



# Volunteer Handbook

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# 1 VOLUNTEERING AT ST MARGARET'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

## 1.1 *Volunteer Engagement*

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Volunteers at St Margaret's School must only be engaged to complement the work of paid staff, not to replace them. Volunteers must not be asked to perform tasks: -

- That they are not trained for
- That put themselves or children and young people in potentially vulnerable or unsafe situations
- Where there is a conflict of interest

## 1.2 *Types of roles/volunteer opportunities*

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There are many ways you can volunteer at St Margaret's. Some of these may include:

- help with reading and writing
- assist with music and drama programs
- join a School Board or other committees
- mentor a child or young person
- provide support with camps and excursions
- coach sporting teams
- help in the garden and improve the grounds
- help in the library
- help at the school fundraising events
- be a guest and share your knowledge and expertise

## 1.3 *Who can offer volunteer services?*

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Everyone has the right to actively participate in and contribute to their community: There are volunteering opportunities for everyone. Valuing diversity is extremely important in providing a full range of services to the many children and young people from different cultural and social backgrounds.

## 1.4 *St Margaret's obligations to volunteers*

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As a volunteer, you can expect:

- support with obtaining the relevant history screening (WWCC)
- to be provided with sufficient and appropriate training and induction
- Information handbook for volunteers
- role description
- meaningful work, appropriate direction, and supervision
- to be provided with a safe and well-managed workplace
- to be kept informed of anything that would affect your volunteering role
- to have your opinions and ideas respected
- no physical, economic, social and cultural barriers to your participation

- regular opportunities for feedback, recognition and support
- to have explained to you the expectations about maintaining personal and professional boundaries with children and young people
- to be given a Volunteer Agreement to read and sign
- to adhere to confidentiality and privacy principles

### 1.5 *Your obligations to St Margaret's School*

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As a volunteer, you are expected to:

- ensure children and young people benefit from what you have to share
- undertake the job you have agreed to perform as per your role description
- be open to change and ready to learn new skills
- adhere to the boundaries as outlined in the protective practice guidelines (see 3.8)
- be respectful to others and respect the rights of children
- talk to your supervisor or the Principal about any concerns you have about a student's wellbeing and safety
- be reliable and accountable for your actions
- adhere to confidentiality and privacy principles
- cooperate with St Margaret's policies and procedures including your work health and safety requirements
- cooperate with others
- provide ongoing feedback about your experiences or concerns
- respect property, materials and equipment
- read, sign and adhere to the conditions set out in a Volunteer Agreement.

## 2 GETTING STARTED

### 2.1 *Things to consider before volunteering*

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There are a number of important things you may need to consider before volunteering in a School.

These could include:

- what the position will involve
- training, and ongoing support
- the time involved, i.e. short or long term, occasionally or regularly
- rights and responsibilities
- screening checks and processes
- Each volunteering role will have different requirements, including the:
  - length and duration of time involved
  - level of training required
  - type of support needed
  - types of activities or projects

## 2.2 *Mandatory screening process*

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Before starting your volunteering role, you will need to complete an informal interview so that your suitability, interests and expertise can be considered and matched with needs. You will also be able to ask any questions you have about possible roles and tasks at St Margaret's School.

Under the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act) you will be required to complete and pass the Working with Children Check. Passing a Check is a legal requirement for everyone in Victoria doing paid or voluntary **child-related work** who doesn't qualify for an exemption.

Referee checks will also be undertaken.

## 2.3 *Orientation and induction*

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The next step will be to complete a site orientation and induction of St Margaret's School. A staff member responsible for our volunteers will complete an induction checklist with you to make sure all important areas are covered. The checklist includes:

- your role description
- work health and safety induction
- reporting lines
- administrative procedures e.g., sign in/out
- professional boundaries

Your induction will also help to ensure you are aware that all volunteers are expected to act in a manner consistent with the schools policies and procedures.

## 2.4 *Supervision*

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School leaders are responsible for ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised and level of support will vary according to the role of the volunteer.

If you are working directly with students, you must be visible to a staff member at all times. You must not be left alone in a separate classroom/ building, be involved in duties associated with change rooms, sick rooms or toileting or be sent on a student excursion without a supervising staff member. If you are not working directly with students, the level of supervision can be negotiated between you and your supervising staff member.

If you are asked to transport students using your own private vehicle, then specific approvals must be given by the students' parents/caregivers and the Principal. You must have a current driver's licence (no learners,) insurance, and your vehicle must be registered.

If you are volunteering at an out-of-school-hours school sporting event then your site leader will provide you with further information about your supervision requirements and suitable supports.

## 2.5 *Professional boundaries*

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As a volunteer within St Margaret's School, you are expected to maintain professional boundaries with children and young people. You must not exchange personal details such as phone numbers, email addresses, social networking profiles or anything similar.

## *2.6 The exchange of gifts*

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Respecting the rights of children means volunteers must not encourage affection from, or dependency in students. One way this must be avoided is by not giving gifts to children. This relates to any item exchanged that is outside of the approved activities in the school's curriculum. Remember, you are already giving your best gift, the gift of your time.

## *2.7 Confidentiality and privacy*

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During the course of your volunteering, you may be given access to private and confidential information.

The School Volunteer Supervisor will ensure that you are made aware of your responsibilities in relation to confidentiality, privacy and cultural sensitivity.

# **3 VOLUNTEER SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

## *3.1 Work health and safety*

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For the purposes of work health and safety (OH&S), volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities as workers. You will be required to complete an induction before starting your volunteering role which will be provided to you by the school. You are also responsible for taking care of both your own health and safety, and that of others, e.g. students. You will be informed of emergency procedures, identified hazards and control measures.

Please don't hesitate to get assistance with OH&S from site staff. Remember, your safety is of utmost importance.

## *3.2 Insurance*

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As a volunteer, you are covered by St Margaret's School self-insurance arrangements, which cover personal accidents for volunteers who are carrying out volunteer duties at the direction of the school leaders or governance body.

## *3.3 Complaints procedure*

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Should a dispute arise, it is important that problems are brought to light early and resolved using the correct process and procedures. As a volunteer, you have a right to open and fair access to grievance processes and to be fully informed of your rights. All volunteers have the right to have their grievances heard, respected and dealt with in a professional, efficient and fair manner.

## *3.4 Signing in and out*

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St Margaret's are responsible for maintaining accurate records on each day that volunteers participate at the school as well as records of the students working with volunteers. When you arrive, and leave the school you must 'sign in' and 'sign out' at the reception area. You will be issued with a badge and we ask that you wear it at all times when on the school grounds.

### *3.5 Student behaviour*

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Everyone at St Margaret's School is expected to treat each other with respect and courtesy at all times. As a volunteer, you are not expected to tolerate offensive and inappropriate behaviour. If a child or student is acting inappropriately, please seek the assistance of a staff member who is responsible for behaviour management. Volunteers should not manage behaviour issues.

### *3.6 Privacy and confidentiality*

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All Schools must comply with privacy and confidentiality principles regarding the use and release of information. Volunteers need to be aware that any personal information (including names, addresses, telephone numbers, circumstances or situations) about students, staff and other volunteers that you become aware of during your volunteering must not be shared, unless required by mandated reporting processes. Volunteers also have the right to expect privacy and confidentiality from staff and colleagues.

### *3.7 Feedback and appraisal*

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Appraisal is part of an overall approach to managing volunteers. This should be a mutually rewarding process for both the volunteer and the school. It is during this process that the successes and achievements are identified and discussed, concerns are dealt with and importantly the opportunity given to suggest how St Margaret's School services can be extended or improved. Ask your school leader for a regular appraisal.

### *3.8 Smoke-free workplace policy*

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A reminder that the Smoke Free Workplace Policy prohibits smoking at all government facilities including in all, schools, buildings, structures and outdoor areas. This also includes the footpaths surrounding the school and on-site car park, and therefore you cannot smoke in any vehicle (including private cars) if they are located on-site or being used to transport children or others as part of your volunteering.

Enjoy your volunteering and thank you