



*'Walking with Family in faith and Knowledge'*

## Vision Statement

St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School walks with families in faith and knowledge. We are a diverse and connected community who through powerful collaboration and inquiry inspire each individual to learn and flourish in a contemporary world

# Classroom Helpers and Volunteers Handbook

*St. John Vianney's is a Catholic Community where:*

- *People feel safe*
- *Teachers can teach*
- *Students can learn*
- *We look after each other and our belongings*
- *We do our best*

*'Families and the broader community play a vital role in supporting successful learning outcomes for our children.'*

## Classroom Helpers and Volunteers Handbook

Research has shown that families 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 St. John Vianney's Catholic Primary School we encourage Parents, Guardians, Carers (referred to as Parents in this document) to actively support our community by becoming involved in the students' learning.

We greatly value family partnership throughout the school and understand that family and working life can be busy. We therefore appreciate the parents and community members who assist and support our programs, but we also understand that others may not have the time or capacity to do so. This doesn't mean that we undervalue their engagement in their children's learning.

Programs and activities may include:

- Listening to students read. Support during the modeled reading and in the classroom
- Supporting class activities during mathematics or other curriculum activities such visual arts, the bi-annual concert or Indonesian day
- Sharing expertise during inquiry learning such as science or ICT
- Attending excursions.
- Providing administrative support, such as laminating teaching aids and covering library books.
- Supporting fundraising activities such as mothers' day, the fete and sizzle wizzle.
- Participating in school activities such as Book Week, class masses, classroom celebrations, help at sports days for the school or interschool sports.
- Joining the *Parents and Friend Association* and *Parish Education Board*.

## Classroom Helpers and Volunteer Workers

When parents 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](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol_act/) (the Act). [http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/au/legis/vic/consol\\_act/](http://www8.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdb/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 should always:

- 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 behavior 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. (see Frequently asked questions and answers for more information)
- Be willing to assist **all** children or group of children within the classroom. This could mean that they may not always work with their child

## Ethical Code of Conduct

At St John Vianney's we have high expectations of our Parent Community. As well as adhering to our [Parent Code of Conduct](#), we expect all parents will:

- Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- Know the behaviour code (see next page)
- Encourage all students to demonstrate positive behaviours, appropriate conflict resolution strategies and 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.

## St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School Procedures:

As per the Code of Conduct, when visiting St John Vianney's Primary School Parents are required to:

- Sign in and out during school hours, via the school's Visitor Register, so that their presence in the school is acknowledged and recorded.
- Wear the school visitor lanyard when volunteering in school.
- Comply with all safety and emergency procedures implemented by the school and in the event of an emergency, whilst on school grounds, follow the instructions given by any member of school staff.
- Not to discipline any child, including their own, or speak to any child about their behaviour. This is the role of staff members and all parents are required to respect this.
- Treat others visitors to the school with courtesy & respect including the clergy, members of parliament, representatives from the Catholic Education Department, allied health professionals or other educational consultants.
- When visiting or helping in a classroom parents accept the authority of the supervising staff member/s. Staff members value and respect parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave the classroom or class activity for any reason including, but not limited to:
  - Parental assistance not being required at the time;
  - Parental assistance in the classroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any student or member of staff;
  - The parent is not in control of their emotions

# BEHAVIOUR CODE



At St. John Vianney's  
we are a  
Catholic community  
where:

- ☺ People feel safe
- ☺ Teachers can teach
- ☺ Students can learn
- ☺ We look after each other and our belongings
- ☺ We do our best

## **Emergency Procedures**

The School is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of its staff, students, parents, volunteers and visitors. The School has Emergency and Security Management systems in place. As a volunteers / parent helper it is your responsibility to follow instruction from the staff in charge or emergency services.

Summary of Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Plans are located within buildings throughout the School.

## 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 at all times.

### ***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 St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School are asked to sign in at the office. You will be given a lanyard to wear. Please sign out again when you leave school.

### ***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.

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

Individual class teachers and parent helpers jointly 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. We do ask you to please honor your commitment as much as possible.

### ***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. Either write a short email to the teacher or a note to send in with your child or phone the school office Ph: 9546 4161 and leave a message. Teachers understand that there are 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 and together 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. Please let the teacher know ahead of time as 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 St. John Vianney's Classroom Helper and Volunteer Worker Handbook.

Name .....

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

Contact Details .....

Emergency Contact Details (name and relationship to that person)

.....

Child's Name ..... Grade .....

Child's Name ..... Grade .....

Child's Name ..... Grade .....

Child's Name ..... Grade .....

**Signature:**.....**Date:** .....

St John Vianney's Catholic 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.