

Volunteers Handbook



Holy Cross School

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Holy Cross School

Volunteer's Handbook

Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to Holy Cross and thank you for giving up your time to volunteer as a helper at our school. We look forward to your contribution and to working with you to provide quality and inclusive Catholic education to all of the students in our care.

This booklet is designed to provide you with some important information you will need to know while you are working here at Holy Cross. It also outlines some regulations and expectations which apply to all adults working in Catholic Schools.

Please read the booklet carefully and ensure that you are comfortable and familiar with its contents. This will ensure that your time with us here at Holy Cross will be a successful and enjoyable experience for you, the school and the students with whom you may work.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to any member of staff. We are only too happy to assist you. Thank you again for your generosity and please know that we really appreciate your efforts.

Yours sincerely

Paul Drewniak
Prinicpal

Working with Children

All volunteers who work with children undertake a special and rewarding task. However, because of the nature of this work, there are some essential procedural matters which must be followed to ensure the safety of the children, the volunteers and the school.

Important Procedures:

1. Please read the **Volunteers Handbook**.
2. All volunteers are asked to read the **Student Protection Handbook** at your earliest convenience.
3. All volunteers who **are not** parents of students in the class must have a "**Working with Children Suitability Card**" or "**Blue Card**". This card must be presented to the school prior to the commencement of your work as a volunteer. A copy of your current card or suitability notice will be kept in the office. This applies to all people over the age of 18.
4. All volunteers are asked to sign in at the school office on arrival, and sign out when they leave. This is a Health and Safety regulation and ensures that we can account for all people on the site in case of an emergency. The Sign-In register is at the school office.
5. All volunteers are asked to please read and sign the **School Volunteers Registration Form**, containing the **Confidentiality Agreement**.
6. **For those volunteers who are not a parent of a current enrolled student i.e. Grandparents and other relatives etc over 18 years of age, you will need to complete and sign:**
 - The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's Information Sheet
 - Brisbane Catholic Education's Volunteer Suitability Declaration

Volunteer Code of Conduct

This code of conduct applies to all persons volunteering within Brisbane Catholic Education.

- All non-parent volunteers must undergo employment screening under The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2005 and hold a current Positive Notice Blue Card for volunteers.
- Volunteers have a significant role in the work of the school. Volunteers have an integral part to play in providing a safe and enjoyable environment for young people.
- Volunteers are expected to follow the principles of :
 - Safety
 - Respect
 - Support
 - Ethical Communication
 - Ethical conduct
- Volunteers should:
 - Behave honestly and with integrity
 - Act with care and diligence
 - Behave and dress appropriately
- Volunteers should think and act safely:
 - Put safety first in all activities
 - Follow the safety procedures outlined in this Handbook, to the best of your ability, as outlined in your volunteer induction process.
 - If a direct threat is identified, assist in the evacuation of the area and/or situation as quickly as possible.
 - Work only accordingly to your level of competency. Contact and report to a School Administration member when confronted with a situation which you are unable to contend with or beyond your role or responsibility.
- Volunteers should treat students and staff with respect:
 - Respect the rights of individuals and maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
 - Treat everyone with courtesy, sensitivity, tact, consideration and humility.
 - Assist in the creation of an environment free of fear, harassment, racism and exploitation.
 - Respect the cultures, beliefs, opinions and decisions of others although you may not always agree.

- Take instruction from and not obstruct the responsible staff member in any way with regard to the execution of their duties.
- Report any illegal activity to the School's Administration or appropriate staff member.
- Volunteers should use appropriate communication skills when engaging with students:
 - Acknowledge the needs and concerns of the individual
 - Practice effective listening (eg. ask open questions; be alert to non-verbal communication; stay calm and relaxed).
 - Be aware of the young person's physical space
 - Be aware of your own body language
 - Be judicious in making physical contact with young people and at all times seek the young person's permission to do so
 - Stay calm and relaxed
 - Be clear and consistent
 - Use non-discriminatory respectful and non-judgmental language
 - Seek advice whenever appropriate
 - As a volunteer, you must follow all instructions from all staff and School Administration. You should not engage directly with media representatives, and should refer all enquiries to School Administration.
- Volunteers must not:
 - Smoke or use tobacco products while volunteering and/or on school property
 - Condone the use of or provide any of the above substances
 - to any students, employees or other volunteers
 - Verbally harass or abuse any person or use profanity while volunteering and/or on school property
 - Utilize your position as a volunteer to take advantage of any young person

Any breaches of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the School Principal in the first instance and appropriate authorities will be contacted if necessary.

Should you have any questions with regard to any of the above you should contact the school Principal - Paul Drewniak in the first instance on (07) 3857 2443.

Some Hints to Guide You

Do's

Always be positive and encouraging with the children. Encourage effort and progress not just success.

Feel free to discuss with the class teacher any concerns you have about a child. While teachers may be busy, they are very interested in your observations.

Always work with children in a place where you can be clearly seen by another adult. This protects both you and the child.

Always use a calm, quiet and encouraging voice. A raised voice can often frighten a child.

If you are feeling unwell or tired, please don't hesitate to phone the school and say you will not be in. Your efforts are appreciated and we understand that sometimes you won't be able to make it.

Don'ts

Don't discuss children's progress with anyone other than the child's class teacher.

Don't discipline children other than a verbal reminder about expectations. If children do not follow your instructions, you should report this to the class teacher immediately. It is expected that volunteers will be treated with respect at all times.

Don't use children's toilets or accompany a child to the toilet. Staff toilets are available near the front office and in the staff room. You are always welcome to use the staffroom toilets.

School Timetable

8.40am - 10.50am	First session
10.50am - 11.20am	1 st Break
11.20am - 1.20pm	Middle session
1.20pm - 1.50pm	2 nd Break
1.50pm - 2.55pm	Last session

Safety Advice:

1. Please ensure that you follow all appropriate safety procedures regarding the use of any school equipment.
2. Please do not bring equipment from home for use at school, unless already arranged with school staff.
3. There are ladders available for reaching high places. Please do not climb on chairs or any other furniture.
4. Lifting - Be careful when lifting anything. Please clear a path before lifting; keep the weight close to your body and lift with bent knees and a straight back. The school has a trolley to move things if you have any doubts.
5. When preparing food, please observe all hygiene procedures.

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Visitors/Volunteers

All visitors/volunteers must report to the school office staff so they can be accounted for in the school register - Visitors sign in/out book.

In the event of a Fire or Emergency Evacuation, a siren will sound and you will:

1. Remove any people who are in immediate danger
2. Alert nearby staff, children and members of the public
3. Confine fire and smoke by closing doors and windows
4. Ensure that Emergency Services are notified - 000 phone call
5. Proceed immediately to Assembly Area - next to cricket nets
6. Obey any instructions given by Holy Cross staff

Lock Down Procedures

What is a Lock Down?

A lockdown is the securing of persons within a building to prevent a potential threat of harm or injury to Staff, Students, Visitors, Parent Helpers, Contractors or Tradespeople.

What is a potential threat?

- Dangerous person/undesirable visitor on or about the site.
- Toxic spill - chemical spill on or about the vicinity of the school
- Gas leak
- Severe storm

Basically any situation where it is considered that persons will be safer indoors.

Who orders a Lock Down?

Normally the Principal or a member of the leadership team; however,

*Any staff member who can reasonably foresee physical harm to students or staff members resulting from a situation as described above may order a Lock Down.

What happens in a Lock Down?

In the event of a Lockdown Drill, an announcement of "**NO FRENCH LESSONS TODAY**" will be heard over the phone loudspeaker system. All doors and windows are to be locked and nobody is to be exposed to the elements. Until the all clear is given, it is imperative that there is complete silence and people are on the ground in a safe place. Lockdowns do occur in schools and may be for a variety of reasons.

Staff and/ or volunteers should not speak to the media about the event and should advise students similarly. If the media approaches, they should be directed to the Principal.

As there is no way to know if these are drills or real events, we treat each incident as if it were an actual event. We lead by example for our children - in the event of a real incident, they will have known procedures to follow and will have the best possible chance of safety.

Fire drills are undertaken each term and the lockdown evacuation is undertaken once per year to refresh children and staff on procedures. Feedback is essential after participating in these drills so we can ensure the best practice at all times. Please feel free to participate in the feedback process.

Remember - people are more important than possessions and are always our Number One priority!

POLICY ON PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Rationale:

At Holy Cross we acknowledge parents as the first educators of their children and strongly encourage them to be involved in the education of their children. It is our hope that parents will join in partnership with the staff of the school and work together to provide quality Catholic education for our students.

Parents are often invited to act as helpers in many classes. This can include such tasks as helping students with literacy and numeracy activities, helping with art or cooking, working as a volunteer at sporting events and assisting in the swimming program. Parents are also invited to take part in school excursions and assist staff with supervision during these occasions. Parents can also volunteer in the library or the tuckshop, and they may also act as a Class Parent for their child's class. Individual class teachers may also ask parents for assistance in other areas.

At all times, parents who volunteer to work in these situations are formally and informally given access to certain information about students, teachers and class activities. Out of respect for Privacy legislation, the rights of students, staff and other parents and courtesy, all parent volunteers need to be mindful of confidentiality and ensure that they do not share or discuss any information or facts that they see or hear at school.

Policy:

Parents are welcomed and invited to be involved in their child's education. All parents who work as volunteers at school will be expected to read and sign a Confidentiality Statement. They will need to respect the confidentiality of staff, students and other parents at all times. Signed statements will be kept on file in the office.

Implementation:

When parents are invited to act as volunteers at school, the attached Confidentiality Statement will be given to them and they will be asked to read and sign it. Breaches in confidentiality will be treated seriously and the parents involved will be asked to meet with the Principal. Confidentiality will be discussed with all parent volunteers before they begin work in the classes or at school. Volunteers will be asked to read the Volunteers Code of Conduct and sign a Volunteer Suitability Statement (both attached to this document).