



Dorset Primary School
Classroom Helpers and Volunteers
Handbook

Dorset Primary School Classroom Helpers and Volunteers Handbook

Research has shown that parents who take an active role in their child's school life increase their child's ability to learn and have a positive effect on academic achievement.

At Dorset Primary we encourage parents to actively support student learning by becoming involved in a range of school and classroom activities and greatly appreciate the parents and community members who assist and support our programs.

Programs and activities may include:

- Listening to students read.
- Supporting class activities such as cooking, arts and crafts etc.
- Attending excursions.
- Providing administrative support, such as laminating teaching aids and covering library books.
- Supporting fundraising activities.
- Participating in school activities such as Book Week, open mornings, classroom celebrations.
- Joining the School Council.

Classroom Helpers and Volunteer Workers

When parents/carers assist with school programs they are classed as **volunteers** working at the school.

Any person whose duties usually involve or are likely to involve work in a school (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engaged in 'child-related work' and must be compliant with the Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act). www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/.

A duty of care applies while students are under the care of the school. This duty applies equally to school based activities and out of school activities. The same duty of care applies to employees and volunteers who assist at the school.

Classroom helpers/staff support/volunteer workers are expected to assist the programs within the following guidelines:

- Treat all students in a positive, impartial and fair manner.
- Work under the direction of the teacher who is responsible for the class or group of children.
- Refer any behaviour management issues to the classroom teacher, as he/she will then determine what course of action is to be followed.
- Operate within **professional standards** and **confidentiality**. Classroom helpers are in a position of trust and should not discuss with other parents, adults or children any personal information about students, staff or other classroom helpers

learnt whilst involved in school programs.

- Obtain a **Working with Children** check for volunteers, as they are considered to be engaged in 'child-related work' and must be compliant with the Working with Children Act 2005.
- Be willing to assist all children or group of children within the classroom. This could mean that you may not always work with your child.

Code of Conduct

At Dorset Primary we have high expectations of our Parent Community. We expect all parents will:

- Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- Encourage their child to demonstrate positive behaviours and appropriate conflict resolution strategies – e.g. informing the teacher if there is a problem.
- Support school decisions regarding behaviour management.
- Ensure all interactions are respectful and appropriate language is used at all times within the school grounds.
- Contact the school if they have a question or are unsure of something.

Dorset Primary Procedures

- Classroom helpers and Volunteers need to provide the school with a Working with Children's Check. A register of parent helpers with a copy will of their WWCC will be kept at the office. **A receipt of application is acceptable until the official check is delivered.**
- Classroom helpers and Volunteers sign in and sign out of the School, via electronic sign in with the office staff.
- Classroom helpers and Volunteers are reminded to adhere to COVID guidelines:
 - Sanitising of hands on arrival and when leaving the school premises;
 - Sanitising of hands are each student has read with you;
 - Maintaining social distancing were appropriate.

Guidelines for Classroom Helpers and Volunteers

The following guidelines are provided to support classroom helpers and volunteers.

Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Use encouraging/positive words.❖ Adopt a pleasant tone of voice.❖ Use warm, open body language.
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Set a good example. For example, look at and listen to the teacher when he/she speaks.❖ Give students opportunities for decision making by offering limited and appropriate choices. For example, "Which book would you like to read?"
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Accept child-initiated contact where appropriate. For example, a child who high-fives you every time they see you.❖ Redirect child-initiated contact where that contact is inappropriate. For example, a student who wants to cling on to your leg as you walk around the classroom.❖ Discuss any concerns about appropriate contact with the class teacher.
Dress Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Wear appropriate clothing for anticipated role and activities. When in doubt about a situation ask, the class teacher, Collaborative Team Leaders or Assistant Principal.

Emergency Procedures

Evacuation

In the event when the school needs to be evacuated the following procedure needed to be followed:

- A siren will sound.
- Instruct students to line up in pairs.
- Close doors, do not lock them.
- Lead class out of the classroom following the direction outlined on the Evacuation Map.
- Once at the assembly point, take attendance and wait for further instructions from the Wardens.

Lockdown

In the event the school needs to be lockdown the following process needs to be followed,

- Instruct student to sit on floor away from windows, out of sight in silence.

- Check external doors are locked.
- Take attendance, missing students or student out of class are to be reported to the office.
- Classes are to stay in lockdown until advised by the Principal Team.

All staff should remain calm during emergency situations. You will be given information regarding the emergency via email as it become available. In most cases the school will always take extra precautions to ensure the safety of everyone on site. Students should be given age appropriate information regarding the emergency.

Dorset Primary performs Emergency Management drills at different times during the year. Ensure that you are aware of the processes for your classroom as well as the time that you may be in other areas of the school. e.g. Gym, Library etc.

If you have any question please ask the teacher.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What name do the children use when addressing parent helpers in the classroom?

It depends, some parents like to be called by their first name (Mary, Peter,..) while others prefer to be addressed using their formal name (Mrs Brown, Mr White.). The class teacher will normally discuss this with you. Whichever name is chosen, the most important factor is that the children speak to you with respect.

Where can I apply for a Working With Children Check, and how much does it cost?

Applications for a working with children's check can be made at the local post office or online at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>. Applicants need to supply a passport photo with their application. There is no cost for a Working With Children Check for volunteers.

Although it may take several weeks for a Working With Children check to be processed, parents are able to be parent helpers once they have a receipt for their Working With Children check.

What do I need to do when I arrive at school as a classroom helper/volunteer?

All visitors to Dorset Primary are asked to sign in at the office. Please sign out again when you leave school and adhere to COVID guidelines.

Can I bring my toddler / baby with me when I help out in my child's class?

We ask that classroom helpers /volunteers make alternative arrangements for their toddlers and babies so that our students can have your full attention and support. This will allow you and our students to maximise on their learning without distractions.

PMP and Cooking requires supervision rather than one on one support, allowances can be made for younger siblings in these two activities.

What is the usual time commitment for classroom helpers/volunteers in the classroom?

Individual class teachers will organise the time and type of support that best suits both parties. Parent helpers who listen to students read usually come weekly for an hour, but this can vary depending on your availability and the class program. The School appreciates any assistance classroom helpers and volunteers are able to provide. You can contact your child's classroom teacher to make arrangements that suit the time you have available to volunteer.

What do I do if I'm unable to make it to my weekly time?

Class teachers appreciate it if you can let them know if you won't be available. A brief note, sent in with your child, an email to the school or classroom teacher or phone the school office Ph:9725 5038. Teachers understand that there are many times when your routine will change.

I noticed that my friend's child is having a lot of trouble in reading. Should I talk to my friend about this?

As a classroom helper in the classroom you will see the various strengths and areas of need of all the students in the class. It is important that you respect each child's ability and confidentiality and if you have any concerns talk to the class teacher about them.

The classroom that I help out in is quite noisy at times. When I went to school the students worked in silence. Is it OK to have a noisy classroom?

Classrooms have changed a great deal since our school days. Students have many opportunities to work with other students, talk and discuss their learning. The teacher will monitor noise levels in the classroom to ensure they are suitable for the activity being undertaken at the time.

Who is responsible for classroom management in the classroom?

The classroom teacher is always responsible for classroom management. If you are assisting in a small group or individual situation and a student is behaving inappropriately, advise the classroom teacher. It is important for the students to know that the teacher is responsible for behaviour.

What if it is my child who is behaving inappropriately?

This is always a sensitive area. Some students react differently when their mum or dad are in the room. If possible, advise the classroom teacher at the time. If this behaviour continues speak to the classroom teacher out of class time to decide on the best course of action.

I can't help on a weekly basis but I would like to come into the classroom when I have odd days off work. Is this possible?

Teachers always appreciate extra help in the classroom. Where possible a little notice will allow the best use of your time.

I have noticed that children are on different reading levels. What do they mean? I would like my child to move up a few levels should I see their teacher?

Reading levels are a tool the teachers use to match a child to a book that is most appropriate for their instructional learning. There are many factors that go into determining a student's level. Comprehension is one of the most important elements. When students can read a book they also need to be able to understand what they have read. Home readers should be at an easier level than what they read in the classroom.

If you have any concerns or questions about readers you should make a time to meet with your child's class teacher



Classroom Helper and Volunteer Worker Agreement

I have read and agree to comply with the guidelines contained in the Dorset Primary Classroom Helper and Volunteer Worker Handbook.

Name:

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Please specify the type of volunteer helper, e.g parent, work placement:

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Contact Details:

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Emergency Contact Details (name and relationship to that person):

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Child/ren's Name and Grade:

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Signature:.....

Date:.....

Dorset Primary School must have received the signed Classroom Helper and Volunteer Worker Agreement and a copy of the **Working with Children Check**, prior to commencing any voluntary work within the School and classrooms.