

OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY SCHOOL

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY SCHOOL

Our Lady of the Nativity is a faith filled community that gives witness to, and proclaims, the Gospel teachings of Jesus.

Within a nurturing environment, inclusive of all its members, we uphold the dignity of the human person.

Through a holistic approach to education we aspire to develop lifelong learning.

With a commitment to social justice, a sense of purpose and hope we encourage our members to be active participants in the global community.

Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to Our Lady of the Nativity School and thank you for giving up your time to volunteer as a helper at our school. We look forward to your contribution to the lives of the children and our school and to working with you to provide quality and inclusive catholic education for all of the children in our care.

Our policies and procedures for volunteers are in alignment with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) *Guidelines on the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools*.

Child Safety Standards

At Our Lady of the Nativity school we are committed to sustaining a culture of child safety. Our Child Safety Policy (available on the school's website and at the administration office) affirms the school's commitment to:

- A zero tolerance to child abuse
- Listening to and empowering children and young people
- Keeping our children safe from harm

In the case of a disclosure being made to you.

All members of our school community have a responsibility to ensure the safety of our children. We all have a responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual, neglect. Working with our children is a privilege and places us in a position of trust and care.

If, in the course of your working with a child, a disclosure is made to you that causes concern about the child's safety and well-being, you **must** bring the matter to the attention of the class teacher or school leadership as soon as possible. Once again, confidentiality is paramount.

All suspicions that a child has been, or may be in danger of being abused must be taken seriously. This includes abuse that is suspected to have occurred outside of school grounds and hours.

If you form a **reasonable belief** that a child has been, or may be at risk of abuse, you must act, even if you have not witnessed the child abuse.

Essential Documentation required from Volunteers.

As an essential element of our commitment to child safety all volunteers are required to sign our school's **Code of Conduct** which clearly sets out our expectations for appropriate behaviour when working with, and around, children.

Volunteers are also required to have a Working With Children card (applications available online at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au). A copy of your WWC card will be kept on file at school and the card itself must be placed in the card holder available at the office upon sign in whenever you are working within the school or on an excursion.

Under the new Victorian Child Safe Standards, Volunteers now must also provide a National Police Record Check together with the Working with Children card. A National Police Check can be completed online at www.afp.gov.au

All volunteers must provide a copy of the above documentation to the school prior to commencement of any volunteer work.

Volunteers are required to sign in/and sign out when attending the school or assisting on excursions. Working with Children's cards are to be placed in the school lanyard and worn whilst in the school or on excursion

Induction

All volunteers will be required to undertake a general induction for working in the school. This will occur at the beginning of a school year or as required.

Prior to any excursion, volunteers will be briefed about the specific safety and other requirements related to their supervisory duties. This briefing will include Duty of Care requirements.

Volunteers are reminded that the Duty of Care always rests with the teacher in charge of the activity.

How to get involved.

Our Lady of the Nativity School welcomes, and depends upon, the involvement of parents to support the education programs offered within the school. Parents can support the learning experiences of the children in the following ways:

- Supporting the Classroom Literacy Program
- Supporting the Classroom Numeracy Program
- Providing assistance for literacy and numeracy intervention programs
- Supporting Arts programs
- Attending excursions
- Assisting with Interschool sport
- Providing their services as guest speakers
- Assisting in the Library
- Joining the canteen roster
- School banking
- Membership of Parents and Friends
- Attendance at working bees
- Organisation of, and participation in, special event days. Eg Footy day, Mothers'/Fathers' Day stalls, Fete, special lunches

Responsibilities of Classroom Helpers

All classroom helpers require the appropriate documentation (WWC card and signed Code of Conduct). Parents wishing to assist with the Literacy or Numeracy Programs are required to undertake a training course which is conducted by the school's Literacy and Mathematics Leaders. This one hour course will be timetabled in Term One each year. A register of parents who have undertaken the training course is passed on to class teachers who will then roster parents on at appropriate times and days. If you are rostered on for a particular time we ask that you make every effort to attend or inform the teacher of your inability to attend.

Assisting on Excursions

Excursions are an important aspect of the children's learning as they provide first hand experiences and enable children to deepen their conceptual understandings and enrich their units of inquiry.

The number of parent helpers required for each excursion is dependent on a number of factors:

- The age and development of the children
- The type of activity they will be engaged in during the excursion
- The location of the excursion.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to accommodate all the parents who volunteer to accompany a class on an excursion. We endeavour to make the process as fair as possible but often resort to a 'lottery' system. We understand that missing out on an excursion can be disappointing but ask that you do not place the class teacher in a difficult position by insisting that you attend or that you will meet the class at the venue. You will appreciate that Duty of Care on any excursion is high to ensure the safety of the children and just turning up can compromise our control of the situation.

At times, due to the availability of seating on a bus, you may be asked to car pool and meet the class at the venue/location of the excursion. It is important that you come to school first, sign in for the excursion and depart from school at the same time as the children. We also ask that you accompany the bus back to school.

Important points when accompanying students on an excursion:

- Duty of Care rests with the teacher at all times
- If a child needs discipline, bring the matter to the attention of the teacher
- Stay with your assigned group ensuring that you are in sight of the teacher as much as practicable
- If you have to leave the group for any reason, such as accompanying children to the toilet, inform the teacher.
- Never leave children unattended or unsupervised
- Never be alone with an individual child
- Follow all instructions of the teacher.
- We request that you do not purchase any food or other items for the children.

Confidentiality

Parents helping within the school are in a privileged position. Maintaining confidentiality is an essential requirement of all parent helpers. In order to maintain confidentiality for all of our students, teachers and families, the following MUST be adhered to.

- There should be no discussion of students' needs, behaviour or academic behaviour outside the classroom or with any third party.
- There should be no discussion or comparison of teachers or their programs.
- If there are any circumstances that require further attention, these are to be taken in the first instance to the class teacher and then to the co-ordinator if necessary.
- No photos of children are to be posted onto social media.

Unfortunately, any parent who breaches confidentiality for any reason will no longer be permitted to participate in the classroom helper program.

General Protocols for Volunteers

- It is never permissible for a parent volunteer to discipline a child. Please bring misbehaviour/concerns to the attention of the teacher.
- If you will be assisting with the children's learning, either in the classroom or on an excursion, toddlers and pre-schoolers are unfortunately not permitted. They are however welcome if a parent is assisting with before school programs
- Please refrain from using mobile phones whilst working with the children
- Hot drinks are not permitted in the classroom in the presence of children