



## VOLUNTEER POLICY FRENCHVILLE STATE SCHOOL



### Rationale:

Volunteering is an activity undertaken in a community context without pay and of the volunteer's free will for the benefit of the community. School Volunteers must be aware of their rights and responsibilities for the school to reap maximum benefit from their involvement. This policy clarifies how members of the school community can work as a well-ordered group to promote the interests and further improvement of Frenchville State School.

### Outcomes Expected:

- Volunteers know their rights and responsibilities within the school and departmental context, and particularly in regard to departmental legislative requirements.
- Volunteers contribute to school goals in a meaningful and purposeful manner

### Operating Procedures:

1. Any parent of a current FSS student or a community member is eligible to apply to become a P&C member. All volunteers must be members of the Frenchville State School P&C body. This covers volunteers in the event of an injury or accident, provided the volunteer register has been signed.
2. Volunteers who are not parents of current Frenchville SS students may need to apply for a blue card (suitability rating for working with children). See the Business Services Manager for details.
3. All volunteer work is without pay and of the volunteer's free will.
4. All volunteers must read the Volunteer Policy. Volunteers must sign on through the office upon arrival. If after hours, a sign on register will be provided at the site of the volunteer activity. Alternatively, for regular classroom help, a volunteer register is often maintained in the classroom.
5. Personal privacy is of paramount concern to all. Confidentiality is crucial. Information gathered or obtained as a result of our roles as volunteers in our school community should be treated with strict confidence. A basic condition of working in classrooms is an undertaking never to discuss student progress or behaviour with people other than the teacher. You are expected to respect confidentiality of this information. In rare cases information may need to be passed onto the relevant school authority eg. in cases of suspected abuse, neglect. In the majority of cases, concerns should be shared firstly with the principal.
6. Courtesy and respect is to be observed by all.
7. Discussion is healthy; personal attacks are destructive and to be avoided.
8. Discrimination on racial, ethnic, or religious grounds is forbidden, as is any form of sexual discrimination and/or harassment.
9. Reliability and punctuality is important to the smooth operation of the volunteer program, particularly in classroom contexts. Volunteers need to notify the office if they are running late or if they are not available on a particular day.
10. Volunteers must respect the rights of other workers in the school and the decisions they make.
11. Volunteers must represent the interests of the school at all times. Self-interest should be avoided.
12. Volunteers should be provided with a synopsis of their task and role. Volunteers need to commit to this role and be accountable for their actions within the role. If in doubt of how to perform the role, volunteers must seek clarification, workplace health and safety advice, or similar from the appropriate person. In classroom contexts, this is the classroom teacher. In other contexts such as yard maintenance this will be the janitor groundperson or business services manager.
13. Volunteers should undertake training when offered and have a good understanding of the school.
14. Volunteers should address any areas of conflict with the appropriate staff member.
15. Volunteers should ask for support when it is needed.
16. Volunteers need to wear clothing which meets workplace health and safety requirements.
17. Volunteers should wear badges which identify them as volunteers, especially where volunteers are operating in public contact areas.
18. Volunteers should read over the attached references regarding Child Protection and Sexual Harassment.

## LEGAL MATTERS

### CHILD PROTECTION

#### 1. ***What is assault under the CRIMINAL CODE?***

1.1.1 Any touching of, or applying force of any kind to, a person, without that person's consent (and in some circumstances with consent), is an assault.

1.1.2 Also, if there is by any bodily act or gesture an attempt or threat to apply force and there is actual or apparent ability to effect this purpose, this is assault.

1.1.3 An assault is a criminal offence unless there is a defence to the assault.

1.2.1 Therefore, any touching of a child by a principal/teacher/volunteer may be an assault unless there is a defence to the assault under the Criminal Code.

#### 2. ***Section 280 Domestic Discipline states:***

It is lawful for a parent or a person in the place of a parent, or for a schoolteacher or master, to use, by way of correction towards a child, pupil, or apprentice, under the person's care such force is reasonable in the circumstances.

Therefore, a teacher/volunteer may touch or apply force to a student for the purpose

of:

- (a) correcting the student, e.g., correcting their grip on a cricket bat;
- (b) encouraging movement in a desired direction or to line up properly, e.g., touching a child on part of their body;
- (c) separating students in a squabble/fight;
- (d) tactile expressions of encouragement, e.g., pat on shoulder.

#### 3. ***When does a student consent to Touching***

In 1994 the QLD Court of Appeal stated: a child attending school tacitly consents to receiving from a teacher tactile expressions of encouragement. The traditional pat on the shoulder for a significant achievement falls within this concept. Offered in plain view of others. 'Tacit' means 'unspoken' rather than implied, to emphasise that such consent may be withdrawn by word/gesture of a pupil.

Children do not necessarily consent to receive prolonged or effusive expressions of encouragement and a child must be allowed to respond negatively to being touched if that is the child's wish. Touching should be brief and gentle.

#### 4. ***Points to remember***

Any touching or application of force to a child by a principal/teacher/volunteer may be an assault.

4.1.1 If principal/teacher/volunteers are accused of assault they may have a defence to the assault under 280 of the Criminal Code.

#### 5. ***Conclusion***

It is important to remember that touching students can be misinterpreted and may lead to allegations that may result in a threat of a complaint or a complaint being laid under the Criminal Code.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

1. Education Queensland considers sexual harassment an unacceptable form of behaviour and as such it will not be tolerated under any circumstances. It has no place in an organisation in which equal opportunity for all students, volunteers and employees is an objective.
2. The department believes that all students, volunteers and employees should be able to learn and work in an environment free of sexual harassment and intimidation. Sexual harassment erodes individual's rights, debilitates morale and interferes with the effectiveness of the work and learning environment. Furthermore, the effects of sexual harassment are compounded when it denigrates a person's cultural or ethnic background, or any impairment they may have, as well as their sex.
3. The Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act and the Federal Sex Discrimination Act makes sexual harassment unlawful. Therefore all principals, managers and supervisors are required to ensure that all students and employees, including voluntary workers, are treated equitably and are not subject to sexual harassment. They must also ensure that people who make complaints of sexual harassment, or are witnesses, are not victimised in any way.
4. Whilst the above mentioned Acts clearly define the behaviour which constitutes unlawful sexual harassment in specific circumstances, other unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature which may not be covered by the legal definitions will still be considered sexual harassment and treated as such by the Department.

## Here are some ways that parents can help us at FSS

- ❖ Cover & repair books in the library.
- ❖ Serve in the canteen.
- ❖ Collect materials for classroom projects.
- ❖ Organise refreshments for school sports.
- ❖ Referee and coach sports that the teachers can't offer.
- ❖ Provide transport for excursions.
- ❖ Take exhibits of student work to your workplace or club.
- ❖ Help with flyers, bulletins and school newsletter items via email.
- ❖ Arrange bulletin boards.
- ❖ Help in craft activities.
- ❖ Tidy up stock cupboards.
- ❖ Help in PE and gross motor skill programs.
- ❖ Give disadvantaged kids special attention and assistance with their work.
- ❖ Help supervise excursions.
- ❖ Repair broken furniture, games etc.
- ❖ Sponsor school related activities, clubs etc.
- ❖ Wash sports gear.
- ❖ Raise funds - involve the kids too!
- ❖ Assist in learning centres.
- ❖ Water indoor plants..
- ❖ write to firms requesting donations or information
- ❖ Build equipment for classroom projects.
- ❖ Attend working bees
- ❖ Offer your business' service to P&C free of charge or at a reduced rate
- ❖ Staff stalls/activities at special events
- ❖ Volunteer for breakfast club
- ❖ Develop environmental study sites.
- ❖ Gather information on community resources.
- ❖ Work as classroom aides under teacher direction.
- ❖ Build pieces of special classroom furniture.
- ❖ Run a crèche for children of other parents attending school functions.
- ❖ Work with small groups of kids.
- ❖ Help keep school garden tidy and bountiful.
- ❖ Play a musical instrument in assemblies or lessons.
- ❖ Become involved in school policy formulation.
- ❖ Attend in-service courses and give feedback to teachers.
- ❖ Go to school and talk to kids about your job, your childhood etc.
- ❖ Give children more experience of conversation with adults.
- ❖ Make drama sets and costumes.
- ❖ Make old shirts into painting smocks for young kids.
- ❖ Provide scrap materials for art and craft classes.
- ❖ Work on staff/parent committees to solve specific problems.

