

# St Margaret's Anglican Girls School

## Volunteer Code of Conduct, Engagement Policy and Procedures

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### PREFACE

Volunteers are a valuable part of the St Margaret's community and volunteer work assists us to provide an extensive educational and co-curricular program. The nature of volunteer work at the School, often involving work and interaction with children, means that there are a range of obligations and responsibilities that must be undertaken by volunteers.

### INTENDED USE

This Code of Conduct is intended to be made available to the School's volunteers at the commencement of their role and it is to be available and/or provided to volunteers during the course of their involvement with the School. The Code forms comprehensive directions to all volunteers as to the expected standard of behaviour.

#### 1. Purpose of this policy and procedures

The purpose of this document is to outline the expected code of conduct together with policy and procedures required to engage a volunteer to support the educational and co-curricular programs offered by St Margaret's. Staff members at St Margaret's greatly appreciate the in-class support received from parents, grandparents, past students and volunteers. This support enriches the educational experiences our students receive. The School strives to provide a safe and caring environment for the wellbeing and development of students. As such, it is important to outline our policy and procedures to support the roles and responsibilities of volunteers in our School. Volunteers are protected from liability for community work undertaken at the School if these activities are undertaken in accordance with the School guidelines; are within the scope of the School's community work and are undertaken in good faith. Further, they are protected by the School's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance whilst acting as a volunteer.

#### 2. Scope

For the purpose of this policy, a 'volunteer' means anyone 18 years or over who assists St Margaret's in an unpaid capacity.

This document applies to two types of volunteers who assist at St Margaret's:

##### 1. Regular ongoing engagement.

Examples include: volunteer assistant teacher or teacher aide, literacy or learning support program volunteer, volunteer sporting team coaches, parent helpers.

##### 2. Volunteer assistance that is on-site, one off or irregular.

Examples include parent assistance for excursions, ad hoc in-class support, sports day assistance, tuckshop roster or assistant.

This document does not apply to pre-service teachers, volunteers that assist with activities organised through the St Margaret's P&F Association or the St Margaret's Old Girls Association.

### 3. Definitions

**Volunteer** – a person, 18 years or over, who provides support to St Margaret's without financial reward.

**Volunteer's' Coordinator** – the position responsible for managing the volunteer whilst engaged in St Margaret's activities.

### 4. Responsibility

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy and procedures are effectively implemented.

Volunteer's' Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that volunteers complete the Volunteers Register and that all volunteers receive an induction as well as the Safeguarding our Student – Student Protection Policy and Procedures Guide plus the Online Workplace Health and Safety course. The Volunteer's' Coordinators are responsible for directly supervising a volunteer in the area in which he or she works.

The induction may cover such matters as:

1. The Volunteer Code of Conduct.
2. The role of the volunteer and the description of the tasks to be undertaken.
3. The School Community and Code of Conduct or St Margaret's Kindergarten Code of Conduct Policy, depending on volunteer engagement.

### 5. Working with Children check (Blue Card)

Under the Commission for Children & Young People & Child Guardian Act 2000 ('The Act'), people working with children under 18 in certain categories of business and employment must undergo the Working with Children Check and be issued with a positive notice blue card.

**Volunteers who are parents of current St Margaret's students DO NOT have to be in possession of a blue card.**

**Volunteers who are not parents of current students may not commence or continue in regulated duties unless they hold a valid positive notice and blue card.**

For employees or volunteers who have advised that they have already applied for a blue card through another employer/organisation, or who already hold a blue card, a further application can be made to the Commission to confirm that fact by completing an 'Authorisation to confirm a valid blue card form'. Upon lodgement of this form, the Commission will confirm in writing the current blue card status of the volunteer. The form also enables the Commission to notify the School should there be any change to the status of a volunteer's blue card.

Blue cards expire three years from the date of issue and must be renewed to ensure continued validity.

A blue card holder can continue to carry on a regulated activity after the expiry of their blue card, provided their card was not suspended or cancelled and they lodge a renewal application at least 30 days prior to the expiry of their card.

### 6. Site-specific procedures

As St Margaret's is a Kindergarten to Year 12 girls day School, site-specific procedures may be required. For example, volunteers working in the Junior School may need to follow procedures which are not relevant to volunteers working in the Senior School. This document contains appendices which may relate only to a particular area of the school.

## **7. Use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco**

You must never:

- Smoke whilst on school grounds
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time
- Verbally harass or abuse any person or use profanity while volunteering

## **8. Breach of Procedures**

Any breach of our Volunteer Code of Conduct, Engagement Policy and Procedures will be dealt with firstly through the specific Volunteer's Coordinator, or may be escalated directly to the Principal. It will be dealt with through the School's Complaints Management in Anglican Schools Policy and associated procedures. This policy is available on the School's website and on the staff intranet.

## **9. Right of Appeal**

The School's Complaints Management in Anglican Schools Policy is accessible from the School's website. Details about a person's right of appeal are available through this policy.

## **10. Evaluation**

This Policy will be reviewed every two years.

## Appendix 1

### Volunteering in the Classroom

Thank you for volunteering at St Margaret's Anglican Girls' School.

All employees, volunteers and visitors of an Anglican School, share in the responsibility to promote and strive to provide a safe and supportive living and learning environment for students within those Anglican Schools.

This document aims to provide clear guidelines for staff and volunteers regarding the involvement of volunteers at St Margaret's and to help make your volunteering experience a positive one.

### School's Responsibility to Volunteers

- A staff member will be allocated to supervise a volunteer in the area in which he/she works. This staff member will be responsible for ensuring the student protection and necessary WH&S training is complete prior to the volunteer starting work. They are also responsible for the direct supervision of the volunteer while working at St Margaret's.
- Accurate records will be kept of a volunteer's attendance at the School for emergency and evacuation purposes. You must follow staff instructions during evacuations and lockdown procedures;
- Volunteers will be provided with a volunteer's badge which must be worn at all times whilst on the School's premises;
- The School will provide access via the School website (and in hard copy if requested) to appropriate policies and procedures that will support the volunteer's role.
- As a volunteer, it is expected you shall not undertake, or be expected to undertake, an activity which you believe may present a hazard to a student, volunteer, member of the general public or private property.

### Student protection

- All parent volunteers in the classroom will need to have read and understood the Anglican School Student Protection documentation: Responsibility, recognising, and reporting; information for coaches, tutors, volunteers and visitors to Anglican Schools. This document needs to be printed and signed by the volunteer prior to commencing volunteer work. This is accessed through the Volunteer Register link, is available on our School website, and a hard copy is also available in the Primary and Senior School Receptions.
- Our School Student Protection Officers are available to answer any questions you may have in relation to this document and your responsibilities as a volunteer.
- To summarise, volunteers must report any matters regarding child protection to the supervising staff member or Student Protection Officers. At St Margaret's these are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Karen Gorrie	Deputy Principal
Nikki Townsend	Dean of Students
Angela Drysdale	Head of Primary School
Sharon Stone	Student Counsellor
Lesa Fowler	Head of Boarding

- Even if unsure or doubtful about whether something observed, overheard or reported to you is a child protection matter, it is necessary to report it to the supervising staff member. It is always far better to be cautious than to withhold information.
- Important points for you to remember about child protection matters and how to respond:

1. Never promise a student that you will keep information confidential. As a volunteer and an adult, it is your responsibility to ensure students are protected from harm. Part of your responsibility for ensuring that students are protected from harm is reporting to the supervising staff member information that could reasonably suggest a student is at risk of being, or has been, harmed.
2. Remember that child protection is about 'harm', which is wider than sexual abuse. Harm includes anything that has a detrimental effect of a significant nature on a student's physical, psychological or emotional well-being, however caused.
3. Providing you have acted honestly and in good faith, you cannot be held liable if information you provide is proven to be false.
4. Potential child protection matters must never be discussed with anyone other than those to whom you report. All information must remain confidential.

### **Workplace Health and Safety Procedures**

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the requirements of the Volunteers Register.

Administration of prescribed medication to students should only be undertaken by staff and in accordance with school policy.

Please ensure that no pets are brought to the School unless specifically discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Guidelines for working in classrooms**

To be a volunteer in the School, there are several guidelines to follow. These are set to help to ensure that volunteering is a positive experience for everyone.

- Identify a particular morning or afternoon session or day when you are available to help. Please negotiate with the class teacher about which time would be most useful. Even if you can only come in on an occasional basis or on alternate weeks, your help will still be very much appreciated. If you are unable to help at the agreed time, please let the classroom teacher know either by email.
- Sign in at the Primary or Senior School Reception (depending on which classrooms you are volunteering) before and sign out after attending a classroom as a volunteer. A visitor badge is provided. This helps us keep track of all the helpers who work at our School, and for identification purposes. As part of the fire regulations, all visitors in the School must report to the office.
- Confidentiality – you should always exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing the personal information of students, parents, staff and other people with other School volunteers or employees. Normally information should be limited to those who need to know in order to conduct their duties, or to those who can assist in carrying out the School's work because of their expertise.
- Volunteers need to be aware of the School's guidelines and behaviour management procedures for expectation of student behaviour. All behaviour issues or concerns must be reported to and dealt with by the student's teacher. If in doubt – ask the teacher/s for advice. It is not appropriate for a parent volunteer to talk to another person's child about incidents in School even if the incident involves their own child. If you have any concerns with someone else's child at School – please refer it to the teacher/s.
- Ensure your standard of dress is suitable and appropriate for the activity being undertaken and the School's expectations.
- Please ensure all mobile devices are kept on vibrate/silent whilst helping in the classroom to minimise disruption to the class activities. Under no circumstances are volunteers to use their mobile devices

to take photographs of students working in classrooms, or attending School excursions. Do not use or distribute in print or electronic form any student photographs or personal information about students unless given permission by the School Principal.

- Ensure physical contact with students is appropriate given the age of, and relationship with, the student such that questions of impropriety do not arise.
- Avoid being alone with individual students in any circumstance. Ensure any one-to-one work with a student is conducted in a public area or in a visible area such as in an office with an interior window or an open door so that another adult can be present outside the room as a witness. Maintain suitable sight lines, leaving doors and blinds open if working in a withdrawal room or other confined space.

### Professional relationships between volunteers and students

- You should never drive a student in your car unless you have specific permission from the School.
- You must not impose physical punishment on a student in the course of your duties.
- Assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student. Always advise the student of what you intend doing and seek their consent.
- You must not develop a relationship with any student (other than your own child) that is, or that can be, interpreted as having a personal rather than a professional interest in a student. An overly familiar relationship with any student raises serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence, dependency and of equality of treatment.
- At all times when speaking with students, care must be taken to use appropriate language. You must always treat students with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for sarcasm, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity or offensive comments.
- You must not hold conversations with a student of an intimately personal nature where you disclose information about yourself. You must not
  - invite students to your home;
  - visit students at their home unless you have the express permission of their parents or caregiver or you are doing so as a normal part of your parental relationship to your child.

### School Community Code of Conduct

All members of the St Margaret's community are expected to demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour, and support for the School and the Anglican ethos and core values at all times. They need to adhere to the School Community Code of Conduct, including:

- Not causing, inflicting or encouraging others to verbally abuse, threaten or inflict bodily harm on another person by any physical aggression.
- Accepting that the use of swearing; derogatory terms; sexual jokes; innuendo and other inappropriate language; in the School environment, or around students, will not be tolerated.
- Respecting and treating others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability; treating others with respect at all times even if there is disagreement.
- A full copy of the School Community Code of Conduct is available on the School's website.

Name of document: Volunteer Code of Conduct, Engagement Policy and Procedures	
Version: 1.0	Approved by:
Last amendment:	Date:
Contact Officer: Business Manager - Operations and Compliance	Next Review: April 2019