

MOUNT PLEASANT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Volunteers Policy

Ratified - 01/08/2018

Review - 2020

1: Rationale:

Parents have talents, interests, energies and skills which have the ability to enrich the life and programs of the school and the education of all students

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.

2: 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. These activities may be regular or sporadic.

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

3: Policy statement:

3.1 Mount Pleasant Primary School is committed to the involvement of parents and volunteers and to the participation of parents in the school.

Therefore

- Families are encouraged to be involved in school life in ways that are comfortable for them and meaningful for the school.
- Class teachers or the Principal will negotiate particular roles with individual volunteers.
- Invitations to join PFA or become engaged in 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.
- Acknowledgments of volunteer contributions are made in many ways such as through Newsletters, student reports, assemblies and a Thank You morning tea/lunch.

3.2 All procedures affecting volunteers comply with existing Acts, regulations and the administrative instructions and guidelines of the Department for Education and Child Development. (DECD)

Therefore

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.

3.3 No part of this policy conflicts with the specific professional responsibilities for which principals and teachers are accountable.

Therefore

Volunteers are not to carry out the roles and responsibilities designated to teachers or other members of staff. The day to day operation of the policy is the responsibility of teachers and the Principal.

3.4 The inclusion of parents and volunteers in the improvement and future directions of a school is encouraged.

Therefore

All families are invited to voice their opinions about specific matters through surveys, having their representatives on the Governing Council, the PFA and MT POSH committees and through open Council meetings. However it is the role of the Governing Council to provide advice and information that affect the development of school policies and future directions. Being a volunteer does not automatically give a person the right to be a member of any committee or council.

3.5 The involvement or participation of parents and volunteers in the school takes into account the vulnerability of children, who must be our primary concern and therefore protected.

Therefore

- Everyone has a responsibility to protect our students. Volunteers, PFA and Governing Council members must pass a Child-Related Employment Screening Check. No person will be permitted to work within the school on a voluntary, or paid, basis until this check is passed.
- Volunteers in schools are mandated reporters. Therefore Responding to Abuse and Neglect training is compulsory for all volunteers. The training is offered either on-line or face-to-face as meets the need of the individual volunteer.
- All volunteers are required to sign the Visitors' Log book at the Office before working in the school. They will be issued with an "Accredited 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 at all times.

3.6 Support to encourage the involvement or participation of parents and volunteers in the school is determined in terms of personnel, monetary and time commitments.

Therefore

- A small budget is set aside to provide for parent participation and involvement. This is used to provide Criminal History checks, training, meals, etc. that support volunteers and parents in their involvement and participation.
- Any training needed for volunteers to fulfil a certain role will be provided by the school on an 'as needs' basis. If the school is not equipped to provide the necessary training then the school will organise this through a third party.

3.7 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.

Therefore

The school reports broadly on the work of volunteers and acknowledges their contributions through the Newsletter and the Annual Report.

Semester reports inform parents about particular individual support given to their child by SSOs and volunteers.

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 changing or in 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**:

- Complete and pass a Working With Children Screening Check every five years.
- Undertake Responding to Abuse and Neglect training every three years.
- Refer all student concerns or behaviour issues to the supervising teacher and/or Principal.
- Refer all requests to access school files to the supervising teacher.
- Participate fully in any training the Principal deems is necessary for them to be able to fulfil their role within the school.
- Sign the “Sign In” book on arrival and departure.
- Wear the provided name badge at all times.
- Follow all reasonable instructions given to them by the supervising teacher and/or Principal.
- Adhere to the school’s values 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 at any time. Providing sufficient notice to the school would be appropriate.

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.

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I,, have read, understood and will abide by the Mount Pleasant Primary School Volunteers Policy while working at this school.

Signed..... Date.....