

MOUNT PLEASANT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Volunteers Policy

Rationale:

Parents have a unique knowledge and understanding of their own children. They have the right to be informed about their children's learning and to participate in reaching decisions that affect them. Parents also have talents, interests, energies and skills which enrich the life and programs of the school.

Our school enjoys wide spread support from school families and community members and so the school has an obligation to support, value and protect these people, while at the same time holding a very important duty of care to students.

Definition:

A volunteer is a person who undertakes defined activities of their own free will, without payment (other than out-of-pocket expenses) and which will benefit the school.

The Department for Education and Child Development's policy about volunteers has been used as the basis of this policy.

Policy statement	Operating procedures
1. Mount Pleasant Primary School is committed to the involvement of parents and volunteers and to the participation of parents in the school.	Families are encouraged to be involved in school life in ways that are comfortable for them. This is discussed with parents as new students are enrolled. Class teachers and interested parents negotiate particular roles with individual family members. Invitations to join PFA or other volunteer work are made personally and through notes and Newsletters. Records of all parents' involvement and participation are kept through the Visitors Log Book and acknowledgments of their contributions are made in many ways such as through Newsletters, student reports, assemblies and a Thank You morning tea.
2. All procedures affecting volunteers comply with existing Acts, regulations and the administrative instructions and guidelines of the Department of Education and Children's Services. (DECS)	The Governing Council and Principal are responsible for ensuring that all volunteer programs comply with legislative, regulatory and administrative requirements. This policy has been developed in consultation with Governing Council and is signed by the Chairperson to indicate the acceptance of the policy.

<p>3. No part of this policy conflicts with the specific professional responsibilities for which principals and teachers are accountable.</p>	<p>The day to day operation of the policy is the responsibility of teachers and the Principal. Volunteers are not to carry out the designated roles of teachers or other staff members.</p>
<p>4. The inclusion of parents and volunteers in the involvement or participation of a school is encouraged, so contributing to supporting and developing the relevance and future directions of the school.</p>	<p>All families are invited to voice their opinions about specific matters through surveys, having representatives of PFA and MT POSH committees on Council and through holding open Council meetings. However it is the role of the Council to provide advice and information that affect the development of school policies.</p>
<p>5. The inclusion of parents and volunteers in the involvement or participation of the school takes account of the vulnerability of children, who must be our primary concern and therefore protected.</p>	<p>Everyone has a responsibility to protect our students. Volunteers in schools and parents are mandated reporters. Therefore Mandatory Notification training is made available for all volunteers.</p> <p>Council members and all volunteers who work with students must sign an agreement which states the conditions under which a person may volunteer. (Appendix A)</p> <p>All volunteers are required to sign the Visitors' Log book at the Office before working with students. They will be issued with a Volunteer's Badge to wear while working. This shows that the volunteer is legitimate and helps staff to supervise the interaction between students and visitors. Volunteers working with students must work within the sight and general supervision of a teacher.</p>
<p>6. Support to encourage the involvement or participation of parents and volunteers in the school is determined in terms of personnel, monetary and time commitments.</p>	<p>A small budget is set aside to provide for parent participation and involvement. This is used to provide training, meals, etc. that support volunteers and parents in their involvement and participation.</p>
<p>7. The school reports to families, information that is relevant to children's education, including the wider involvement of parents and volunteers and the participation of parents.</p>	<p>The school reports broadly on the work of volunteers and acknowledges their contributions through the Newsletter.</p> <p>Semester reports inform parents about particular individual support given by SSOs and volunteers.</p>

Volunteers' Responsibilities

The volunteer's most important responsibility relates to his/her duty of care to children. Students are a vulnerable group generally, due to their age and lack of experience. Their vulnerability increases if they are very young, if they have an intellectual or physical disability, if they are newly arrived in Australia or if they experience emotional/physical neglect.

For volunteers, respecting the rights of children means that they must not:

- Work unsupervised with students
- Be involved in toileting students or assisting with change or sick rooms
- Have unsupervised contact with students during break times
- Encourage affection from or dependency in students eg by giving presents
- Have intentional physical contact with students (the supervising teacher will provide comfort/first aid to a distressed student)
- Display bullying or intimidating behaviours towards students.

Volunteers must:

- Refer all student concerns or behaviour issues to the supervising teacher
- Refer all requests to access school or pre-school files to the supervising teacher
- Sign the time book for volunteers on arrival and departure
- Wear the provided name badge at all times
- Notify the school as early as possible if they are unable to fulfil their volunteer commitment.

The volunteer may cancel their agreements if they no longer have the time available.

The Principal may cancel an agreement with a volunteer where there is no longer suitable work available or if the volunteer fails to follow requirements outlined in this policy.