



# Mt Cotton State School Parents & Citizens' Association



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## VOLUNTEERS POLICY

### Introduction

This booklet has been designed as a guide for both staff and volunteers. We hope it will answer the many questions often asked and ease us through some of the problem areas. We value our volunteers highly and recognise the important role they play in providing a full and effective education for our children. We also recognise what a huge contribution they make to the smooth running of our school.

### Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is someone who gives their time, talent, energy and expertise freely without charge in a productive way to enhance and enrich our school community. They may be relatives of students or people who have responded to a request.

### Philosophy

- We believe that a volunteer program is invaluable to our school but needs to be supported by sound policies, procedures and planning in order to meet our objectives
- Interaction between volunteers and our school enhance our role within the local community
- We believe that without volunteers our ability to deliver an effective education to our students would be disrupted

### Key Contacts

Principal – Meagan Steward

P&C Executive - President

[pandc@mtcottonss.eq.edu.au](mailto:pandc@mtcottonss.eq.edu.au)



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### Working with Children Suitability Check (Blue Card)

- **All** volunteers, unless they are parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school, **must** have a suitability check done and be the holder of a positive notice blue card before their volunteer duties commence. The school and the P&C are responsible for ensuring that applications for screening are forwarded without delay to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardians.
- The requirement for a blue card applies to regulated voluntary work within a 12 month period of:
  - At least once a week over the course of one month, or
  - At least once a fortnight over the course of two months, or
  - At least once a month over the course of six months
- **Exemptions** – Persons not required to undergo this check:
  - Children under 18 years who are volunteers
  - Volunteers who are parent/primary guardian of a child enrolled at the school
  - Teachers registered under the *Education (Teacher) Registration Act 1988 (Qld)*

### Sign-On (and off)

On arrival EACH DAY, volunteers must sign in electronically at the office. Signing in, provides a record of the amount of time given and is also a requirement for Queensland Council of Parents & Citizens Association (QCPCA) insurance cover (see further details below). Security badges will be provided to all volunteers and must be worn at all times while working in the school. Volunteers should also sign off in the office when leaving. These records are referred to in times of emergency (such as fire or lock down) and it is essential that the school administration be able to account for all those signed on at the school at that particular time.

### Insurance

QCPCA each year negotiates on behalf of all state schools an insurance package to cover the needs of Parents and Citizens' Associations. It is a condition of use of school facilities that the Parents and Citizens' Association have adequate Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance for their voluntary workers. This requirement is in the interests of members of Parents and Citizens' Associations to protect them against any legal claim arising from alleged negligence. Activities should be noted in the minutes of the P&C Association General Meetings (eg fetes, working bees, carnivals and other fundraising activities). Regular activities need to be approved by the P&C Association at the beginning of each year. These approved activities must be noted in the minutes. P&C's Personal Accident Insurance cover taken through QCPCA covers other community members who are genuine volunteers in schools (eg in the classroom and on excursions). These people do not have to be registered members of the P&C. For activities such as tuckshop, classroom or excursions it is recommended that voluntary workers record their daily attendance in the volunteer sign-on book located in the school office. It should be noted that public liability for non P&C activities remain the responsibility of the Department of Education.



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### Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers, including Parents and Citizens' Association members, Committee members and Parent Representatives. This Code of Conduct has been adopted to aid all members of our school community to work as a well-ordered group that promotes interest and facilitates development to further improve our school. A harmonious working environment is essential to the effective conduct of our school's volunteer contribution and job satisfaction. To this end, we have agreed to the following:

- Personal privacy is of paramount concern to all. Information gathered or obtained as a result of our roles as volunteers in our school community is ONLY passed onto the relevant school authority WITH the permission of the person disclosing the information.
- Courtesy and respect is to be observed by all.
- Discussion is healthy; personal attacks are destructive and to be avoided.
- Constructive criticism is always welcomed.
- Discrimination on racial, ethnic, social or religious grounds is forbidden, as is any form of sexual discrimination and/or harassment.

*We do have separate functions but we all strive to work as a team.*

### Role of Volunteers

The role of the volunteer and the duties required by him/her will be determined by the person responsible for the area of the school in which the volunteers is working (eg classroom teacher, tuckshop convenor, fundraising coordinator, P&C executive). As a volunteer you can expect:

- Recognition and thanks for your valuable time and assistance
- Something for yourself - such as new skills, friendships and personal satisfaction
- Appropriate information and support to undertake your duties effectively and the right for feedback on completion of your duties
- Worthwhile duties that are within your capabilities and areas of interest (you can say 'no' to duties you do not like, without feeling uncomfortable about it)
- Consideration and respect from other volunteers, school staff and students
- Training as required to familiarise you with the school's environment and relevant policies. This includes initial induction, orientation, ongoing training if required and supervision.
- Clear instructions of what you have to do and whom you will report
- To feel comfortable in liaising with school administration and/or P&C representatives



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## Volunteer Expectations

As a volunteer you are expected to:

- Work as a team member and be supportive and encouraging to other volunteers, students and staff
- Behave in a competent and trustworthy manner and present yourself as a good role model for our students
- Uphold high standards and perform your duties according to the policies and philosophies of this school community
- Treat our students, their families and staff with dignity and respect
- Be dependable and consistent in fulfilling your obligations (eg give adequate notice if you are unable to attend on your rostered time or are unable to complete allocated tasks)
- Respect the privacy of all other members of our school community
- Treat any information you acquire about the students, staff and other volunteers as confidential
- Discuss any concerns you may have regarding your voluntary work with the appropriate people
- Provide constructive feedback and suggestions to the appropriate people so that our work in our school can be continually improved
- Undertake training and information sharing to help assist in carrying out your and your counterparts activities more effectively
- Clearly state the tasks you do not feel comfortable undertaking so that they may be assigned to other volunteers (it's OK to say 'no')

## Addressing Concern / Grievance Procedures

Should you experience any problems or concerns during the course of your work as a volunteer, please be assured that we have processes in place to encourage prompt resolution. This process is outlined below:

- Attempt to address the situation with the person concerned to resolve the issue.

If it is not satisfactorily resolved:

- Issues concerning the P&C Executive are to be directed to the School Principal
- Issues concerning staff are to be directed to the School Principal
- Issues concerning other volunteers are to be directed to the supervisor/coordinator for the area or project you are involved in (e.g. fete coordinator, fundraising coordinator) or to the P&C Executive
- Issues concerning the Principal are to be directed to the Assistant Regional Director for our school's district.

If the issue isn't resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, then a formal grievance procedure can be implemented where a copy of the grievance will be provided to all parties who will be given the opportunity to respond in writing and a meeting will be convened to try and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement between the parties.

If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, then an independent mediator will be engaged to resolve the issue.



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We encourage you to express your concerns to the appropriate person as soon as an incident has occurred so that issues may be resolved quickly and discreetly.

**Welcome and we hope that your involvement in our school community is not only beneficial for our students but is also very rewarding for you too!**

Reviewed: March, 2021

Ratified: AGM – 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021