



Classroom Helpers and Volunteers Handbook 2022

Lesdon Avenue, Cranbourne Vic 3977

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Be Respectful Be Safe Be Kind Be a Learner

RPS Classroom Helpers and Volunteers Handbook

Research has shown that parents 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 Rangebank Primary School we encourage parents to actively support student learning by becoming involved in a range of school and classroom activities and greatly appreciate the parents and community members who assist and support our programs.

Programs and activities may include:

- Listening to students read and supporting other classroom learning activities.
- Attending excursions and camps.
- Covering library books.
- Supporting fundraising activities.
- Participating in school activities such as Book Week, Breakfast Club, Canteen Support, Mothers and Fathers Day activities and classroom celebrations.
- Joining the school council.

RPS Classroom Helpers and Volunteer Workers

When parents/carers 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 (the Act). www.austlii.edu.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 are expected to assist the programs within the following guidelines:

- 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 or children.
- Refer any behaviour management issues to the classroom teacher, as he/she will then determine what course of action is to be followed.

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- 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.
- Be willing to assist all children or group of children within the classroom. This could mean that you may not always work with your child.

Code of Conduct

At Rangebank Primary we have high expectations of our Parent/Carers Community. We expect all parents/carers will:

- Promote a positive attitude towards our four school values: be safe, be kind, be respectful and be a learner.
- 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.

Rangebank Primary School Procedures

- Classroom helpers and volunteers need to provide the school with a Working with Children's Check. A register of parent helpers with a copy of their WWCC will be kept at the office.
A receipt of application is acceptable until the WWCC is delivered.
- Classroom helpers and volunteers sign in and sign out of the school using the Compass system in the front office.
- Classroom helpers and volunteers will be given a Rangebank Primary School lanyard to wear, indicating to staff and students that they are the school volunteering.

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Guidelines for Classroom Helpers and Volunteers

The following guidelines are provided to support classroom helpers and volunteers, please speak to the classroom teacher or a member of the Principal class if you would like further clarification with any of the points below

Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use encouraging/positive words. ➤ Adopt a pleasant tone of voice. ➤ Use warm, open body language.
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set a good example. For example, look at and listen to the teacher when he/she speaks. ➤ Give students opportunities for decision making by offering limited and appropriate choices. For example, "which book would you like to read?"
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept child-initiated contact where appropriate. For example, a child who high-fives you every time they see you. ➤ Redirect child-initiated contact where the contact is inappropriate. For example a child who clings onto your leg. ➤ Reinforce hugs are for home (if required).
Dress Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where appropriate clothing for anticipated role and activities.

Emergency Procedures

The school is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of its staff, students, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors. The school has Emergency and Security Management Systems in place. As a volunteer it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the School's Emergency Management Plan.

Evacuation

In the event the school needs to be evacuated the following procedure needs to be followed:

- A siren will sound.
- Refer to teacher for instruction.
- Close doors, do not lock them.
- Follow along with the class being lead outside as per the direction on the Evacuation Map.
- Once at the assembly point, make yourself known to the closest teacher.

Lockdown

In the event the school needs to be in lockdown the following procedure needs to be followed.

- Refer to teacher for instruction.
- Stay in the classroom with the teacher and students.
- Classes are to stay in lockdown until advised by the Principal Team.

Changes to routine and unforeseen events can be highly distressing for some children; especially our younger children and those with additional needs. Adults displaying a calm and controlled manner is essential for these students. All staff and volunteers are to remain calm during emergency situations. You will be given information regarding the emergency as it becomes available. In most cases the school will always take extra precautions to ensure the safety of everyone on site. Students should be given age appropriate information regarding the emergency.

Rangebank Primary School performs Emergency Management drills at different times during the year. Ensure that you are aware of the processes.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What name do the children use when addressing parent helpers in the classroom?

It depends, some volunteers like to be called by their first name, some like to be called by their first name preceded by a title (e.g. Miss Nikki) while others prefer to be addressed using their formal surname. 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.

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 sized 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/carers are able to be 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 RPS are asked to sign in at the office. Please sign out again when you leave the school.

Can I bring my toddler/baby with me when I help out in a classroom?

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 the students to enjoy fully the richness of working together and maximise 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 – even 15 minutes a week could make all the difference to child.

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What do I do if I am unable to make it to my weekly time?

Class teachers appreciate if you can let them know if you won't be available. Either jot a brief note and send it with your child, phone the school office and leave a message or send a message via Dojo. Teachers understand that there are many 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 okay 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 my child is behaving inappropriately?

This is always a sensitive area. Some students react differently when their mum/dad or carer are in the room. If possible, advise the classroom teacher at the time. If this behaviour continues speak to the teacher out of class time to 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. Where possible 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 them. 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.