



VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

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. 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. 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 for volunteers.

Intended Use

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

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the expected code of conduct for volunteers engaged to support the educational and co-curricular programs offered by St Margaret's. Volunteers are protected by the School's Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance whilst acting as a volunteer 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.

Scope

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

- **Regular ongoing engagement:** Examples include volunteer assistant teacher or teacher aide, literacy or learning support program volunteer, volunteer sporting team coaches, parent helpers.
- **Volunteer assistance that is on-site, one off or irregular:** Examples include parent assistance for excursions, ad hoc in-class support and sports day assistance.

Definitions

Volunteer – a person who provides support to St Margaret's without financial reward.

Supervising Staff Member – the position responsible for managing the volunteer whilst engaged in St Margaret's activities.

Responsibility

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this Code of Conduct is effectively implemented.

The Supervising Staff member is responsible for ensuring that volunteers complete the online Volunteer Register Form (see below). The Supervising Staff Member is responsible for directly supervising a volunteer in the area in which he or she works and providing an induction prior to commencement of volunteer engagement.

The induction may cover such matters as:

- The role of the volunteer and the description of the tasks to be undertaken
 - The Volunteer Code of Conduct
 - The School Community Code of Conduct or St Margaret's Pre Prep Code of Conduct, depending on area of volunteer engagement
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Volunteer Register Form

All persons wishing to volunteer at St Margaret's are required to complete the online Volunteer Register Form available on the school website prior to commencing their volunteering activities. By completing the form, volunteers are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to student protection, code of conduct and workplace health and safety.

Completion of the form does not constitute permission for the volunteer to commence. Volunteers will receive a confirmation email from their Supervising Staff Member advising when they may commence.

Blue Card Requirements

Under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* people working or volunteering with children under 18 in certain categories of business and employment for more than 7 days in a calendar year must have a valid blue card before they can commence.

As volunteer parents are exempt from this requirement, volunteers who are parents of current St Margaret's students are exempt from this requirement and do not require a valid blue card in order to volunteer at St Margaret's. An exception to this, is those parent volunteers who provide home stay accommodation organised by the school for more than 7 days in a calendar year, will require a blue card.

Volunteers who are not parents of current students may not commence or continue in child-related activities unless they hold a valid blue card. This includes grandparents of current students.

If a non-parent volunteer already has a valid blue card through another employer/organisation, their blue card will need to be linked to the School before they can commence volunteering. Please contact the school's Compliance Officer at bluecard@stmargarets.qld.edu.au to arrange for your blue card to be linked.

Blue cards expire three years from the date of issue and must be renewed prior to expiry to ensure continued validity. If a blue card is not renewed prior to its expiry date, the 'No Card, No Start' policy applies, and the volunteer will not be able to continue volunteering until their new blue card is received.

'Restricted Persons' and 'Restricted Employment'

From 31 August 2020, legislative changes to Queensland's blue card system have introduced two new terms – 'restricted person' and 'restricted employment' – as well as new offences, which mean certain people will not be able to rely on the previous exemptions to work or volunteer with children.

A *restricted person* is a person who either:

- Has been issued a negative notice
- Has a suspended blue card
- Is a disqualified person
- Has been charged with a disqualifying offence that has not been finalised

Restricted employment refers to the situations or exemptions that allow a person to work with children without a blue card, such as if they are:

- A volunteer parent
 - A volunteer who is under 18
 - Paid or unpaid staff who work in regulated child-related employment for not more than 7 days in a calendar year
 - A consumer at a child-related service outlet (i.e. a place where disability services are provided to children) where they also carry out work at the outlet
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Example Scenario:

A person who was convicted of a disqualifying offence in 1990 is now a parent of a child in primary school. They want to volunteer at their child's school, reading with the students and working at the tuckshop.

Q. Can they rely on the volunteer-parent exemption to volunteer with reading and tuckshop at the school?

A. No. They are considered a restricted person, because they were convicted of a disqualifying offence.

It is now an offence for a restricted person to start or continue working or volunteering in restricted employment. The maximum penalty is \$66,725 (500 penalty units) or 5 years in prison.

If you are a 'restricted person' you are not permitted to be engaged by St Margaret's as a volunteer.

Site-specific procedures

As St Margaret's is a Kindergarten to Year 12 girl's day School, site-specific procedures may be required. For example, volunteers working in the Primary 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.

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

Breach of this Code of Conduct

The consequences to a volunteer for breaching this Code of Conduct will be determined by the Principal in accordance with the St Margaret's Complaints Policy.

Right of Appeal

The St Margaret's Complaints Policy 'right of appeal' will apply to any decision made by the Principal under this Code of Conduct. The Policy is accessible on, and can be downloaded from, the School's website.

Policies to be viewed in conjunction with this Code of Conduct

St Margaret's Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Review Date: April 2026

Appendix 1

Volunteering in the Classroom

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 completed 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 always be worn 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 policy and procedures guide for volunteers and visitors to Anglican Schools. This is accessed through the online Volunteer Register Form 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:

Name	Position
Nicole Devlin	Deputy Principal
Nikki Townsend	Dean of Students
Angela Drysdale	Head of Primary School
Caitlin McCluskey	Dean of Academics
Lesa Fowler	Head of Boarding
Kate Frewin	Assistant Head of Primary – Curriculum
Nicole Walker	Head of Year 12
Michelle Alexander	Senior Psychologist
Emma Greensill	Psychologist

- 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:
- 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.
- 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.
- Providing you have acted honestly and in good faith, you cannot be held liable if information you provide is proven to be false.
- 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 Instructions

- Workplace Health and Safety instructions are provided on the online Volunteer Register Form.
- 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 Supervising Staff Member.

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 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
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- 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 so 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 always. 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 always even if there is disagreement.
 - A full copy of the School Community Code of Conduct is available on the School's website.
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