

VOLUNTEERS

Policy Statement

Burke and Beyond recognises volunteers as a valuable resource and is committed to fostering a diverse and mutually beneficial volunteer program which supports the vision and mission of the organisation.

Objective

The purpose of this policy document is to provide guidance with aspects of volunteering at Burke and Beyond and does not constitute a binding contract. It supplements other documents, policies and procedures approved by Burke and Beyond to achieve our vision, mission and effective service delivery.

We value the contributions volunteers make, their willingness to give of their time and encourage them to become involved and participate within the relevant activities and programs at Burke and Beyond. Our aim is to support, train and supervise our volunteers to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.

Scope

The policy, processes and practices apply to all non-elected volunteers who undertake tasks on behalf and at the direction of the management teams of Burke and Beyond. The policy also applies to all staff and management who work with and/or supervise volunteers.

Volunteers include, but are not limited to, Board and Committee members who are elected to their role or position.

Policy and Practice Details

Burke and Beyond management are responsible for ensuring the practices outlined in this document and other related policies and procedures are implemented efficiently and effectively. All staff and volunteers (including voluntary management committee members) are expected to comply with the practices outlined.

Burke and Beyond will consider anyone as a volunteer, however individuals must be able to demonstrate a commitment to the principles and aims of the organisation and will only be placed if their experiences, skills and knowledge match the needs of the organisation. A person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation will not be accepted as a volunteer unless prior approval has been granted by the CEO and/or Board of Burke and Beyond.

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of paid staff and are not as a substitute for a paid role. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.

Volunteers are treated as members of the staffing team and are treated equally and fairly as paid staff. They are provided with appropriate work space, equipment, communication and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.

The working times for volunteers are negotiated between Burke and Beyond, the volunteer, and are as flexible as the tasks and/or program activities require. Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of full-time paid staff; however unscheduled absences can create organisational problems, and therefore communication regarding absences is required.

Volunteers are expected to work within the policies and procedures of Burke and Beyond and adhere to its vision, mission and principles. As representatives of Burke and Beyond, they are responsible for presenting a positive image with professional conduct consistent with the expectations of Burke and Beyond.

Volunteers must seek prior approval from management before undertaking anything that might affect the participants or the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, joint initiatives/activities with other services and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

Burke and Beyond respects a volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality and in accordance with legislation and our privacy and confidentiality policy, will maintain security of personal information. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering at Burke and Beyond, especially that of participants and their families

A system for maintaining volunteer records is maintained, including dates and times of service, duties performed, evaluation of work, supervision, etc. Volunteer records are accorded the same confidentiality as staff records.

Any volunteer program is at the discretion of Burke and Beyond and the service areas. At any time, and for whatever reason, Burke and Beyond may decide to terminate volunteer's relationships with the organisation. Similarly, volunteers may at any time, and for whatever reason, decide to terminate their relationships with Burke and Beyond. Notice of such decisions should be communicated at the earliest opportunity, preferably with a meeting/discussion and in writing.

Prior to any volunteer agreement or recruitment effort, a role description is developed and approved for each voluntary opportunity. This must include a title of the volunteering role, starting and finishing dates, hours and place of work, name of "supervisor" and tasks to be undertaken. A copy of the final version is provided to the volunteer, with a copy filed in Volunteer (staff) file.

Volunteers may be recruited via formal recruitment programs, through volunteer placement services and/or via a potential volunteer applying directly to Burke and Beyond. Recruitment is consistent with the recruitment process and the diversity/ equal opportunities processes of Burke and Beyond. Each potential volunteer must complete a volunteer application form.

Potential applications are invited to attend an informal chat/ interview with the Volunteer Coordinator and either management or an experienced volunteer so as to ascertain their interest and suitability for the role. Written records of all interviews are kept.

As relevant, referee checks may be undertaken for potential volunteers as well as relevant mandatory criminal checks, working with children and other checks consistent with the role. Volunteers are always warned in advance of the intention to make these checks. If they refuse permission and cannot provide an acceptable reason, they will not be placed.

Formal appointments are made only after the role description has been agreed and any necessary checks have proved acceptable. No placements are made unless the requirements of the volunteer and the volunteer's supervisor can be met.

All placements are subject to an initial trial period of three months, and at the end of this period, the Coordinator and/ or Volunteer Coordinator meets with the volunteer to discuss suitability for their role, continuation, reassignment to a more suitable role, or a separation from the organisation.

All volunteers receive induction when they begin voluntary work with Burke and Beyond. This consists of a general introduction to the organisation, as well as a specific orientation on the purposes, requirements of their volunteering role and the service where they are working.

Volunteers receive initial and ongoing on-the-job training appropriate for the position, role, tasks, safety and the capabilities of the volunteer.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist formally and informally. Volunteers have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings relevant to their role as a volunteer and a member of Burke and Beyond. Volunteers are consulted on all decisions that would substantially affect their volunteering conditions.

Volunteers are provided with information regarding who their supervisor is and who is responsible for the day-to-day management of them.

Volunteers receive regular appraisals of their work, based on their role descriptions. Evaluation sessions take place regularly between the volunteer and their Coordinator/ Volunteer Coordinator. These review the performance of the volunteer, suggest any changes in work style, seek suggestions from the

volunteer on means of enhancing the volunteer’s relationship with their work area, convey appreciation to the volunteer and ascertain the continued interest of the volunteer in serving in his or her role. The sessions also serve as an opportunity to plan future tasks.

Volunteers who do not comply with policies and procedures, or who fail to perform their volunteer role satisfactorily, may be subject to dismissal. No volunteers’ involvement will be terminated in writing until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for possible dismissal with management. Grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct, being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol), theft, abuse of participants and/ or co-workers, misuse of equipment and materials, breaches of confidentiality, failure to abide by policies and procedures and failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard.

Volunteers are encouraged to raise any concerns and/ or grievances regarding their volunteering either with their Coordinator or the Volunteer Coordinator in the first instance. If they feel their concerns are not being addressed/ handled appropriately, they are entitled to have their concerns reviewed by management and are encouraged to discuss with the Operations Manager, CEO or the Community Services Manager. Management will discuss the issue as soon as practical after receiving a complaint, and take appropriate action consistent with the feedback and grievances processes.

Informal exit interviews are offered/ held with any volunteers who are leaving the organisation, either because they have reached the end of their project, or are leaving for another reason. Interviews are usually conducted with the volunteer’s supervisor with written records maintained accordingly. The session should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, how they found the volunteering experience and what suggestions they may offer to improve the way Burke and Beyond operates. The option of a personal reference for future employment etc. is discussed and agreed with each volunteer.

Burke and Beyond endeavours to provide the necessary support which encourages and empowers volunteers to make a meaningful contribution and gain significant benefits from their voluntary work. Support forms part of the regular catch up sessions and gives volunteers a safe setting in which to express themselves, let off steam and discuss how they feel about volunteering. Burke and Beyond’s management will always try to be available to volunteers who require support in other areas that are affecting their performance.

Volunteers provide a unique service to Burke and Beyond, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. Therefore Burke and Beyond recognise the efforts of volunteers and encourage management and staff to acknowledge and thank them on a regular basis for their contributions, both informally and formally.

ADMINISTRATION:

Continuous Improvement:	Improvements to this document can be made by completing a suggestion and improvement form, attaching any suggested amendments and forwarding to your manager and/or the Quality Advisor for review.				
Standards related to:	DHHS- Disability Service Standards:- Service Management National Standards for Disability Services:- Service Management Child Safe Standards				
Position Approving Document:	Chief Executive Officer				
Position Responsible for Document	Operations Manager				
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