have a professional relationship with the Applicant
- To determine details of Applicants previous employment
- Any history regarding child protection issues
- Any Applicants reliability and consistency in implementing duty of care practices
- The Applicants supervision skills

Notification

- Once the selection panel selects a Applicant for the job, the decision is then presented as a recommendation to the OSHC Management Sub-committee.
- On ratification, the successful Applicant is made a formal job offer. This can be done by phone, but will always be done in writing as well.
- All applications and interview records are to be kept for three months in case of appeal. They shall remain confidential.
- Once the successful applicant has accepted the position, the Coordinator is to ensure that all unsuccessful applicants are notified. Letters will be sent to applicants who were not shortlisted, once shortlisting has taken place.

Confidentiality

- Confidentiality regarding applicants, interviews, the decision etc. is to be maintained until the successful applicant has formally accepted the position.
- Educators will be informed of the successful applicant after the OSHC Management Sub-committee has ratified the selection panel’s decision.

Short-term positions

- The employment of educators to fill short-term positions is done at the discretion of the Coordinator in consultation with the OSHC Management Sub-committee where appropriate.

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- Short-term positions are created when covering educators on leave, and to maintain educator-child ratio requirements following an educator's resignation (until new educators are appointed).
- This does not apply to new positions.

Employment agencies for staff recruitment

- External employment agencies may be used for recruiting permanent or casual relief educators.
- The Service will ensure the employment agency knows the Service and its philosophy on child protection, as well as the key selection criteria for the position.
- The Service will provide information to the agency outlining the requirements (e.g. diploma qualified) to forward to all applicants, and will require all applicants to provide a valid WWC Check card and current Police Check, and evidence of qualifications, including first aid, prior to engagement.
- Wherever possible, the agency will be asked to provide educators that are known to the Service.

Procedures for Retention of Educators

BEPS OSHC Service is committed to providing a rewarding, stimulating and supportive working environment to all educators. Educators are highly valued, and this policy communicates the ways that the OSHC Management Sub-Committee aims to work with and retain educators. Many of the other Service policies regarding things such as OHS, illness, head lice and expectations of staff are also in place to ensure the wellbeing of educators.

BEPS OSHC Service's retention policy initiatives include:

- priority of child-care places for the children of educators
- regular meetings where educators are encouraged to raise concerns, ideas and collaborate in a constructive and open manner
- opportunities to undertake professional development including formal training, on-the-job training, and other initiatives, including liaison with other OSHC services
- appraisals to identify development needs and professional goals
- active involvement of educators in planning and developing the Service
- Code of Professional Conduct to protect educators and children from unacceptable behaviour by families or visitors entering the Service workplace.

Sources & Legislative References

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National Professional Support Coordinator Alliance 2012, *Getting started with policies for the NQF: Policies in Practice template – Recruitment of Educators, Staff, Volunteers* <http://www.pscalliance.org.au>

Department of Justice 2007, www.justice.vic.gov.au

Fair Work Australia www.fwa.gov.au

Child Safe Standards 2017

DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care (2010)

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) – Information Privacy