

# PLATTSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Volunteer Code of Conduct





# Volunteering at Plattsburg Public School

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*Updated April 2019*

## **Welcome**

Welcome and thank you for your generosity in offering to be a volunteer at Plattsburg Public School. Volunteers are a valuable part of the Plattsburg Public School community and volunteer work assists us to provide an extensive and rich educational program for our students.

The aim of this code of conduct is to give you an introduction to volunteering at Plattsburg PS and provide you with information about the school and our expectations of you when volunteering.

Volunteers are expected to support the school's values of *Respect, Connecting, Independence and Empathy*.

The nature of volunteer work at the school often involves work and interactions with children, which means that there are obligations and responsibilities as volunteers. You should review this Code of Conduct as part of your volunteer induction. Further training or instruction may be required for specific volunteering roles.

## Plattsburg Public School Values



The Plattsburg PS values provide a framework to guide our day-to-day behaviours as students, staff and members of the Plattsburg PS community. Our values are collectively embraced and consistently applied in all that we do as individuals and as a school.

**Respect** — we are fair-minded in our thinking and actions and foster acceptance, tolerance and understanding. We are not afraid of what we don't know, and acknowledge and celebrate diversity.

**Empathy** — we strive to understand another's thoughts, feelings and condition from his or her point of view to facilitate pro-social and helping behaviours.

**Connecting** — we value acts of kindness that do not seek reward or recognition that connect us to people, communities and wider humanity.

**Independence** — we are purposeful and positive in our outlook on life fostering the courage to be different, to accept and celebrate uniqueness and diversity, to be true to yourself.

Our motto is *Festina Lente* (*Hasten Slowly*)

# Principles of Volunteering

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Listed below are nationally-recognised principles of volunteering, which Plattsburg PS supports:

- volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer
- volunteer work is unpaid
- volunteering is always a matter of choice
- volunteering is a legitimate and rewarding way in which people can participate in the activities of their community
- volunteering is a vehicle for individuals to address human, environmental and social needs
- volunteering is not a substitute for paid work
- volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.

Reference: *Definitions and Principles of Volunteering* — Volunteering Australia

## Overview

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The Plattsburg Volunteer Code of Conduct outlines a standard of behaviour expected from volunteers at our school. The school recognises our volunteers as one of our greatest assets.

The Code of Conduct is to guide and enhance the conduct of volunteers in performing their duties within the School. The Code of Conduct sets out the school's expectations with respect to personal conduct and its intent is to promote integrity and ethical behaviour and to guide individuals' dealings with students and members of the school community.

### **Who has to Comply with the Code of Conduct?**

All volunteers, whether parents, carers, staff or the wider community must comply with the Code of Conduct.

By accepting a volunteer role with the school, you must be aware of and comply with this Code.

Therefore, you must:

- conduct yourself in a manner that upholds the ethos and reputation of the school
- comply with the school's policies and procedures
- act ethically and responsibly
- be accountable for your actions and decisions.



## What is Expected of you as a Volunteer?

As a school volunteer, you are expected to:

- perform your duties to the best of your ability and be accountable for your performance
- follow reasonable instructions given by staff or your supervisor
- comply with lawful directions
- be courteous and responsive in dealing with staff, students, parents and members of the public (if applicable)
- work collaboratively with staff and your fellow volunteers
- ensure that your conduct is consistent with the ethos of the school and does not damage the reputation of the school.

## What Happens if I Breach the Code of Conduct?

Actions that may be taken by the school in respect of a breach of the Code include disciplinary actions ranging from a warning to termination of the volunteer role and reporting to the relevant regulatory authorities. The school will reserve the right to determine in its entirety the response to any breach of this Code.



# Child Protection

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At Plattsburg PS, the safety, wellbeing and protection of our students is our highest priority. Volunteers should be aware that Child Protection Legislation applies to them in the course of their duties as a volunteer and a breach of the Legislation can lead to criminal charges and being barred from working with children by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

You must be aware of and comply with the School's Child Protection Policy (<http://www.Plattsburg PS.nsw.edu.au/why/policies>), of which you will receive and acknowledge when you complete the Parent Volunteer Training. The School's Child Protection Policy is also located on the School's website.

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*, a volunteer who suspects a child has suffered harm from abuse or neglect is required to report the matter to the Principal as soon as possible (within 24 hours) of becoming aware of the harm, or risk of harm. If the Principal is unavailable, then the report must be made to the Deputy Principal or Director of Human Resources and Compliance. Volunteers who have reasonable grounds for suspecting a child has suffered mistreatment or that there is risk of significant harm, can lawfully make a report without fear of legal repercussion.

Depending on the nature of the situation, the Principal or her delegate may report or identify the concern to Family and Community Services. A volunteer may also report suspected child abuse directly.

## Obligations to Protect Children

You must report any concerns you may have about any employee, contractor or volunteer engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of reportable conduct that has been made to you to the Principal.

Under the Ombudsman's Act 1974, as a result of being a volunteer in a school, you may be reported to the NSW Ombudsman if an allegation is received that you have engaged in reportable conduct.

Reportable conduct is defined as any sexual offence, sexual misconduct (either involves a child or in the presence of a child), physical assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child, or any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

The school has an obligation under the Act to investigate any of the above allegations, even if the allegation relates to a matter that occurred away from your role as a volunteer. A sustained allegation under the Act may lead to criminal charges and may affect your ability to continue as a volunteer and your ability to obtain a future Working With Children Check.

If, through your volunteer role, you have concerns about or become aware of a serious crime committed by another person, you are required to report it to the above-mentioned staff, who may be required to inform statutory authorities.

As a volunteer, you must report to staff:

- a) any concerns that you may have about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person
- b) any concerns you may have about the inappropriate actions of any other staff member, contractor or volunteer that involves children or young people
- c) any concerns you may have about any other staff member, contractor or volunteer engaging in reportable conduct or any allegation of reportable conduct that has been made to you
- d) if you become aware that a staff member, contractor or volunteer has been charged with, or convicted of, an offence involving reportable conduct
- e) if you become the subject of allegation of reportable conduct whether or not they relate to your role in the school
- f) if you become the subject of an Apprehended Violence Order.

## **Professional Relationships Between Volunteers and Students**

As a volunteer, it is important to understand the boundaries governing your relationship with students. This knowledge is important to protect yourself against any accusations of impropriety and it is vital to protect our students.

As a volunteer, you should avoid situations where you are alone in an enclosed space with a student.

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 expressed permission of their parents or caregiver, or you are doing so as a normal part of your parental relationship to your child.

## Volunteer Screening/Working With Children Check

If you are a parent volunteer, you are required to either complete a [Volunteer Statutory Declaration](#) and a [Consent form](#) or if you hold a current Working With Children's Check, you must provide this information to the Plattsburg PS Administration Officer for the School's records.

From time-to-time the School may ask you to obtain a Volunteer Working With Children Check. This would be if there is a requirement under the Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 (NSW) for you to hold a volunteer WWC Check for the particular role you are undertaking. Any volunteer attending an overnight camp is required to provide the school with a Volunteer Working With Children Check.

To apply for a Working With Children Check, go to: [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/check). Once your application has been completed online, you will receive an application number (APP). To complete the application you will need to take your application number, along with proof of identity, to a NSW Motor Registry, RMS Agency, or Service NSW Office. Details on finding a location are outlined at [www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/service-centre).

## Serious Misconduct

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The school may end your Volunteer Agreement without notice in circumstances of serious misconduct.

Serious misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- a) any serious breach or persistent breach of any of the provisions of this Agreement
- b) dishonesty
- c) disobeying any lawful and reasonable direction issued by the school
- d) deceiving or misleading the school or other staff
- e) working while intoxicated or under the influence of an unlawful substance to the extent that you are so impaired that you are unfit to be entrusted with your employment duties
- f) sexual misconduct
- g) conviction of any criminal offence
- h) conduct that causes serious and imminent risk to:
  - a. the health and safety of a person
  - b. the reputation, viability or profitability of the school
  - c. being found by the school to have acted or proposing to act in a manner contrary to the best interests of the school.



# Confidentiality and Privacy

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Whilst you are working as a volunteer, you may receive or overhear confidential information regarding students, staff or other volunteers. Confidential information received in the course of your volunteering must be kept confidential.

Confidential information means all information relating to:

- a) the school's business, current and future students and parents, suppliers, financial affairs, commercial, economic and educational policies of the school
- b) the methods, processes, systems, techniques, practices and procedures employed by the school.

You must not, either during your assignment or after it has ended, disclose any confidential information developed, accessed or acquired by you as a result of your assignment, except:

- a) as required by law
- b) with the school's prior written consent

Discussing information you have received during your volunteer role with staff, students, family, friends or other volunteers inside or outside the school is not acceptable. You must only use the confidential information for the purpose of your assignment and must not use or attempt to use any confidential information in any manner which may injure or cause loss to the school.

Confidentiality requirements apply to the use of social media and email.

In your volunteer role, you must not contact the media, except with permission from the Principal.

Privacy laws protect personal information about volunteers, students and staff. You may need to be told specific detail about a student to enable you to carry out your volunteer role. We will only provide you with information that is necessary for your role. Not all volunteers you are working with may need to be aware of this information, therefore this information needs to be treated as private and confidential.



# Social Media Policy

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Privacy is important to our students, staff, parents and school community. We ask that you do not post photos of students, staff, parents or other volunteers to your social media accounts.

In addition, please use social media with caution and ensure that anything you post would match the values and expectations of the school.

Volunteers must not use social media to:

- a) post offensive, inappropriate, disparaging or defamatory comments or material about Plattsburg PS, its students, staff, parents or volunteers on any social media account
- b) make false or misleading claims about Plattsburg PS, or allow others to make false or misleading comments about Plattsburg PS, on their social media account.

# Work Health and Safety

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As a volunteer, you have a responsibility under Work Health and Safety legislation to take care of your own health and safety. Considerations of safety relate to both the physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.

You must report all incidents, injuries, near misses or hazards that you witness or identify immediately (within 24 hours) to your supervisor teacher or the School Administration Officer. If a hazard is identified and requires immediate attention, you should report the hazard to your direct contact for immediate action.

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

It is important to be aware of the risk of spreading infection. Prevention of the spread of infection is important especially when working with children.

If you have an infection or virus, it is important to inform your direct contact prior to commencing your volunteer role, as it may be safer for you and our students for you to fully recover before returning to volunteer.

A copy of the Volunteer Work Health and Safety Policy can be found in Appendix 1.

# Grievances

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A grievance is a real or perceived cause for complaint. A grievance can be about discrimination, harassment, bullying or any other related decision or behavior which a volunteer sees as unfair, upsetting or unjust.

If you are not sure who to raise your grievance with, or would like to talk confidentially about your concerns, please contact an Assistant Principal.

## Other Important Information for Volunteers

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### **Dress Code**

Volunteers are not required to wear a uniform. The school, however, does require you to wear comfortable covered footwear and smart casual clothing suitable to your volunteer role. If your role requires you to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), this will be supplied to you with instructions of use. If PPE is supplied, it must be worn at all times.

### **Sign-in Process and Identification**

When attending or volunteering at the school during standard school hours (Monday to Friday 8.30am–3.00pm), please sign in at Main Reception, which is located in the Administration Block adjacent to Boscawen Street.

You will be required to wear identification provided to you by the school when volunteering. This may be a lanyard or a visitor's badge. The identification should be worn at all times when you are carrying out your volunteer role. The identification must be returned to Main Reception when you sign-out following your volunteering role.

### **Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco**

It is the responsibility of each person to ensure that alcohol and drugs do not impair your work or the safety or performance of others. When volunteering at the school, you should not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Smoking is not permitted on school grounds or in any of the school facilities or whilst you are accompanying students of the school, whether it be on school premises or at another venue.

## Health/Medication

Volunteers should never purchase, give medication to, or administer medication to a student. If you are required to give food or drink to a student, please check with the staff member responsible beforehand, as there may be health issues of which you are not aware.

## Excursions

Risk assessments are completed prior to all excursions. Volunteers will be advised of the details of their role if they attend excursions.



## Emergency Procedures

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In the event of an emergency, the safety of you and any students in your care is our highest priority.

In the event of an emergency, you should obey all reasonable and lawful directions of staff and follow their guidance.

A copy of the school's Emergency Evacuation Map is provided in Appendix 2. Please familiarise yourself with the evacuation routes and assembly points.

You should familiarise yourself with the layout of the school's premises and be aware of emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures, evacuation routes and assembly points.



# Thank You

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We have provided you with a copy of this Volunteer Code of Conduct, with our expectations and supporting policies. We encourage you to read this document and contact us if you have any questions.

Some of the best experiences you can have of your child's schooling and the opportunity of developing lifelong friendships, can be found in immersing yourself in the school community as a volunteer.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy your experience volunteering at Plattsburg PS and we look forward to the positive contribution you will be able to make towards the school.

Thank you for giving your time in a volunteer capacity for the benefit of our students and the wider Plattsburg PS community.



**Ellen Bax**  
**Principal**

## Important Contact Information

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**Plattsburg PS School Administration Manager**

Kathryn Bridge (02) 49 559196

[plattsburg-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:plattsburg-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

**Plattsburg PS School Office Assistant**

Deb Dyson (02) 49 559196

**Plattsburg PS Assistant Principals**

Donna Brooks

David Hopson

Rebecca Dann

Jasmine O'Donnell

# APPENDIX 1

## Volunteer Work Health and Safety Policy

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### Aims

- Plattsburg PS considers the Safety and Welfare of all staff, students and volunteers to be of paramount importance.
- The school believes that injuries can be prevented.
- Accident prevention is the responsibility of every staff member, student and volunteer and therefore part of normal routine.
- Every safety rule and regulation must be logical and able to be complied with.
- All safety rules and regulations will be approved by the Principal before implementation.

### Safety

Plattsburg PS will endeavour to:

- Provide safe working conditions, procedures and facilities, which comply with relevant legislation.
- Ensure Plattsburg PS's Workplace Health and Safety Programs are effective and appropriate.
- Provide opportunity through the Workplace Health and Safety Representative for safety- related matters to be identified, reviewed and resolved.

All volunteer supervisors will:

- Support the implementation of the school's Volunteer Workplace Health and Safety Policy.
- Be pro-active in promoting and implementing safety procedures when attending school activities.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Adopt a positive attitude towards Workplace Health and Safety and be personally involved in safe working practices and procedures.
- Report unsafe situations, acts and conditions within Plattsburg PS to the appropriate supervisor.
- Actively support Plattsburg PS's Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

### General Workplace Health and Safety Policy

The Workplace Health and Safety of all persons employed within the organisation and those visiting the organisation is considered to be of the utmost importance. Resources in line with the importance attached to workplace health and safety, will be made available to comply with all relevant Acts and Regulations and to ensure that the workplace is safe and without risk to health.

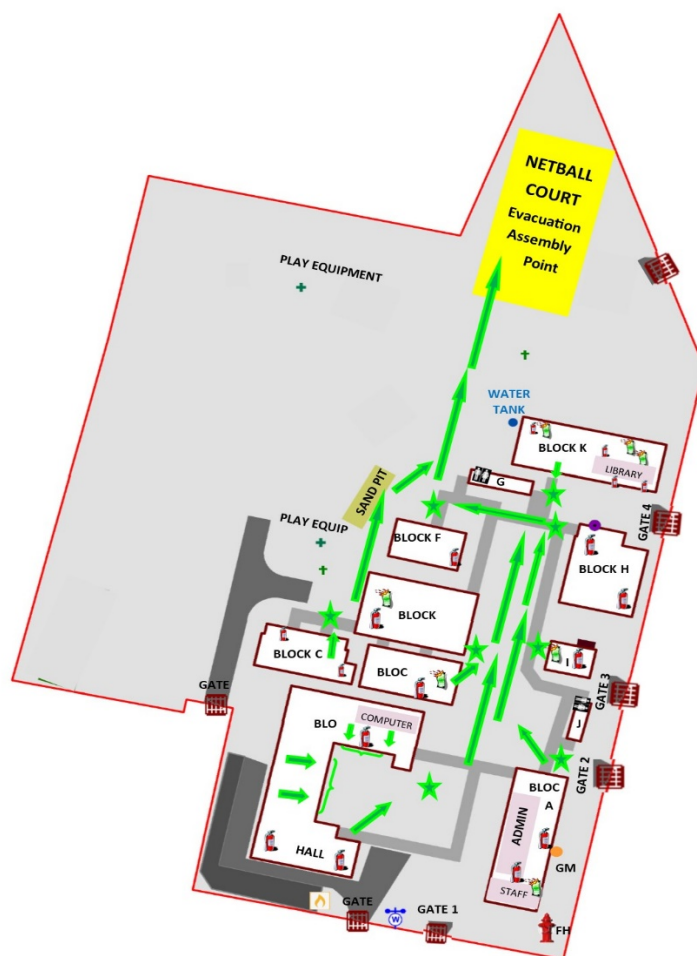
### Management's Responsibility

The promotion and maintenance of Workplace Health and Safety is primarily the responsibility of management. Management at all levels is required to contribute to the health and safety of all persons in the workplace.

# APPENDIX 2

## Emergency Evacuation Map

### PLATTSBURG PUBLIC SCHOOL FIRE EVACUATION MAP



CONTINUOUS INTERMITTENT SIREN MEANS EVACUATE			
KEY			
	Muster Point		Fire Hydrant
	Fire Extinguisher CO2 (electrical)		Gas Mains
	Fire Blanket		Electrical Mains Room
	Fire Extinguisher WATER		Water Tank
	Water Mains		Play Equipment