Policy Statement

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Date Reviewed: November 2016

Aim
The aim of the St Martins Lutheran College School Volunteers Policy is to maintain a safe and caring learning environment, whilst utilising the much appreciated skills and talents of school registered volunteers.

Rationale
At St Martins Lutheran College we believe that voluntary workers make a significant contribution to the school community through the giving of their time and sharing their God-given talents, skills and expertise. Volunteers have a wide range of interests and abilities that complement and support school programmes, thus providing a wider range of interactions, opportunities and experiences for the students.

Within St Martins, a volunteer is a person who supervises and/or works with students in a small group or one on one, not necessarily in the direct company or supervision of teaching staff. Examples of volunteers include sports coach, camp assistants, PALS workers and stage assistants. People who assist with classroom routines such as listening to reading, assisting with literacy and numeracy, art, craft or the canteen are considered parent helpers or unregistered volunteer and are directly supervised by paid staff members and therefore do not need to obtain a DCSI Background and Screening check.

Implementation

Parent Helpers (also known as Unregistered Volunteers)
The time that parent helpers give to the college is priceless.
We ask that parent helpers:
1. Complete a Parent Helper/Unregistered Volunteer Details and Agreement Form;
2. Always ensure that the classroom teacher or supervising staff member is aware when they arrive and leave;
3. Make themselves familiar with the Safe Place Brochure;
4. Comply with the school’s Work Health and Safety procedures.

Registered Volunteers (also known as Entrusted Persons)
We ask that those people interested in being a volunteer at St Martins become registered with us. Volunteers will need to be assessed, with the Principal holding the overriding decision of suitability and termination of services if necessary.
1. Potential volunteers are invited to make themselves known to the Heads of School and may be invited to attend an interview.
2. (a) Registered Volunteers (Entrusted Persons): are required to complete a:
   o Volunteer Details Form;
3. Volunteers must make themselves available to attend a 2 hour Safe Place Training session as endorsed by the Lutheran Church of Australia.
4. Comply with the school’s Work Health and Safety procedures.
5. Volunteers will be advised in writing of their acceptance as a registered volunteer at St Martins.

**College Responsibilities**

St Martins values its volunteers and is committed to ensuring the effectiveness of volunteer opportunities. Therefore:

- a staff member will be allocated to either directly or indirectly monitor volunteers;
- volunteers will be encouraged to comply with the school’s Work Health and Safety procedures.

**Volunteer Responsibilities**

A volunteers’ most important responsibility relates to their duty of care to children. Volunteers must, at all times, respect the rights of children. In doing so they must:

- Respect the personal space of students;
- Sign in and out of the College at central administration;
- Notify the College if they are unable to meet their volunteer commitment for that day;
- Refer any concerns to the supervising teacher/staff member;
- Provide basic first aid if the parent or supervising teacher is unavailable;
- Respect educational and personal information about students, staff, parents and members of the school community ensuring complete confidentiality.

Volunteers must not:

- Have unsupervised contact with students during break times;
- Encourage affection from or dependency in students by giving gifts or treats;
- Display bullying or intimidating behaviours towards students;
- Have intentional physical contact with a student.

**Cancellation of an Agreement**

If concerns arise regarding a volunteer the College will address the situation in a timely manner. A volunteer’s agreement can be cancelled at the Principal’s discretion or where the volunteer:

- Has no more suitable work available;
- Fails to follow requirements outlined in this policy;
- Behaves towards students, staff or parents in a manner that is deemed inappropriate; or
- Repeatedly fails to meet commitments without notice to the College.

**Definitions**

**Definition of Volunteer (Entrusted Persons)**

Background:

Education and care settings are unique in the degree to which they encourage and accommodate parental participation. Positive partnerships with parents are seen to play a significant role in the overall effectiveness of the education and care process. With regard to background screening, it is important and necessary to distinguish between when a parent is involving themselves primarily in their own child’s learning or care and when they are volunteering as an entrusted person.
The following distinctions apply with regard to screening.

**Entrusted Person Volunteers (screening, including criminal history checks, is required)**

Parents and non parents shall be viewed as entrusted person volunteers and be required to undergo screening including a criminal history check when they are engaged in the following:
- any overnight camps/school sleep-overs/billeting;
- working one-to-one with other people’s children, eg LAP, music, drama, coordination skills etc;
- acting as a coach or manager of teams or groups of children and young people;
- working in resource centres, offices, managing canteens etc;
- accepting a position on governing/school councils, boards or committees (This is to protect against people adversely influencing the protective climate of an education/care environment through the decisions of committees or boards. The organisation shall determine which committees this will apply to).

Please Note:
Criminal history checks are **not** required for one-off guest presentations such as guest speakers, concert performers or attendance at one-off events such as sports days, working bees and whole of school events.

**Parent participation (no criminal history check / background screening required)**

Parents shall not be required to undertake a criminal history check / background screening, if **each of the following three conditions is met.**

1. Teacher/staff supervision is provided at all times;
2. Their own child is involved in the activity and is the main focus of the parent’s participation. (This includes one off events where their child may not be directly involved in the activity such as sports days, concerts, working bees and other whole of school events);
3. The site’s relevant authority confirms their status as the parent or primary carer (The enrolling parent/guardian and the school must approve extended family members, de facto partners and step-parents).

Examples of parent participation are:
- Hearing reading in the child’s class;
- Assistance with excursions (eg to the zoo) or special events (eg religious celebrations) that involve the child’s class or child care service;
- Attending as a guest for a one off event, working bees, sports days and other whole of school events;
- Canteen assistance (under the supervision of the Canteen Manager who has undergone full screening)
- Assisting with transport where their own child is present in the vehicle and informed parental consent is obtained (that is, name of transporting parent is provided).

Site leaders have the right to require a parent to undergo screening, at their discretion. This may be appropriate if a parent’s initial level of participation alters over time or if a staff member expresses concerns about the parent’s relationships with children or young people.

**Additional risk management of volunteers**

Sites follow established selection, mandatory notification training, supervision, monitoring and record keeping protocols for volunteers. Volunteers are made familiar with the expectations contained in the *Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Students Guidelines*. Site leaders retain the right to discontinue a volunteer at any time if concerns exist about their suitability to be working with children.
Definitions
Registered Volunteer (Entrusted Person) – A person who supervises and/or works with students who may not be under the direct supervision of teaching or paid staff member.
Unregistered Volunteer (Parent Helper) – A person who assists in an activity at the College under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

References
Department for Communities and Social Inclusions: Screening and Background checks, https://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/services/screening

Review Date and Specifications
To Be Reviewed: November 2018