

# PARA HILLS SCHOOL P-7

## Volunteers Policy



**Respect Commitment Honesty**

# **POLICY**

## **DEFINITION**

Volunteer school worker means a person who works at or for Para Hills School P-7 without remuneration or reward.

In our school context, a volunteer is a person who supervises and/or works with students of the school in a relatively unsupervised capacity.

Examples of such volunteers include:-

- Coaches of sporting teams
- Supporting students by listening to reading
- Camp assistants
- People of the school community who drive children to and from excursions.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

A volunteer is a person who offers themselves for services of their own free will. They are highly valued and respected members of the school community and bring with them a sense of determination and generosity of spirit to make a difference.

Volunteers come from all walks of life equipped with many skills and experience, interests and talents. They can make significant contribution to the school by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. These varied interests and skills can complement school programs, thus providing a wider range of positive interactions and experiences for students.

## **AIMS**

1. Recognise the valued role of Volunteers at Para Hills School P-7.
2. Augment the curriculum and provide additional learning opportunities and experiences for students.
3. Develop links between the school and community.
4. Maximise the number and variety of effective volunteers who contribute to our school.
5. Outline roles and responsibilities for volunteers and the school in respect to volunteering.
6. Provide volunteers with the support and recognition they deserve.
7. Provide Safety for students and volunteer protection.

## **VOLUNTEER SELECTION PROCEDURES**

Volunteers will be assessed on their suitability to work at the school by the staff and the principal, with the principal holding the overriding decision of suitability. This assessment will be made in relation to the skills and contributions being offered, and after verification of the person's good character.

Specifically, potential volunteers are required to complete a:

- 1) Volunteer Expression of Interest
- 2) Volunteer Agreement form
- 3) Undergo DCSI Criminal History Screening
- 4) Attend Volunteer Induction Session

**The principal's decision is final in determining who is eligible to work as a volunteer at the school. Any applicant not accepted for volunteer work will be advised in writing and reasons will be given (in accordance with natural justice).**

All volunteers are expected to undertake induction training.

Having completed these steps, applicants will receive official written notification about their registration as a volunteer.

Long-term school volunteers will be required to revisit some aspects of the application and training process every three years or as needed.

## **SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A volunteer will be allocated a supervising staff member in each of the areas he/she works.
- Accurate records will be kept of a volunteer's training records and work details.
- Volunteers can expect to be treated with respect and courtesy.
- Volunteers have a right to a safe and healthy work environment, free from harassment or bullying.
- Information specific to the area of volunteer work will be provided.
- **Volunteers will be provided with induction training that will include:**
  1. Privacy & Confidentiality
  2. Mandatory reporting
  3. Occupational Health Safety & Welfare procedures
  4. Duty of care responsibilities to students
  5. Orientation regarding the school (layout, policies, relevant staff)
  6. Grievance Procedures
  7. Equal Opportunity
  8. School values, appropriate language and behaviour

## **VOLUNTEERS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The volunteer's most important responsibility relates to his/her duty of care to children. Students are a vulnerable group, 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 with English as a second language or if they experience emotional/physical neglect.

Volunteers are required to carry out tasks in a manner consistent with the school expectations, including maintenance of a professional, cooperative and confidential working environment.

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

- Work unsupervised with students
- Be involved in toileting students or assisting with change rooms/sickrooms
- Have unsupervised contact with students during break times
- Encourage affection from or dependency in students eg. 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
- Represent the school or their area of work (for example in official correspondence, public forums or media contact) without approval of the principal

**Volunteers must:**

- Refer all student concerns about behaviour issues to the supervising teacher or leadership staff
- Sign the Attendance Register 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
- Act in a way that supports the school values and expectations about appropriate language and behaviour
- Abide by Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector and be aware of their obligation

**CANCELLATION OF AGREEMENT**

When concerns arise about a volunteer, opportunity to remedy a problem or improve an area of concern will be offered wherever appropriate. A volunteer's agreement can be cancelled at the principal's discretion and where the volunteer:

- has no more suitable work available
- fails to follow requirements outlined in the volunteer policy and elaborated through the induction training
- behaves towards, students, parents or staff in a manner deemed inappropriate or improper
- repeatedly fails to meet commitments without notice to the school

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Volunteers are actively encouraged to participate in school activities, and will be invited to do so
- Volunteers will be sought out formally through the newsletter, written invitations and personal approach, as well as informally and through conversation and opportunity
- Volunteers will be required to participate in an induction process prior to volunteering at the school
- Volunteers will be matched with work that is suitable to their skills, interests, time commitments and health status. Training will be negotiated as required
- Volunteers will not be required to carry out tasks with which they are uncomfortable
- Changes to a volunteer's area of work or time commitment will be made in full consultation with them
- Supervising staff will be available to discuss volunteers' concerns or suggestions as they arise
- Supervising staff will meet their duty of care to students by not leaving a volunteer to work unsupervised with students
- Volunteers will sign in and out at the designated area
- Volunteers will be invited to use staff toilets and seek refreshments in the staff room
- Volunteers will be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses if this has been negotiated with the school before hand and if receipts are produced

## LEGAL MATTERS

- Volunteer workers undertaking school work on behalf of, and with the approval of the Governing Council or principal, are indemnified as to their personal liability in similar terms to teachers.
- The Government's self-insurance arrangements' uniform cover is available to volunteers who assist the department. The cover extends to persons who carry out volunteer duties at the direction of the site leader or governance body.

## RECOGNITION

- Individual or groups of volunteers will be acknowledged in the newsletter, publicising their contributions to the school.
- An informal function with refreshments will be provided in term 4 to thank volunteers for their contributions throughout the year.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed.

This policy was ratified by Governing Council

Chairperson

Date

Principal

Date