



HIGHVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Volunteers Policy

Ratified by School Council: November 2012

Review date: November 2015

Rationale

Volunteers at our school bring with them a range of skills and experience that can enhance the learning opportunities of children. We welcome and encourage volunteers from the local community. A volunteer is an unpaid person who provides support to our school.

Our volunteers include:

- Members of the governing body
- Relatives of pupils
- University students
- Ex members of staff
- Local residents
- Members of the local community
- Secondary school students

The types of activities that volunteers are engaged in might include:

- Kids Hope
- Working with children after training through the school's Classroom Helpers program
- Undertaking arts and craft activities with children
- Supporting teachers to run after school clubs
- Working with children on the computer
- Accompanying school visits, excursions and camps
- Working Bees
- Sanctuary assistance
- Guest speaker/expert helper
- Assisting with extra curricula and non-curriculum based activities such as Father's or Mother's Day stalls, head lice checks etcetera.
- Assisting in classrooms with small group activities across the curriculum

Becoming a volunteer

Anyone wishing to become a volunteer, either for a one off event or on a more regular basis should approach their child's class teacher, the principal or the assistant principal. Before starting in school and to ensure the safety of our pupils at all times, all volunteers will be required to complete a Working with Children Permit except where exemptions may apply

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/exemptions/>. Forms can be obtained from a local post office.

Confidentiality

Volunteers in school are bound by confidentiality. All staff members, voluntary helpers and visitors should be aware that information relating to individual children or members of staff is totally confidential. Whilst in school volunteers may hear conversations which are of a confidential nature. These cover aspects such as children's academic progress, misbehaviour, or home circumstances. All information relating to individual children and staff is totally confidential and volunteers must respect this.

Issues affecting children

Respect

Responsibility

Honesty and Integrity

Commitment

Any concerns that volunteers have about the children they work with/ come into contact with must be shared with the class teacher and not with the parents of the child or any persons outside school. These comments, particularly if taken out of context can cause distress to the parents of the child if not heard directly from the school.

Issues affecting adults in school

All adults in our school can expect their personal and health issues to remain confidential unless:

- it impinges on their terms of contract;
- it endangers pupils or other members of staff;
- there is a legal obligation to disclose such information;
- it is necessary for legal proceedings;
- despite the duty of confidence the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Volunteers who are concerned about anything another adult in the school does or says should raise the matter with the Principal or Assistant Principal.

Child Protection

If a child discloses something, this information must be shared promptly with the child's teacher, Principal or Assistant Principal. We cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a child discloses something; however, reassurance can be given that the best interests of the child will be maintained.

Supervision

All volunteers work under the supervision of the class teacher to which they are assigned or to a responsible person in charge of an outside curriculum event. Although teachers retain responsibility for children at all times, this does not require volunteers to be in their direct supervision at all times. Volunteers should feel confident to carry out the task they have been assigned and should seek further advice/ guidance from the teacher in the event of a query or problem regarding a child's behaviour or understanding of a task.

Health and Safety

The school has a health and safety policy which will be provided to the volunteers. Class teachers should ensure that volunteers are clear about emergency procedures (e.g. fire evacuation) and about any safety aspects associated with a particular task (e.g. using cookery equipment). If a volunteer attends a school trip, their emergency contact details will be requested. Volunteers need to exercise due care and attention and report any obvious hazards or concerns to the class teacher, deputy head teacher or head teacher.

Complaints Procedure

Any complaints made about a volunteer or by a volunteer will be referred to the Principal or Assistant Principal for investigation.

The school has the right to take the following actions:

- Speak with the volunteer about a breach in the volunteer agreement
- Offer an alternative placement for a volunteer
- Inform the volunteer that they are no longer permitted to help in school

Responsibility and Evaluation

The school council will regularly review its policy and procedures to effectively address privacy policies as part of its cyclic policy and procedures review schedule.