



# Parent Involvement

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## Parent Involvement

Our school prides itself on its family approach to education and welcomes the involvement of parents. We actively encourage participation through volunteer programs where parents can directly participate in school activities. Opportunities are available to assist in a variety of ways e.g. community services, camps, excursions, sporting events, classroom programs, and participation in school council sub-committees. Currently we have many parents who are involved in various ways at our school. Without parent assistance in some areas, it would be very difficult or even impossible to run some programs. Some involvement requires a long-term commitment, whereas others may be one-off or occasional.

Participating at school can be a most rewarding and enlightening experience and I hope some of these ideas are useful for you.

Any contribution you can offer will be warmly welcomed. Please don't hesitate to contact a staff member if you have any queries about volunteering.

***Research shows that students whose parents take an active role in the school do better at school.***

### Things I should be aware of before volunteering

- All visitors must obtain a visitor's pass from the office. This process is part of our emergency management and student safety procedures.
- Confidentiality is critical.
- If in doubt about handling personal information, please seek advice from a staff member.
- If you have any difficulty with a student, you must refer the problem to the Class Teacher. Under no circumstances should you touch a child.

## Working with Children Check

For the peace of mind of all concerned, we ask that you apply for and are successful in gaining a Working with Children (WWC) check prior to being a volunteer in the classroom (not required for community services helpers). The WWC check seeks to prevent those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work.

The WWC check involves submitting a form to the Department of Justice. The form asks you for personal information such as gender, date of birth, drivers licence number or passport details to verify your identity and enables a check of the National Criminal History Record. Detailed information will not be returned to the school. *The form to apply for a WWC Check is available from the Post Office. The check is free for volunteers and as long as your circumstances do not change, the WWC Check remains valid for five years.*

For information on the regulations concerning working with children in schools refer to [www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren)

## Class Representatives

At the beginning of each year, we ask for two parents to volunteer to be Class Representatives (Class Reps). The main purpose of this role is;

1. **PARENT PARTICIPATION IN CLASS PROGRAMS:** to encourage and organise assistance required in the classroom by the teacher e.g. help in the classroom, photocopying materials, etc.
2. **CLASS SOCIAL FUNCTIONS:** to arrange opportunities for parents to meet each other at the beginning and during the year.
3. **CLASS TELEPHONE LIST:** to assist in the compilation of a class telephone / address list which helps with the student's socialisation. Permission to be included on the list must be given by parents.

4. **FUND RAISING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES:** The Class Representatives encourage participation in school fundraising functions and activities e.g. Arranging class tables for our Trivia Night, School Dinner Dance, organising volunteers for fete stalls and other fundraising events, encouraging attendance at Community Sub Committee Meetings. The Class Reps are asked to attend or delegate other parents from the class to attend meetings and share information.

**The Class Representatives become a strong supporting link in our home school partnerships.**

### Parent Helpers

A Parent Helpers Course will be facilitated by school staff each year at the commencement of Term 2.

### School Council

It is through the School Council, that opportunity is provided for parents and teachers to take part in school level policy decision-making.

The School Council is a voluntary group which consists of the Principal and elected parents and teachers.

Elections for the parent and teacher representatives take place in February each year, when half the representatives are elected for a two year term. All parents are eligible to stand for School Council and to vote at elections.

School Council meets eight times per year. Observers from the school community are welcome to attend these meetings.

The Council is responsible for determining school policy, the management of the school's finances, buildings and grounds and the selection of the Principal.

It has several permanent sub-committees as listed below. These committees are open for any member of the school community to be a member and parents are urged to be involved in any area in which they may have an interest. Each sub-committee has a nucleus of members of the School Council and Staff with a School Councillor as convenor.

The **Education and Policy Sub-Committee** is responsible for the development of school policy and conducting educational programs for the school community. Education Forums open to the school community, provide the opportunity to discuss educational issues.

The **Finance and Personnel Sub-Committee** is responsible for bringing recommendations to School Council re the budget and for expenditure control.

The **Sustainability Sub-Committee** is responsible for the ensuring we have an environmentally friendly school. They organise initiatives such as 'Walk/Ride to School Day', 'nude food' lunches and partaking in Clean Up Australia Day.

The **Community Sub-Committee** informs the wider community of the work of the school. Members of this committee are involved in organising social and fundraising initiatives, researching and applying for grants, maintaining the buildings and grounds and organising working bees.

The School Council obtains money for school use from:-

- a) Government grants.
- b) Fund raising efforts by the Parents, Teachers & Friends Committee, Fair Committees, sale of icypoles, social events and profits from the Uniform shop.
- c) Contributions from parents.
- d) Other donations.

We acknowledge the wealth of experience we have within our community and genuinely appreciate the fabulous support our parents provide. We look forward to seeing many of you working with our students at various events and activities.

Our thanks to Hawthorn West PS for contributing this resource