

Volunteer Statement



Introduction

We value our volunteers and recognise their important role in both complementing and enhancing the educational programme afforded our children by school staff. We recognise that voluntary work exists in many forms, occurs at different times and is performed in both an obvious and behind the scene contexts. Volunteers make a huge investment within 'Our Great State 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 (a community of staff, parents and students united by purpose). A volunteer may also be from the extended family of students or perhaps a person who has responded to a request in a designated volunteer role (Source: Volunteering Australia).

Philosophy

- We believe that a volunteer programme is invaluable to our school as it provides learning experience and support opportunities for our students beyond that which could be achieved by school staff alone.
- A volunteer programme needs to be supported by sound policies, procedures and planning in order to meet our objectives.
- The objectives of our volunteer programme are:
 - To promote the interests of McDowall State School.
 - To facilitate the development and further improvement of McDowall State School.
 - To promote parent participation.
 - To foster collaboration between parents, students, school communities and non-government entities with intent to achieving the best educational outcomes for McDowall State School students.
- The P&C Association undertakes a critical role in actively supporting our volunteer programme by:
 - Fostering community interest in educational matters.
 - Building close co-operation between parents of children, children attending and staff working at McDowall State School.
 - Building close co-operation between the school and other members of the community.
- The purpose of the McDowall State School is to implement the Australian preparatory and primary curriculum and deliver effective professional teaching services within a supportive school learning environment facilitating achievement of personal excellence.
- Our vision is for all enrolled students to experience success and to assume increasing levels of self-responsibility in the achievement of pre-determined learning outcomes within a supportive learning context strengthened by partnerships.

- ‘Partnerships’ is defined as parents and community actively supporting and complementing school operations, investing additional funding, resources, time, facilities and opportunities to deliver the best possible learning outcomes for all McDowall State School enrolled students.

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. These cards are available from Blue Card Services. Both School Administration and the P&C Association will provide guidance and assistance to new volunteers regarding the application procedure.
- If a volunteer already has a Blue Card, it must be linked to McDowall State School through Blue Card Services before their volunteer duties commence.
- 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.
- While legislation requires that P&C Association executive officers (not members of the OSHC sub-committee) hold a Blue Card prior to commencing the operation of the OSHC business, administrative protocols have been established to cater for those people who take on a P&C Association executive officer position at the Annual General Meeting or at any time during the year. Eg. Where a person appointed as a P&C Association executive officer of a P&C Association licensed Outside School Hours Care Service does not hold a Blue Card, they may assume office once they have made application for a Blue Card and continue to work in that capacity until the application is decided, withdrawn or lapses.
- Exemptions – Persons not required to undergo this check are;
 - 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)*.

Volunteer Sign In and Sign Out

Upon arrival within the McDowall State School, all volunteers must sign the Visitor Attendance Register at School Administration. This same register must be completed at the time of a volunteer departing the McDowall State School site. This procedure is a requirement regarding P&C Association Public Liability Insurance. For the convenience of Tartan Tuckerbox and Uniform Shop volunteers, a Visitor Attendance Register, overseen by the Manager, is also located there.

The Visitor Attendance Register is an official register, used by School Administration to account for all on-site school visitors and volunteers during Emergency Drills such as ‘Evacuation’ and ‘Lock-Down’.

At School Administration, Name Badges are provided (sticker labels) to all school visitors and volunteers. This identifies them as legitimate visitors and volunteers within McDowall State School and should be worn while working in the school. These sticker labels should be responsibly discarded upon departure from the school site.

All volunteers are to read and be familiar with the Student Protection Fact Sheet on display at School Administration.

Public Liability Insurance

The McDowall State School P&C Association holds adequate Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance for school visitors and volunteers. Volunteers do not need to maintain P&C Association membership to be covered.

To ensure P&C Association Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance coverage:

- P&C Association activities should be noted in P&C Association Minutes. Eg. fetes, working bees, fundraising activities.
- Regular activities should be approved by the P&C Association at the beginning of each year. These regular activities are to be noted in the P&C Association Minutes with a notation that volunteers are required.

The Department of Education and Training does not maintain Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance cover for visitors to the McDowall State School or for students. Should an incident or accident occur within the McDowall State School, please attend and advise School Administration immediately. Staff will investigate and take steps deemed necessary to best prevent future occurrence.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct clarifies expected standard of ethical behaviour adopted by the McDowall State School P&C Association. This Code of Conduct applies to all members of our school community, including volunteers, allowing us to work as a cohesive group in partnership with the school.

Volunteers are to:

- Act in the best interest of the total school community at all times.
- Conduct and present themselves in a professional manner and act ethically and with integrity at all times.
- Act with courtesy and demonstrate respect for all persons, whether fellow parents, volunteers, school staff, students or community members.
- Remain objective and avoid personal bias at all times.
- Represent all members of the school community.
- Engage the school and wider community in developing and effecting school priorities, policies and decisions in a manner that is consultative, respectful and fair.
- Declare any conflicts of interest and not misuse their position to advance individual views or for personal gain.
- Make fair, transparent and consistent decisions.

- Provide objective and independent advice.
- Listen and be tolerant of the views and opinions of others, even if those views and opinions differ from your own.
- Treat official information with care and use it only for the purpose for which it was collected or authorized.
- Respect confidentiality and information privacy (about the school, community members, staff or students) at all times and not disclose confidential information.
- Not use confidential or privileged information to further personal interests.
- Be responsive to the requirements of the school community.
- Seek to achieve excellence in educational outcomes for all students at the school.
- Listen and respond to issues and concerns regarding strategy and policy.
- Work within the boundaries of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006* and the Department of Education and Training's policies and procedures.

Our individual strengths and differences make us more effective as a collective team.

Role of Volunteers

The McDowall State School P&C Association acknowledges that 'Our Great State School' and our students are the result of a sustained long-term investment of time, finance, resource and diligent 'parenting' and 'up-bringing' by their parents, extended family, local clubs and organisations, out-of-school hours care, community experience and of course, an exceptional McDowall State School staff. The greatest and ultimate investment that any parent can make (and influence) in the life of their child, is to be the very best parent that they can possibly be. It is the parent, within the family unit, who will nurture, discipline, cherish and direct a child toward a preferred future. This investment will be different depending on child, parent and family. Thank you for what you do.

Just as it is reasonable to expect that primarily it is parents who will passionately and directly support and volunteer at their child's school, it is reasonable to expect that our community has a responsibility in supporting and investing in parents and the family unit, as parental failure results in societal decay, dysfunction and lower standards of living for all.

Acknowledging and building on this understanding, we address the visitor and role of volunteers within McDowall State School.

The Principal is in charge of the McDowall State School and exercises leadership and management over all school operations. While within the McDowall State School all persons are under the direction of the Principal, or his delegate. Such entry into the McDowall State School is at the discretion of the Principal, or his delegate. 'Delegate' may include a member of staff effecting school policy, procedure or direction.

The role and expectation of the volunteer is generally determined by the person responsible for the task, event or duty within which the volunteer is engaged (eg classroom teacher, Tartan Tuckerbox manager, fundraising coordinator, P&C Association executive).

As a volunteer you can expect:

- A warm, hearty welcome with a smile.
- Clear instruction, training and direction on how you may be of assistance. This may extend to training opportunities, depending on the task and duties to be undertaken.
- To be safe and treated with respect.
- Constructive feedback and guidance from the organiser or person in charge.
- Recognition and thanks from the organiser or person in charge. McDowall State School implements a 'Flying Gang' acknowledgement initiative.
- New knowledge and new skills earned through a committed involvement within a programme.
- New and strengthened friendships with other volunteers and productive relationships with staff.
- A strong sense of personal satisfaction and contribution in worthwhile endeavour.
- Worthwhile tasks and duties that are within your capabilities and areas of interest. (You can say 'no' to tasks and duties for which you don't feel capable, able or suited. It's ok to decline a task.)
- That if you feel concerned, you may discuss issues firstly with the organiser or person in charge, and if your issue is not able to be resolved, seek further advice and guidance from School Administration or the P&C Association Executive.

Volunteer's Responsibilities

As a volunteer you are expected to:

- Comply with Principal and staff direction and instruction.
- Comply with the Student Protection Policy. A Student Protection Fact Sheet is on display at School Administration.
- If required, present your Blue Card at School Administration.
- Comply with the Code of Conduct.
- Align your personal motivation to that of the school purpose, vision and priorities.
- Display a warm, hearty and happy disposition.
- Comply with the instructions and directions of the organiser or person in charge. Ask questions and seek clarification should there need to be clarification.
- Where possible, attend training sessions that may be made available to you.
- Work as a team member. Get the job done. Do it well. Be respectful, dignified, supportive and encouraging toward other volunteers, parents, students and staff.
- Share ideas, provide suggestions and provide constructive feedback with the organiser or person in charge, should there be realistic avenues for task improvement.
- Comply with school policies, procedures, standards and directions.
- Be a good role model for other volunteers, especially before our students.
- Be dependable and consistent in fulfilling your obligations. Commit to your undertaking and provide the organiser or person in charge with advance notice if you are unable to attend your rostered time or unable to complete allocated tasks.
- Inform the organiser or person in charge if you don't feel capable, able or suitable for a task or role. It may be possible to reassign the task or role to another volunteer. (It's Ok to decline a task.)

- If you feel concerned, discuss issues firstly with the organiser or person in charge, and if the issue is not able to be resolved, seek further advice and guidance from School Administration or the P&C Association Executive.

Grievance Resolution

We understand that through the course of your work as a volunteer, situations may arise that may cause you concern. You may be unhappy about an event, the way you may have been treated or perhaps the outcome of a situation. Rarely, does anyone deliberately choose to cause upset. Often people don't know they have caused concern, believing that they are simply doing their best. At times, you may simply require more information. Inter-personal issues need to be addressed in a rational, respectful, private, timely and honest way. If you choose not to resolve the situation and move on then it is business as usual.

Should you choose to seek a resolution to the situation, the following points should be noted:

- Have a private discussion with the person concerned and seek to constructively resolve the issue. It is expected that all adults will responsibly seek to resolve any issues that may be brought to their attention in the shortest possible time frame, without involving or effecting other people.

If it is not resolved;

- Where the issue concerns the P&C Association Executive, the issue should be directed to the Principal.
- For issues relating to school staff, these should be directed to firstly, the respective Deputy Principal, then secondly, the Principal.
- For issues relating to P&C Association employees, the issue should be directed to the P&C Association Executive.
- Where the issue concerns other volunteers, the issue should be directed to the organiser or person in charge for the area or project you are involved in (e.g. fete coordinator, fundraising coordinator) or to the P&C Association Executive.

Grievance resolution does not mean that all issues will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. It means that rational, meaningful discussion and explanation will occur with deliberate intent to cause resolution. At times, a decision must simply be made on the basis of all available information at the time. Keeping focus on school purpose and vision, parties subsequently return to the reason for their involvement within this school.

For more information about Volunteering at McDowall State School, please refer to the P&C Association Volunteer Handbook.

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!