

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to St Anthony's and thank you for giving up your time to volunteer as a helper at our school. We look forward to your contribution and to working with you to provide quality and inclusive Catholic education to all of the students in our care.

This booklet is designed to provide you with some important information you will need to know while you are working here at St Anthony's. It also outlines some regulations and expectations which apply to all adults working in Catholic Schools.

Please read the booklet carefully and ensure that you are both comfortable and familiar with its contents. This will ensure that your time with us here at St Anthony's will be a successful and enjoyable experience for you, the school and the students with whom you may work.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to any member of staff. We are only too happy to assist you. Thank you again for your generosity and please know that we really appreciate your efforts.

Working with Children

All volunteers who work with children undertake a special and rewarding task. However, because of the nature of this work, there are some essential procedural matters which must be followed to ensure the safety of the children, the volunteers and the school.

Important Procedures: Duty of Care/Health and Safety & Student Protection

ALL: Read Volunteers Handbook (This Document)

ALL: Complete BCE online Volunteer and Other Personnel Training http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/students-parents/student-protection/Documents/eLearningModule/story_html5.aspx

ALL: Complete the 'online Volunteer and Other Personnel Training Form' and provide this document to the office

ALL: Volunteers are asked to sign in at the school office on arrival, and sign out when they leave. This is a Health and Safety regulation and ensures that we can account for all people on the site in case of an emergency. The Sign-In Register is at the school office

If you are not a parent in the school: Complete ALL of the above and also attach a Blue Card or Exemption Card to the document.

Some Hints to Guide You

Do

Always be positive and encouraging with children. Encourage effort and progress not just success.

Feel free to discuss with the class teacher any concerns you have about a child. While teachers may be busy, they are very interested in your observations.

Always work with children in a place where you can be clearly seen by another adult. This protects both you and the child.

Always use a calm, quiet and encouraging voice. A raised voice can often frighten a child.

If you are feeling unwell or tired, please don't hesitate to phone the school to say you will not be in. Your efforts are appreciated, and we understand that sometimes you won't be able to make it.

Don't

Don't discuss children's progress with anyone other than the child's class teacher.

Don't discipline children other than a verbal reminder about expectations. If children do not follow your instructions, you should report this to the class teacher immediately. It is expected that volunteers will be treated with respect at all times.

Don't use children's toilets or accompany a child to the toilet. Staff toilets are available near the student toilets (Disabled Toilets) and in the administration staff area. You are always welcome to use staffroom toilets.

School Timetable

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 8:30 -10:40 | First Session |
| 10.40-11.10 | Supervised Morning Tea |
| 11.10-1.10 | Second Session |
| 1.10-1.40 | lunch |
| 1.40-2.50 | Third Session |

Safety Advice:

1. Please ensure that you follow all appropriate safety procedures regarding the use of any school equipment.
2. Please do not bring equipment from home for use at school.
3. There are ladders available for reaching high places. Please do not climb on chairs or any other furniture.
4. Lifting – Be careful when lifting anything. Please clear a path before lifting; keep the weight close to your body and lift with bent knees and straight back. The school has trolleys to move things if you have any doubts.
5. When preparing food, please observe all hygiene procedures.

Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Visitors/Volunteers

All visitors/ volunteers must report to the office support staff so they can be accounted for in the school register.

In the event of a Fire or Emergency Evacuation, a siren will sound and you should immediately abandon your tasks whilst ensuring you do not leave any fire or safety hazards (ie cooking appliances if you are in the tuckshop). Please leave all personal items behind and obey any instructions given by the St Anthony's staff. Please ensure you report to the teacher in charge of your volunteer area or the office support so we can account for you in these circumstances.

Lock Down Procedures

1. What is a Lock Down?

A lockdown is the securing of persons within a building to prevent a potential threat of harm or injury to Staff, Students, Visitors, Parent Helpers, Contractors or Tradespeople.

2. What is a potential threat?

Dangerous person/undesirable visitor on or about the site.

- Toxic spill – chemical spill on or about the vicinity of the school.
- Gas leak
- Severe storm

Basically any situation where it is considered that persons will be safer indoors.

3. Who orders a Lock Down?

Normally the Principal or a member of the Leadership Team; however, any staff member who can reasonably foresee physical harm to students or staff members resulting from a situation as described above may order a Lock Down.

3. What happens in a Lock Down?

In the event of a Lockdown Drill, the song 'Yellow Submarine' will play over the PA system. All doors and windows are to be locked and nobody is to be exposed to the elements. Until the all clear is given, it is imperative that there is complete silence and people are on the ground in a safe place. Lockdowns do occur in schools and may be for a variety of reasons.

- ◆ Staff and/or volunteers should not speak to the media about the event and should advise students similarly. If the media approaches, they should be directed to the Principal.

As there is no way to know if these are drills or real events, we treat each incident as if it were an actual event. We lead by example for our children – in the event of a real incident, they will have known procedures to follow and will have the best possible chance of safety.

Fire drills are undertaken twice a year and the lockdown evacuation is undertaken once per year to refresh children and staff on the procedures. Feedback is essential after participating in these drills so we can ensure best practice at all times. Please feel free to participate in the feedback process.

Remember – people are more important than possessions and are always our Number One priority!

Volunteer Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to all persons volunteering within Brisbane Catholic Education.

All volunteers should participate in a Student Protection Induction wherever possible as well as reading the Student Protection Handbook.

- All non-parent volunteers must undergo employment screening under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2005* and hold a current Positive Notice Blue Card for volunteers.
- Volunteers have a significant role in the work of the school. Volunteers have an integral part to play in providing a safe and enjoyable environment for young people.
- Volunteers are expected to follow the principles of:
 - Safety
 - Respect
 - Support
 - Ethical Communication
 - Ethical Conduct.
- Volunteers should:
 - Behave honestly and with integrity
 - Act with care and diligence
 - Behave and dress appropriately
- Volunteers should think and act safety:
 - Put safety first in all activities.
 - Follow the safety procedures outlined in this Handbook, to the best of your ability, as outlined in the volunteer induction process.
 - If a direct threat is identified, assist in the evacuation of the area and/or situation as quickly as possible.
 - Work only according to your level of competency. Contact and report to School Administration when confronted with a situation which you are unable to contend with or is beyond your role and responsibility.
- Volunteers should treat students and staff with respect:
 - Respect the rights of individuals and maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
 - Treat everyone with courtesy, sensitivity, tact, consideration and humility.
 - Assist in the creation of an environment free of fear, harassment, racism and exploitation.
 - Respect the cultures, beliefs, opinions and decisions of others although you may not always agree.
 - Take instruction from and not obstruct the responsible staff member in any way in regards to the execution of their duties.
 - Report any illegal activity to the School's Administration or appropriate staff member.
- Volunteers should use appropriate communication skills when engaging with students:
 - Acknowledge the needs and concerns of the individual.
 - Practice effective listening (For example ask open questions; be alert to non-verbal communication; stay calm and relaxed).

- Be aware of the young person's physical space.
- Be aware of your own body language.
- Be judicious in making physical contact with young people and at all times seek the young persons permission to do so.
- Stay calm and relaxed.
- Be clear and consistent.
- Use non-discriminatory respectful and non-judgmental language.
- Seek advice whenever appropriate.
- As a volunteer, you must follow all instructions from the staff and School Administration. You should not engage directly with media representatives, and should refer all enquiries to School Administration.

- **Volunteers must not:**

- Smoke or use tobacco products while volunteering and/or on school property.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time while volunteering and/or on school property.
- Condone the use of or provide any of the above substances to any students, employees or other volunteers
- Verbally harass or abuse any person or use profanity while volunteering and/or on school property.
- Utilize your position as a volunteer to take advantage of any young person.

Any breaches of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the School Principal in the first instance and appropriate authorities will be contacted if necessary.

Should you have any questions with regard to any of the above you should contact the school in the first instance on (07) 3357 6185

Parent Volunteers and Confidentiality

Rationale

At St Anthony's, we acknowledge parents as the first educators of their children and strongly encourage them to be involved in the education of their children. It is our hope that parents will join in partnership with the staff of the school and work together to provide quality Catholic education for our students.

Parents are often invited to act as helpers in many classes. This can include such tasks as helping students with reading or maths activities, helping with art or cooking, working as a volunteer at sporting events and assisting with the swimming program. Parents are also invited to take part in school camps and excursions and to be of assistance to the staff in supervising the students on these occasions. Parents can also work in a voluntary capacity in the library or tuckshop, and they may be asked to act as a Care and Concern Representative for their child's class. Individual class teachers may also ask parents for assistance in other areas.

At all times, parents who volunteer to work in these situations are formally and informally given access to certain information about students, teachers and class activities. Out of respect for Privacy legislation, the rights of students, staff and other parents and courtesy, all parent volunteers need to be mindful of confidentiality and ensure that they do not share or discuss any information or facts that they see or hear at school.

Policy

Parents are welcomed and invited to be involved in their child's education. All parents who work as volunteers at school will be expected to read and sign a Confidentiality Statement. They will need to respect the confidentiality of staff, students and other parents at all times. Signed statements will be kept on file in the office.

Implementation

When parents are invited to act as volunteers at school, the attached Confidentiality Statement will be given to them and they will be asked to read and sign it.

Breaches in confidentiality will be treated seriously and the parents involved will be asked to meet with the principal.

Confidentiality will be discussed with all parent volunteers before they begin work in the classes or at school. This will be done as part of the Volunteer's Induction Program. Volunteers will also be asked to read the Volunteer's Code of Conduct and sign a Volunteer Suitability Statement.



Student Protection



Child protection is everyone's business

As adults we all have a responsibility to care for children and young people and to protect them from all forms of harm as well as to positively promote their welfare.

Brisbane Catholic Education seeks to continue its adherence to legislative requirements, policy directives and duty of care to students by a commitment to the implementation of student protection strategies and processes.

The volunteer's role in the school

Our aim is to give students the sense of being safe and valued as people so that they are secure and ready to learn at their best. As a volunteer you play a significant role in the work of the school, form part of the school community and assist in providing the optimal learning environment for the students.

This document outlines your responsibilities as a volunteer in the vital area of student protection and it is important that you read this document, in conjunction with the Volunteer Code of Conduct, so you understand your responsibilities in the protection of our students.

What is child abuse?

The term 'abuse' has been replaced in recent state legislation with the term "**harm**". Child '**abuse**' is any act, or failure to act, that leads to the '**harm**' of a child or young person. It can be better understood by thinking that '**abuse**' is the **action** and '**harm**' is the **consequence**.

The legal definition of 'harm'

In Queensland harm is legally defined as:

'Harm caused to the child/student under 18 years is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the student's physical, psychological or emotional well being.

It is immaterial how the harm is caused.'

Harm can be caused by:

- (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect or*
- (b) sexual abuse or exploitation'.*

(Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act and Regulations 2001, and the Child Protection Act 1999)

Within a school there are four (4) sources of harm to a student.

They are:

1. Harm to a student by a staff member, other employee or volunteer of the school.
2. Harm to a student by someone outside the school.
3. Harm by other students.
4. Student self-harm

What are reasonable grounds to suspect harm to a student?

Reasonable grounds to suspect that harm to a student may have occurred is when:

- a student speaks about being harmed or being in danger of being harmed
- someone else (perhaps a relative, friend, acquaintance or sibling of the student) informs you that they suspect a student has been harmed
- a student tells you that they know a child who has been harmed (often the student can be referring to him/herself)
- you observe a particular student's behaviour, physical appearance or social relationships that raises concerns of possible harm to the student.

What is a "disclosure" of harm?

Sometimes a student may approach you and tell you about their experience of being harmed. This is described as a "disclosure".

If a student speaks to you about a concern, you need to be prepared so that you can be supportive of the student and clear about your own responsibility at the same time.

If a student tells you about being harmed or being at risk of harm

DO:

- Let them tell their experience first in their own words and at their own time.
- Listen attentively to their story
- React calmly to the information the student provides though it might be upsetting
- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing to tell e.g. "I am pleased you have told me these things"
- Reassure the child that it is not his/her fault that whatever the concern is has occurred
- **At this stage you may ask for clarification ONLY if it is necessary. If you have the essence of the story, you probably have enough information to report your concerns**
- Be thoughtful and careful of the student's feelings at this time. They may be distressed or ashamed, so they will need care and reassurance
- Be aware of privacy issues for the student
- Treat this information confidentially and discuss it only with the right person out of the hearing of other students
- Be honest with the student about your responsibility for taking action.
- Act immediately to report the concerns to the principal or the school student protection contact (SPC) (See below for more about this)

DO NOT:

- Panic
- React emotionally or accuse the alleged perpetrator.
- Ask leading questions e.g. 'Was it your father who did this to you?'
- Make promises that you cannot keep – particularly about not telling others (e.g. relevant adults such as the principal etc) about the information
- Leave the student alone immediately after a disclosure as they will be feeling very vulnerable at this time
- Discuss the situation with parents, caregivers or others (other than those designated e.g. principal, student protection contact (SPC).)

Who are Student Protection Contacts (SPC's)?

Legislation requires all non-State schools in Queensland to nominate at least two staff members to whom students can report concerns.

In Brisbane Catholic Education the principal is one student protection contact and the principal must also nominate at least one other staff member to be the school's other Student Protection Contact (SPC). Students, staff, parents and others can report to the principal and/or SPC if they have concerns for students.

At St Anthony's, we acknowledge and understand that student protection is the responsibility of every person and is an integral aspect of student wellbeing. We aim to work collaboratively with parents, students and other community members to ensure a safe school environment, guided by Brisbane Catholic Education's student protection policy and processes.



All staff participate in regular student protection professional learning in order to assist them to understand their legal, policy and pastoral responsibilities and to respond appropriately to student protection concerns.

In 2014, we will be implementing personal safety learning for students to develop awareness and skills that lead to their empowerment and an ability to identify risk, act protectively and seek assistance.

Student protection safety posters are displayed in each classroom with details of staff members acting in the role of Student Protection Contact. Students know they can go to one of our school's Student Protection Contacts with any concern about something happening at school or away from school. These staff members are:

- Martin Wilkie, Principal
- Judy Blyth, Teacher Librarian
- Zoe McNeil, Guidance Counsellor

For further information about Brisbane Catholic Education's Student Protection Policies and Processes, please see the following link: <http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/students-parents/student-protection/Pages/default.aspx>

Your reporting responsibilities

In your role as a volunteer at the school if in any instance:

- you become aware, or reasonably suspect harm to a student has occurred, or it is likely of it occurring, you must report this as soon as possible to the principal or the school student protection contact (SPC).
- Please check with your school principal about whom you are to report to if you have concerns about a student.

REMEMBER

It is vital to maintain confidentiality for the protection of all involved.

What happens next ?

Once you have reported the alleged harm of a student, the principal or the SPC will do whatever is necessary to make sure the student is safe.

Brisbane Catholic Education has student protection reporting processes and all Brisbane Catholic Education staff have received training in student protection.

You can rest assured that your report will be taken seriously, dealt with immediately and reported to the appropriate State authorities where necessary.

Here are some scenarios for your consideration

Scenario 1

You work as a volunteer in the tuckshop. You notice a yr 2 girl has a large bruise around her eye and she tells you that she had been hit by her mother. You know her mother well. What do you do?

Scenario 2

You are a volunteer who assists with helping students to read. Another volunteer is working nearby with a student. You observe that the volunteer appears angry, is raising her voice at the student, poking the student on the shoulder. You have worked with this volunteer all year and usually have morning tea with her. What do you do?

Scenario 3

You are a volunteer and assist with the school year eight netball team. You notice that a female student in the team has cuts on her arms and on her legs. You enquire about the cuts and she tells you she did it to herself because she felt unhappy. You remember someone remarking in the past that this girl was a little 'strange'. What do you do?

Scenario 4

You are a volunteer parent assisting school staff take the year six class on an excursion. On the bus one of the year six girls tells you that one of the boys has been acting in a sexually inappropriate manner at the back of the bus. The male student is the son of a friend with whom you talk with regularly. What do you do?

Answers to scenarios:

Each of these situations should be reported to the principal or SPC.

Remember you do NOT have to be sure that a student has been harmed to report – you just need to have a concern.

Very Important Note

If you have been involved in a student protection matter in your role as a school volunteer, be aware of your own reactions and seek support if required. Your principal can assist you with this issue.

Finally, please sign the following page where indicated to confirm you understand your student protection responsibilities as a volunteer.

Brisbane Catholic Education thanks you for your support for our schools and our students.

References and Resources

More information on student protection in Brisbane Catholic Education can be found in the following documents which can be accessed on Brisbane Catholic Education's public website

www.bne.catholic.edu.au

- 1. Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education Council *Student Protection Policy 2011***
- 2. *Student Protection Processes January 2013***
- 3. *Student Protection Brochure for Families 2011***