



# St. Thomas School & Pre-School

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## Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy

### **Policy:**

St Thomas Pre-school staff will maintain a safe and secure environment for other staff, the children, families and visitors to the service. The Pre-school will promote a positive role for volunteers and encourage a wide range of family participation.

Visitors to our Pre-school are a regular occurrence. Family members or potential families want to visit a service when deciding on care for their children. Students attend practicum periods; volunteers may choose to spend time in the Pre-school along with maintenance personnel, educators and staff from other centres and other authorised volunteers. The presence of visitors must be monitored and documented. The Pre-school encourages students and volunteer participations as we are committed to assisting students gain valuable experience in early childhood settings.

Volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring with them a wonderful array of experiences, skills and interests. Their participation has much to offer this community Pre-school and helps the organization truly reflect the population who attend this Pre-school.

It is hoped that the volunteer experience will also provide assistance to the volunteers themselves; providing opportunities to spend time with their young children in an educational setting, the acquisition of work skills and experience, helping to maintain self- esteem, confidence, and self-respect and developing broader social contacts.

Volunteers provide support at all levels within the Pre-school including, supporting the educational program, supporting other families, fundraising and cleaning/maintenance.

As a vital support group, it is important that volunteers are appropriately trained, supported and their role recognised within the organization.

### **Key Resources:**

- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations: [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)
- Early Childhood Australia: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)
- Volunteering NSW : [www.volunteering.com.au](http://www.volunteering.com.au)

### **Practices:**

- Records relating to visitors and students to our service will be maintained.
- Educators and staff will abide by regulatory protocol when visitors are in the service.
- Promote a positive role for volunteers within the Pre-school.
- Encourage a wide range of parent/family participation within the Pre-school.
- Provide a volunteer workforce for the Pre-school to help provide affordable, high quality care and education.
- Utilize the range of experiences, skills and interests which can be provided by the parents, families and community groups.
- Provide support and clear guidelines for the operation of the volunteer program.
- Provide recognition of the contribution made by the volunteer group.

### **Volunteer Involvement**

St Thomas Pre-school relies on the support of volunteers. It is both managed and supported by volunteers from the parent body.

Volunteers provide support at all levels within the Pre-school;

#### **Fundraising**

- Social - organising and supporting social experiences for families – completed by Management Committee
- Education - sharing skills and interests with the children in the education program.
- Excursions - helping with special days, excursions, etc.
- Cleaning/Maintenance – washing/ironing, working bees helping with repairs to building, odd jobs, sewing etc.

### **Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers**

#### **Rights:**

Volunteers have the right to:

- Protection (a safe environment)
- Be listened to
- Decide when and how long to be available
- Supervision and instruction
- A real piece of work or task
- Promotion and variety
- Negotiate the job, times and days
- Know what the job is before starting
- Have the right tools for the job
- Contribute to the decision making process

#### **Responsibilities:**

Volunteers have the responsibility to;

- Be conscientious
- Be punctual
- Be responsible for what they have agreed to do
- Be reliable
- Let the coordinator know if they are unable to work
- Maintain confidentiality
- Support other volunteers
- Be a team member
- Seek support when needed
- Know their own limitations

### **Specific Roles**

- Fundraising – Assist St Thomas Parents & Friends in Fundraising efforts.
- Social - organising and supporting social experiences for families, e.g. family evening etc. Social events are organised by members of the Parents & Friends
- Education - sharing skills and interests with the children in the education program, e.g. playing musical instruments, demonstrating science experiments, introducing another language etc. Parents are encouraged to share skills and interests . As these are often “one off” experiences that vary, there is no position description. The experience is discussed with, and supervised by staff and parents.
- Excursions - helping with special days, excursions, etc. Parents volunteering to attend an excursion are to have a Catholic Education Police Check completed prior to attending excursions. Parents are to be supervised by paid staff at all times and only paid staff are to attend to children’s toileting and other personal needs etc. Parents will receive written and verbal instructions for the excursion before leaving the Pre-school. Attendance on excursions is open to all parents unless spaces are limited by the travel arrangements or venue, in which case the excursion will be advertised and the first parents adding their name to volunteer list will be accepted.
- Cleaning/Maintenance – washing/ironing, working bees helping with repairs to building, odd jobs, sewing etc. “One off” maintenance jobs are advertised in the newsletter and discussed in greater depth with volunteers.

### **Orientation, Education and Training**

Prior to work the Volunteer receives an orientation which includes;

- Introduction to staff
- Completed Catholic Education Police Clearance
- Completed St Thomas Volunteers Induction form
- Tour of building (if unfamiliar)
- Location of Attendance book. Voluntary staff are to sign on and off at each attendance.
- Location of place to keep personal possessions, e.g. bag
- Location of adult toilet facilities
- Location of telephone (in playroom/office) and protocol of use (short, local calls only)
- Explanation /training for job, including any Work Health and Safety issues.
- Location of materials required to complete tasks.

**Educators and staff will:**

- Welcome visitors to the service and seek information on their reason for coming.
- Direct visitor appropriately, have them complete the Visitor Book and make the Nominated Supervisor aware of a visitor at the service
- Welcome families to visit and participate at any time

**Families will:**

- Be aware of who they are providing access to the service for when they enter themselves and are requested to be aware of unknown visitors and direct them accordingly.