

Altona Green Primary School

Volunteers Handbook



Volunteer Helpers Handbook

Dear Volunteers,

We believe that the education of our children is enriched by your involvement. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and valued by the school, staff, parents and children. Thankyou for choosing to help, in providing the best possible learning environment for our students.



Karen O'Dowd

Principal

Ways in which volunteers assist at Altona Green PS:

Classroom - Let the classroom teacher know that you are interested in volunteering. It need not be your child's class. Let the teacher know when you are available, what types of activities you feel comfortable and confident to assist with and how frequently you will be able to come along. The teacher will consult their program and let you know when they could most use your assistance.



Excursion - Parents/Volunteers are at times needed to assist on an excursion. Teachers bear the ultimate responsibility but rely heavily on parents support on such occasions. Parent assistance is usually requested on the excursion notes. On the excursion, parents are often assigned a small group for the day. However the classroom teacher is always close by to ensure that the group stays together and is able to enjoy the day. Pre-schoolers, as a rule are not able to attend excursions.

Events Group -. Meeting days are advised in the newsletter. Everyone is welcome to attend. The Events Group are an active group who organise fun activities for the students and co-ordinate fundraising activities.



Buildings and Grounds - the Buildings and Grounds team welcome any form of assistance in helping to maintain our buildings and grounds to the highest possible standard. Whether it be weeding, sweeping, watering or offering any skilled labour, we would always be grateful. Please see Karen Mackay



Public Profile - the aim of the Public Profile team is to promote A.G.P.S to the school community and beyond. We do this by involvement in



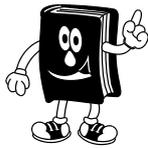
Kinder Transition, promoting children's work in a variety of forums and encouraging parents to be involved with the school. Parents are welcome to join our meetings which are held monthly and published in the newsletter.

Sports Activities - Sports Days and Interschool Sports Days are always busy and extra helpers may be required. Gray will usually ask for helpers in the newsletter or on the sports note that is sent home.

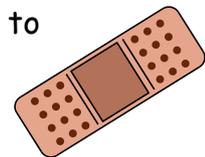
If no assistance is needed, please come along to support the children.



Library - Our library would also enjoy volunteer help. Activities could include shelving books or covering books. Please let Kerrie in the library know if you are able to assist.



First Aid Laundry - Volunteers are rostered on once a term to launder the sick bay linen and remake beds with fresh sheets etc. Please let Raelene in the office know if you are able to assist.



Camp - We operate a camping program from Prep-6, ranging from breakfast at school to overnight camps. At times we rely on parental assistance with these activities.

For overnight camps, expressions of interest are sought and then those volunteers attend a meeting before the event so that the details and program are explained as well as the responsibilities and protocols. Only volunteers who have a current police check are able to assist on overnight camps.



Communication Protocols

We are all busy people. Teachers are particularly busy before school preparing lessons, during class time supervising students and after school attending meetings. Making appointments with teachers is the best way of ensuring they can make time to meet with you without being interrupted.

- Do not disturb teachers during class time.
- Make appointments to see teachers so they are well prepared.
- If you witness student misbehaviour you should report this to a teacher rather than dealing with it yourself.
- Never criticise a student at our school. Refer issues to classroom teachers or see Karen.



Please ring the school office to make an appointment with the teacher.

Confidentiality

In your role as a school volunteer you will hear and see:

- Interactions between staff and students
- Interactions between students
- Interactions between staff and parents
- Teaching and learning of individuals

It is important not to discuss or make comment to others about any information that might be learnt about students, teachers or parents whilst working at the school. If parents ask about their child or someone else's children you should simply refer them to the class teacher. A polite, "You need to speak to the teacher about that" will suffice. Breaches of confidentiality may lead to you being disallowed from assisting at school.

If you have concerns during your time at school you should report these to the class teacher or school administration.

Reliability

Teachers often rely on parent helpers who have made a commitment to regularly assist in the classroom to do specific tasks, so it is important to keep the times you volunteer free of other commitments, where possible. If you are unwell or have an urgent matter to attend to, please call the school that morning or as soon as possible to let the teacher know you are unable to attend in case they need to change their program for the day.

Security

All volunteers must sign in at the office and collect a visitor's badge. Don't forget to return your badge and sign out when you are ready to leave. This is for your safety as well as the students. In the event of fire all visitors must be accounted for (see Emergency Evacuation Procedures) Students have also been taught to recognise that the visitor's badge means that the person wearing it has permission to be in our school. This is important for student security.



Behaviour Management Strategies

Altona Green Primary School's guiding purpose is to provide and maintain a supportive school environment in which all students strive towards their potential in all aspects of their development in a secure climate which has been established through the harmonious interaction between staff, parents, students and community forming productive partnerships.

In essence, the philosophy of this school is based upon a belief in the integrity of children and in fostering of good relationships established through mutual respect between children and all teachers, parents and adults who interact daily with them.

Within a positive, proactive environment, our school endeavours to:

- Foster a development of a positive self image in each child. The view of self, which the child brings to the classroom, is critical in determining what and how learning will occur.
- Give a child opportunities to succeed and recognise his/her achievements. Success needs to be achieved in worthwhile endeavours, which are reasonable challenge to each child.

This important goal is incorporated in a well planned curriculum in each classroom.

- Recognise each child's potential and to develop that potential to the highest possible degree.
- Develop, in children, a strong feeling of their own personal worth and the contribution they can make to their own future success and happiness and to the welfare of others.
- Stress the virtue of respect for others, honesty, personal endeavour and achievement and the satisfaction from a task well done.

High level behaviours such as hitting should be referred to the teacher.

The following Behaviour Management Strategies can help to keep children on task and minimise poor behaviour choices by the students.

1. **Establish Expectations:** You may ask the teacher what their expectations are. Clearly state the rules to the group you are working with. Rules should be short, simple and phrased in a positive way. Refer to the rules frequently. Model the behaviours you expect. Make sure children know what you mean.
2. **Instructions:** When giving an instruction ensure it is clear, short and that the students understand what you mean (use terms the children understand).
3. **Waiting and Scanning:** Allow time for student to process and follow directions. Avoid filling this time with more instructions (one at a time). Use the time to be still (modelling), plan ahead, look for opportunities to praise.
4. **Cueing with parallel acknowledgment:** This form of praise encourages children who are off task to follow directions without the need to repeat the direction or be negative. How to use it - When a student is off task choose to acknowledge someone close to them who is on task. Use a natural voice that can be heard by the off task student. As soon as the student who was off task starts working acknowledge them.

5. **Body Language encouragement:** Smile and make eye contact. Touch the work of an on task student. Be positive and confident. Use nods and hand signals.
6. **Descriptive encouragement:** This form of encouragement describes back to students the behaviour that you know will help them learn. This reinforces the rules and promotes a positive, supportive learning environment. It may be used for an individual or a group. Eg: "George, you are writing that letter well".
7. **Selective Attending:** You may choose to ignore low level behaviours from a student if they are not seriously disturbing others. This strategy models for the group that the focus is on work despite the minor disruption. Keep the child in your line of sight and do not look directly at them. As soon as the child starts work use descriptive encouragement eg; Good, you've started work. This tells the child that you noticed they were off task.
8. **Giving a Choice:** A choice should be given when a student has begun to seriously disturb the group after redirection from you, when a child is hostile or their behaviour is escalating. Use a firm, calm tone. Eg; George, you can choose to sit here with the group or sit over there with the teacher. A choice should not sound like a threat.
9. **Following through:** Following through on what you say tells children that you mean what you say. Think carefully about the consequences that you may choose. You must be able to do it. Act confident even if you do not feel it. Avoid using an aggressive tone. Try to minimise behaviours early on to avoid this option. We are working towards a positive learning environment.
10. **Positive Reinforcement:** many of our class teachers use a reward based scheme with their students. Check with the teacher if you use this scheme with students in your group

Please check with the classroom teacher on the strategies used with individual students.

Accidents and First Aid

Whilst volunteering in the school if you happen to see a student who has been injured or is feeling unwell please refer them to the teacher or bring them to the teacher's attention. Teachers are responsible for taking appropriate action.

If you have an accident or hurt yourself whilst volunteering in the school or on excursion it is important to notify the teacher immediately and to provide full details to the office. In the event of an injury of a serious nature an accident report should be completed.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Emergency Evacuation Procedures and a map to the Emergency Evacuation Area are located in each classroom or building in the school. Please make yourself familiar with the procedures. In the event of an emergency please go to the Emergency Evacuation Area (Basketball Courts) and check in with the office staff there to have your name recorded. If in the event of a fire, failure to check in and have your name recorded may mean that a fire-fighters life is endangered searching unnecessarily. Please do not leave the school grounds at this time without signing out - the sign out book will be at the Emergency Evacuation Area.

In the event of an Intruder Alarm everyone, including visitors to the school, is required to lock themselves in the building. It is important that even in a practice, volunteers follow these procedures as the children rely on the example that you set.

Workplace Health and Safety

The school like any workplace must comply with the Workplace Health and Safety Act. Therefore volunteers are also required to comply for their own safety and that of their fellow workers.

In the classroom volunteers must know:

- Emergency Procedures - volunteers must make themselves aware of emergency procedures in case of an accident, fire etc. please ask the teacher to show you the Emergency Procedures and explain anything that is unclear.
- Smoking - smoking is not permitted in the school grounds. This is the policy for all government facilities.

Who may volunteer to help?

- Parents of students at the school
- Community members with appropriate documents
- Practicum students from universities
- Guest speakers and helpers approved by the Principal

All people entering school grounds require permission from the school principal. Circumstances may arise where a volunteer's assistance is refused.

Some conditions for Volunteers:

- Volunteers should comply with the directions of teachers.
- If on an excursion the class is not having spending money, buying souvenirs or snacks, we expect that the volunteers support this and do not purchase things for their own child.
- A volunteer is there for all children, not just their own child.
- Volunteers should not bring young children with them to classrooms unless arranged with the teacher. This can be quite distracting for the classroom. Only adults who volunteer, enrolled students and staff are covered for public liability.
- Volunteers should observe the various instructions given in this document.
- If assisting in the swimming program or on camp, it is our School Council's policy that all such volunteers have a current police check. Police checks are valid for three years from date of issue. These police checks can be arranged through our school office.

Thankyou

On behalf of the entire school community I would like to thank you for giving some of your valuable time to assist our students.

We believe that your participation in our school enriches the experiences of our students and improves their learning outcomes. Children really enjoy seeing their parents help out at school.



We value your support and hope that your times with us will be most rewarding.
Yours Faithfully

Karen O'Dowd
Principal