

VOLUNTEER & PARENT HELPER POLICY

RATIONALE

Thomastown West Primary School greatly appreciates volunteers and parents who assist positively with the implementation of the school's programs. Volunteers and parent helpers however, must comply with the Working with Children Act (2005), Victorian Information Privacy Act (2000), Health Records Act (2001) and the school's expectations and practices.

BROAD GUIDELINES

The purpose of this policy is:

- to enhance the educational programs at the school,
- to build partnerships between home and school,
- to provide opportunities for parents to develop their skills and become active participants in their children's education.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The *Working with Children Act (2005)* requires certain volunteers who engage in 'child-related work' in schools to undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC). It is an offence to permit a volunteer who requires a WWCC to perform voluntary 'child-related work' in connection with a school if they have not applied for a WWCC. The Act exempts volunteers who are always directly supervised by a teacher, or parents who are volunteering in activities in which his/her child ordinarily participates, from requiring a WWCC. 'Parent' includes the spouse or domestic partner of the father or mother of the child, or a person who has custody of the child. The WWCC is free for volunteers.
- Thomastown West Primary School encourages the assistance of volunteers and parent helpers in a wide variety of areas.
- Invitations for volunteers/parent helpers to assist in the school's programs will be regularly made via the school newsletter, Compass or through personal contact.
- Volunteers/parent helpers will be provided with any support or instruction necessary to help them perform their tasks at school in a confident and effective manner. They will be required to participate in an induction session prior to working in the school.
 - Volunteers and parent helpers for short-term projects such as excursions, incursions, events, etc, will be briefed by the teacher in charge as to their roles and responsibilities prior to commencement. At the same time, matters of supervision and safety will also be discussed.
 - Volunteers and parent helpers for longer term activities or activities with higher levels of required expertise such as literacy rotations or school camps, will be required to undertake appropriate training.
- Volunteers and parent helpers will take guidance and direction from the teacher in charge and may receive feedback and reinforcement from the teacher. They may be allocated to individuals or small groups of students according to the teacher's instructions. Generally, parent helpers are not directly working with their own child.
- Volunteers and parent helpers must make prior arrangements with classroom teacher to fit in with timetables and scheduled lessons.
- In compliance with the Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000 and Health Records Act 2001, volunteers are to maintain complete confidentiality regarding issues that relate to students, staff and/or other members of the school community.
- Volunteers should maintain appropriate standards of conduct at all times. Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with school values.
- Volunteers are expected to respect the professional standing and roles of school staff members.
- Concerns relating to volunteers and parent helpers should be addressed to the Principal.
- The Principal or Assistant Principal of the school may terminate any invitation to a person to volunteer.

EVALUATION

This policy shall be reviewed as part of the three year policy review cycle and/or in response to DEECD policies and guidelines.

REFERENCES

- Working with Children Act (2005)
- Working With Children Check - Department of Justice's Working with Children Information Line: 1300 652 879
- DET School Policy and Advisory Guide
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/Pages/volunteers.aspx>