

# **TOOTGAROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Parent Volunteer Policy**

### **June 2013**

Dear Parents,

Thank you for volunteering your time, skills and efforts here at Tootgarook Primary School. There are numerous roles that parent volunteers can be involved in, to support the school in its core operation of improving learning outcomes of students.

Parent volunteers are one of the greatest resources a school can have – with numerous benefits for the school and for parents including:

Benefits for school:

1. To offer better prepared, more individualized programs to each students
2. To offer better services and facilities
3. An active parent body is an essential part of a vibrant, positive school climate

Benefits for our students:

1. They see their parents and community members helping the school and they realise that it is important to all of us
2. They see adults working together effectively and interacting in friendly, positive ways and follow the example
3. They feel really special when their mum, dad or carer are helping in the school

Benefits for parents:

1. An opportunity to be actively involved in your child's education
2. Build a strong, positive relationship with your child's teacher
3. Learn the skills which can, in turn, assist you in helping your child
4. Well informed about what's happening at the school and in your child's class

## **Guidelines**

To be a parent volunteer in the school, there are several guidelines to follow. These are set to help you understand how you can best help out, and to ensure that volunteering is a positive experience for everyone.

1. The Working with Children (WWC) Check creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. The WWC Check helps to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work. If you work or volunteer with children you may need to apply for a WWC Check. To be a parent volunteer in the school, you need to have a current WWC. A photocopy of the card needs to be submitted to the office prior to helping in the classrooms.

2. Commitment – Identify a particular morning or afternoon or day when you are available to help. Please negotiate with the class teacher about which time

would be most useful. Even if you can only come in on an occasional basis or on alternate weeks, your help will still be very much appreciated. If you are unable to help at the agreed time, please let the classroom teacher know either by phone or a note via your child's diary.

3. Use of mobile phones is prohibited while you are helping in the classroom unless in the case of an emergency.

Refrain from talking to another parent volunteer who is also helping in the classroom as this may interrupt the flow of the activities which in turn affects the students' attention.

Attend the parent volunteer briefing session(s) which will be conducted at the school.

Sign in at the office before and after attending a classroom as a volunteer. A lanyard provided by the school must be worn at all times. This helps us keep track of all the helpers who work at our school, the amount of time you have spent helping us and for identification purposes. As part of the fire regulations, all visitors in the school must report to the office.

4. Activities – All activities in which the parent volunteer is involved must take place under the direct supervision of the teacher.

Due to the timings and needs of the students, you may be reassigned to help in another class.

5. **Confidentiality** – Working in the classrooms gives you the opportunity to learn a lot about the students in them. You will learn about their strengths and weaknesses, their behaviour in and outside the classrooms. It is very important that all parent volunteers maintain strict confidentiality of such information. It is therefore not appropriate to speak with other parents about their children and other children. Kindly refer such queries to the child's teacher. Information gained from your experience at our school must not be shared with any other person(s), except the teacher with whom you are assisting. If confidentiality issues are compromised, the support provided by the parent volunteer will need to be reviewed.

If you find that parents who are friends ask about the progress or behaviour of their children in the classroom, this is a matter requiring a great deal of tact on your part and it is very important that you suggest that if they are worried in any way about their child, then they must discuss the matter themselves with the class teacher.

6. Interaction with students – Follow the guidelines of the teachers to manage the student's poor behaviour. All associated discipline issues must be reported to and dealt with by the student's teacher. If in doubt – ask the teachers for advice. It is not appropriate for a parent volunteer to talk to another person's child about incidents in school even if the incident involves their own child.

If you have any concerns with someone else's child at school – refer it to the teachers.

7. Other children – It is advisable that parent volunteers not to bring other children when helping in the classrooms. This is to ensure that they will be able to focus their attention and effort in helping the students, and play a vital role in the smooth running of the activities. Sometimes unfortunately, the distraction of younger children can outweigh the positive help from the parent volunteers.

8. Ask – Please never hesitate to ask if you are not sure about something – or for advice if you feel something you are doing is not working well. We will do whatever we can to ensure your time with us is rewarding.

## **Ways you may be asked to help in the classroom.....**

Activities which will take place with one child at a time:

- hearing the child read
- helping the child learn the key words
- helping or testing the child in the weekly spelling
- changing reading books and recording in the student's diary/reading log book

Activities which involve working with a small group of students:

- reading in a group
- working on the computers
- working with the students on the tasks set by the teacher

Practical jobs that need doing:

- photocopying and laminating
- cutting things out (sometimes before and after laminating them)
- filing and arranging student's work into folders or portfolios
- sharpening pencils and keeping class stationery in order

## **Safety in the school environment:**

- Fire Alarm – When the fire alarm sounds, make your way to the assemble area with any children you are supervising. Do not go back to the classroom until instructions are given. The fire evacuation plan can be found near the exit of each of the classrooms.
- Smoking is prohibited in the school compound.
- Scissors should not be waved about or left on the table. When they need to be carried, they should be held by the closed blades and pointed downwards. Scissors, pencils and other sharp objects should not be pointed at anyone.

\*This page is to be signed by the parent volunteer and returned to the classroom teacher. Attach a copy of the current WWC check if you have not submitted it to the office previously.

Parent volunteers are expected to:

- be outstanding role models for all students
- sign in at the office before and after helping in the classrooms
- have a current WWC and provide a photocopy to the office
- work under the professional direction of staff, following all school policies
- allow the teacher to deal with discipline issues
- maintain **confidentiality** at all times
- report any issues of concern to teachers (and not directly intervene)
- speak in a kind and friendly way to all students, be fair
- establish and maintain a rapport with students based on mutual respect
- contact the teacher if they are unable to attend via phone call or a note
- be properly attired for the day, either during a PE lesson, camp, excursion or helping in the classrooms
- help in other classrooms other than their child's classroom
- turn off their mobile phones or leave them in silent mode while helping in the classroom
- leave younger child(ren) with a carer while helping in the school
- focus their attention in helping the students assigned to them
- follow the school's fire evacuation plan
- attend the parent volunteer briefing session(s)

Parent volunteers have the right to expect:

- work to be prepared and organised by the teachers
- good manners and acceptable behaviour from students
- to be treated with respect
- support by the teachers
- the teachers to deal with discipline issue that arises
- to be informed of the tasks expected of them
- to be notified if sessions are cancelled or the timetable has changed

I have read and understood the guidelines in the *Parent Volunteer Policy*, and endeavour to

abide by these expectations so that all members of the school community will benefit from

my valuable work for the students while volunteering my help at Tootgarook Primary School.

Name of parent volunteer:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_