

MOONEE PONDS WEST  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

2022

PARENT  
REPRESENTATIVE  
HANDBOOK



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**We think, we create  
and learn together**

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## Introduction

Thank you for volunteering for the role as Parent Representative for your class. As a Parent Representative, you are a valued member of our school community and your time and commitment are very much appreciated. The purpose of the Parent Representative is to help foster good communication in the school and to assist in the development of the school community. It provides another means of uniting the school community and enhances the quality of relationships within the school between teachers, parents and the children. Each class from Foundation to Year 6 will have at least one Parent Representative. The function of the Parent Representative is not formally structured and is not meant to be an arduous task.

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Moonee Ponds West Primary is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

### **Moonee Ponds West Primary has zero tolerance for child abuse.**

Moonee Ponds West Primary is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

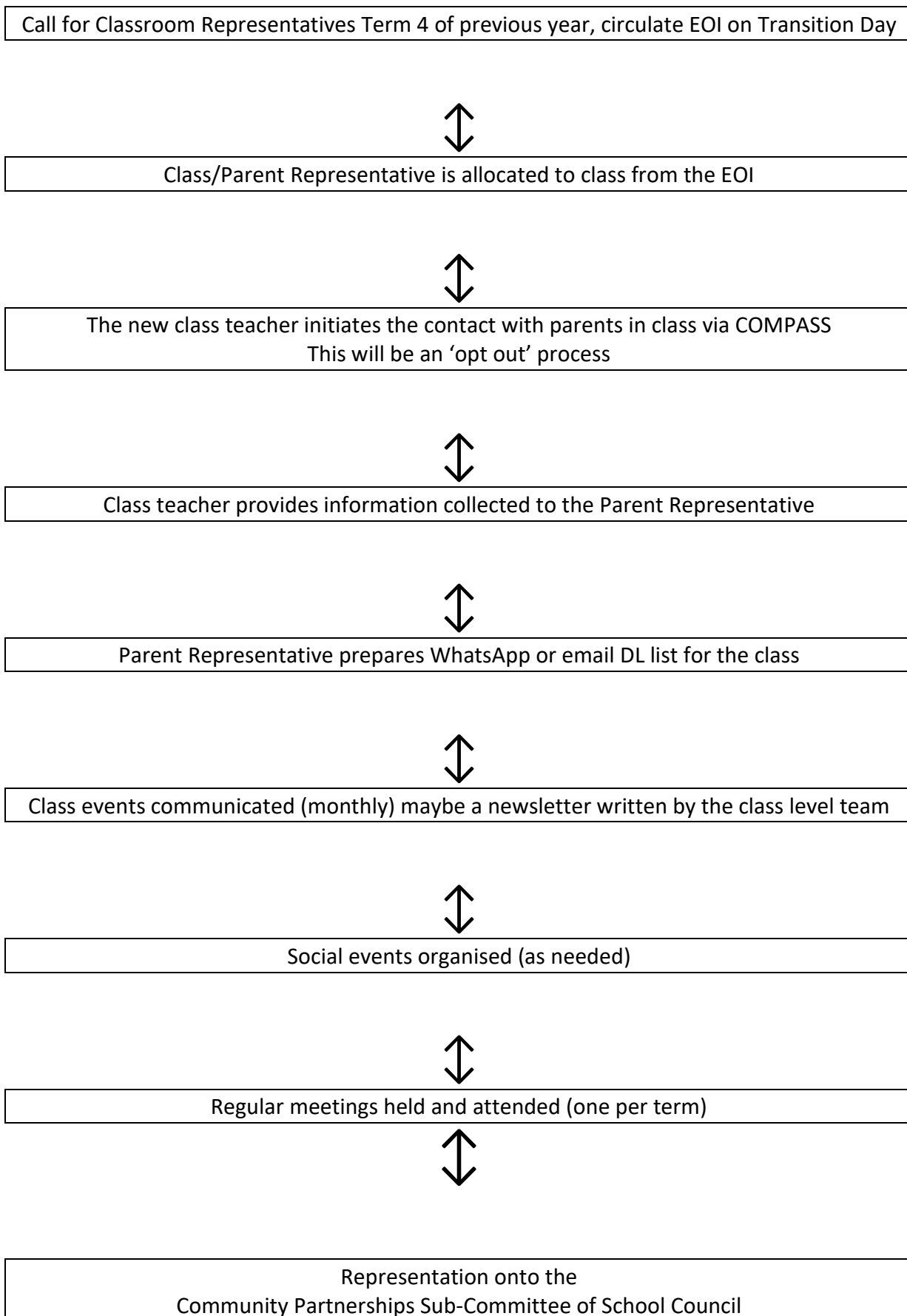
Every person involved in Moonee Ponds West Primary has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

### **Implementation - Principles for Child Safety**

In its planning, decision-making and operations Moonee Ponds West Primary will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff, volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

## The Parent Rep Process at a Glance



## What do I need to provide for the school?

- A current **Working with Children's check** must be provided to the school.
- Become familiar with the **Child Safe Standards** provided by the school.
- A commitment to learning from and supporting within the MPWPS community.

## Protocols of the Classroom Parent Representative

Paramount to the role of the Classroom Parent Representative is the understanding of **confidentiality** of the parents and/or carers, the children and the teachers within the school community. This role **requires mutual trust**, communication and a willingness to promote a harmonious environment for all.

Primarily, the class teacher is responsible for the children in his/her care. The Classroom **Parent Representative** should direct all enquiries from parents to the class teacher/Sub School Leader or Principal. The **Classroom Parent Representative** is to support the class teacher and therefore adhere to the teacher's directions.

## Structure of the Parent Representative Team

A Parent Representative will volunteer for a particular class group for a calendar year. Normally there is one Parent Representative for each class group, but to share the load and/or provide back-up, there may be two Parent Representatives for each class group. Working in pairs can be less daunting especially for new parents into the school community. The year level team will be able to come together for mutual support and consistency.

## Confidentiality

The Parent Representative should at all times be respectful of the privacy of others. Moonee Ponds West Primary School recognises and respects your privacy and is committed to protecting the privacy of all families. No family information will be disseminated unless permission is given by the family. This will be obtained through an **OPT OUT** process. All families will be asked by the class teacher to share their contact details OR to complete the "Request for Parent Contact Details" which is attached as Appendix 1. The **Class teacher** will organise this through **COMPASS** and provide information to the Parent Representatives. The Parent Representative will form the WhatsApp group or Email distribution list. Principal to provide this process to the class teachers.

The **Parent Representative** is then responsible for collating the information and circulating the class list to parents via their preferred method of communication. It is important to note that this list is NOT to be used for commercial or marketing/advertising purposes.

## Role of the class Parent Representative

The role provides a link between the **class teacher** and **parents of that class** with a focus on the organisation and co-ordination of educational and social activities, and classroom assistance. The parent representative will also be connected to the other parent representatives in this year level for a team approach.

The role also establishes a line of communication between the parents and the school. Each class would have a nominated parent/parents who act as the class Parent Representative.

Parent Representatives guidelines:

- Support the teacher to develop a contact list of families in a room.
- Compile the contact list and distribute it to the families within the classroom.
- Organise and advertise at least one social event for the room each term, e.g. Meet at the park on Friday afternoon, coffee at a local café
- Attend Parent Forum and Information nights regularly to stay up-to-date with school information and events
- Support other families by being a contact person for your child's room
- Assist the class teacher with particular activities – e.g. parents attending excursions, assisting in the classroom.
- Welcoming new parents to Moonee Ponds West in your class.
- Other tasks as discussed between yourself and your classroom teacher.

## What the Parent Representative is NOT Responsible For

The Parent Representative is **not** involved in the parent/teacher relationship. If any parent/carer approaches a Parent Representative with any concerns regarding their child's education or experiences at school, the Parent Representative must advise the concerned parent/carer to go to the Complaints Flow chart and converse with the teacher firstly and then as the flow chart outlines. The Flow chart is in the Information Booklet. They are acting as a 'signpost' to get or give information.

## Parent Representative Meetings & Support

A meeting of the Parent Representatives across the school will be held once per term. This meeting will be chaired by the Parent Representative Co-ordinator who is also a member of the School Council. These meetings will provide opportunity to discuss any issues relating to the role and to share information about upcoming school events and class/year level activities. The role of the Parent Representative Co-ordinator is to provide support and guidance to the Parent Representatives. You will be provided with contact details for the co-ordinator to assist you throughout the year.

## Photocopying Facilities

If you require any photocopying of notices/flyers, please contact the School Office or email your request to [moonee.ponds.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:moonee.ponds.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

## School Newsletter

Parent Representatives are encouraged to advertise upcoming events in the school newsletter with reminders sent out through COMPASS or the agreed platform for the class. Advertising in the newsletter can create a greater interest and participation in events, and it also personalises many situations in the school community. Ideas of what to advertise in the newsletter are:


- Upcoming class events
- Reminders for families to respond to deadlines
- A thank you note to families who may have helped with an event

All requests for advertisements in the newsletter can be made through the General Office or email your request to [moonee.ponds.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:moonee.ponds.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

## How to Begin the Year

Below are suggestions on how to begin the new school year:

- Introduce yourself to your class teacher. Have a meeting with them to discuss the specifics of your role, and how we can work together. This can be done virtually as well.
- Once you have received the contact details for the families in your class, introduce yourself to your class families. You can do this by ways of the attached 'Parent Representative Introduction Letter' which is attached as Appendix – example 3
- Be available for the Basket Tea (February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022) which is the first community event on the school calendar
- Organise a family activity for your class outside of school hours so all families can meet
- Pin a laminated photo of yourself to the classroom window (particularly at lower class levels where there are many new families) so other are able to identify you around the school
- Suggest to families the different ways in which they can volunteer time at the school (see Appendix 5)



*Optional* set up a *WhatsApp contact list*: non-compulsory for families but useful for communicating social events/ play dates & last-minute reminders

# Suggested Parent Representative Activities by the Term

## Term 1

*Term 1 is really busy but don't be put off ... much less is required of you in terms 2, 3 & 4*

- Meet with the Teacher and discuss specifics of your role and how you can work together.
- Apply for a Working With Children Check (see booklet for more info)
- Begin to make contact with parents/carers:
  - \* Via COMPASS Teacher seeks parent/carers permission to share phone numbers/e-mail addresses with Representative (parents/carers may opt out if preferred). Once you have a list of children's names & parent contact details, share with classroom families.
  - \* You will have an opportunity to introduce yourself to classroom families in writing (use Parent Rep Intro letter Appendix 3; or write one yourself) and in person during the school-wide Welcome Picnic and at Information Nights arranged by teachers early term 1. \* *Place laminated photo of yourself in classroom* (i.e., on door) so parents/children know who you are.
- Communicate class events with families as required
- Attend Parent Representative Meetings (usually one per term)
- Arrange one or more social events: e.g. meet at big adventure or local park on Friday afternoon; coffee at a local café; a night out for parents. Chat to parents for ideas.



*Optional Assist Teacher to set up "Classroom Helpers" tub or space to place tasks they would like help with e.g.,*

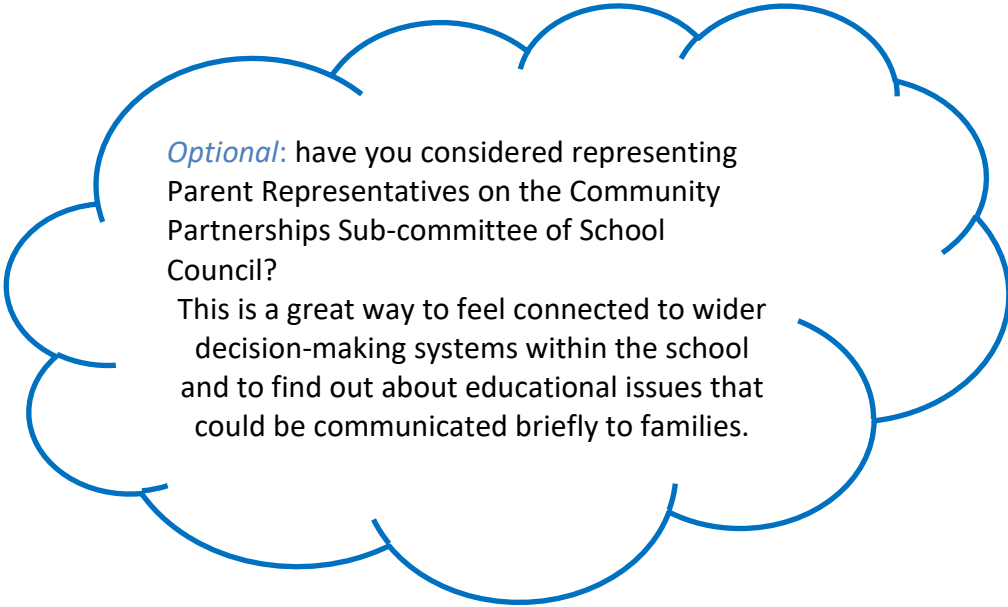
\*Have Joey read a chapter from his book to you \*File children's work \*Cut-out 21 red hearts \*Make 40 copies of attached sheet \*Take books home to cover with contact

*Optional for later years but useful for Foundation: ask Teacher what would be useful for parents to know about how the classroom runs. For example, \*Do children take home books each night & where are these books kept? \*Where do children put their drink bottles? Whilst this information is communicated to children it is also helpful for parents.*

## Terms 2 & 3

*The hardest part is done so let yourself enjoy being Parent Representative. Remember, being a Representative is not about working alone: enlist help of classroom parents from the outset. Delegate as much as possible – other parents may be shy to volunteer or unsure how to assist. Ask what kind of things they would like to do and encourage them to check the "Classroom Helpers Tub" whenever they have spare time.*

- Meet regularly with teacher to discuss activities they would like help with. E-mails are also a great way to check in when you don't have time for face-to face contact.....
- If you haven't already done so, remind parents to sign up to school newsletter as key term dates/events are communicated through this. Ensure they have access to COMPASS (parent/teacher interviews are booked through this system & important information about our children is accessed here).
- Communicate class events with parents as required.
- Arrange a social event or more for the classroom/parents.
- Attend Parent Representative Meetings as arranged



*Optional:* have you considered representing Parent Representatives on the Community Partnerships Sub-committee of School Council?

This is a great way to feel connected to wider decision-making systems within the school and to find out about educational issues that could be communicated briefly to families.

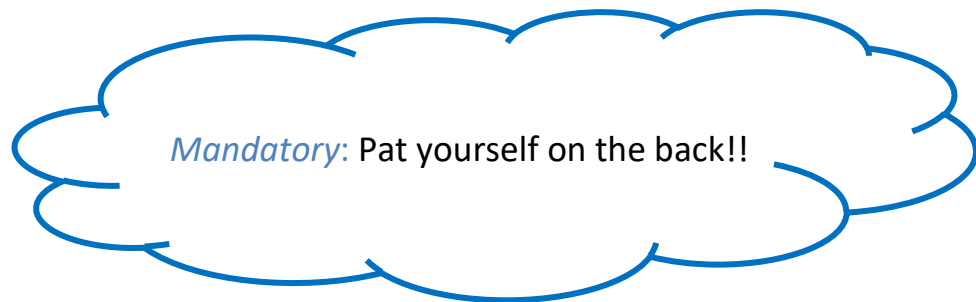
## Term 4

*Term 4 can become rather hectic as we head towards the end of the school year, Christmas, Holidays.....*

*This is a good time to get a little group of parents together to support you in planning end of year activities for the classroom.*

*December arrives quickly!*

- Meet regularly with teacher to discuss activities they would like help with/how they wish to finish the year with children/parents.
- Communicate class events with parents as required.
- Attend Parent Representative Meetings as arranged.
- Remind parents to *check the "Classroom Helpers tub"*. There will be lots of filing and sorting needing to be done.
- *Arrange a small end of year party for the classroom.*



## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### ***What name do the children use when addressing parent helpers in the classroom?***

It depends, some parents like to be called by their first name ( Mary, Peter,..) while others prefer to be addressed using their formal name ( Mrs. Brown, Mr. White). The class teacher will normally discuss this with you. Whichever name is chosen, the most important factor is that the children speak to you with respect.

### ***Where can I apply for a Working With Children Check, and how much does it cost?***

Applications for a Working With Children Check can be made at the local post office or online at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>. Applicants need to supply a passport photo with their application. There is no cost for a Working With Children Check for volunteers.

Although it may take several weeks for a Working With Children Check to be processed, parents are able to be parent helpers once they have a receipt for their Working With Children Check.

***What do I need to do when I arrive at school as a classroom helper/volunteer?***

All visitors to Moonee Ponds West Primary are asked to sign in at the office. You will be given a Moonee Ponds West Primary lanyard to wear. Please sign out again when you leave school.

***Can I bring my toddler/baby with me when I help out in my child's class?***

We ask that classroom helpers/volunteers make alternative arrangements for their toddlers and babies so that our students can have your full attention and support. This will allow you and our students to maximise on their learning without distractions.

***What is the usual time commitment for classroom helpers/volunteers in the classroom?***

Individual class teachers and parent helpers jointly organise the time and type of support that best suits both parties. Parent helpers who listen to students read usually come weekly for an hour, but this can vary depending on your availability and the class program. The School appreciates any assistance classroom helpers and volunteers are able to provide.

***What do I do if I'm unable to make it to my weekly time?***

Class teachers appreciate it if you can let them know if you won't be available. Either jot a brief note and send it in with your child or phone the school office Ph.: 93706875 and leave a message. Teachers understand that there are many times when your routine will change. You can also send an email from COMPASS to the teacher.

***I noticed that my friend's child is having a lot of trouble in reading. Should I talk to my friend about this?***

As a classroom helper in the classroom you will see the various strengths and areas of need of all the students in the class. It is important that you respect each child's ability and confidentiality and if you have any concerns talk to the class teacher about them.

***The classroom that I help out in is quite noisy at times. When I went to school the students worked in silence. Is it OK to have a noisy classroom?***

Classrooms have changed a great deal since our school days. Students have many opportunities to work with other students, talk and discuss their learning. The teacher will monitor noise levels in the classroom to ensure they are suitable for the activity being undertaken at the time.

***Who is responsible for classroom management in the classroom?***

The classroom teacher is always responsible for classroom management. If you are assisting in a small group or individual situation and a student is behaving inappropriately, advise the classroom teacher. It is important for the students to know that the teacher is responsible for behaviour.

***What if it is my child who is behaving inappropriately?***

This is always a sensitive area. Some students react differently when their mum or dad are in the room. If possible, advise the classroom teacher at the time. If this behaviour continues speak to the classroom teacher out of class time to decide on the best course of action.

***I can't help on a weekly basis but I would like to come into the classroom when I have odd days off work. Is this possible?***

Teachers always appreciate extra help in the classroom. Where possible a little notice will allow the best use of your time.

***I have noticed that children are on different reading levels. What do they mean? If I would like my child to move up a few levels should I see their teacher?***

Reading levels are a tool the teachers use to match a child to a book that is most appropriate for their instructional learning. There are many factors that go into determining a student's level. Comprehension is one of the most important elements. When students can read a book they also need to be able to understand what they have read. Home readers should be at an easier level than what they read in the classroom.

If you have any concerns or questions about readers you should make a time to meet with your child's class teacher

## School information

**Vision:** Our school Vision is as follows: **We Think, Create and Learn together.**

**Our School Purpose statement:**

**At Moonee Ponds West, we create rich and challenging learning opportunities for every child. Our students know themselves as learners; they explore and exchange ideas, and make meaningful connections with family, school and the broader community**

### School Structure

In 2022 the school will be organised into Professional Learning Teams (or PLT's) as follows: Junior School (F/1, 1/2) Middle School (3/4) and Senior School (5/6). At MPWPS our students are educated in multi-age classes. Student Individual Learning Plans (ILP's) are negotiated with the teacher in the areas of reading, writing and number and are reviewed in a timely way. The goals build upon each child's current achievements, and the next level of learning.

Parental involvement in all school activities is valued as this support directly affects children's attitudes and achievements.

Independent work habits, independence of thought, individual initiative, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility are increasingly essential for learning and wellbeing in today's world.

MPWPS is a school that values authentic learning. A great deal of commitment by the teachers and parents involved in the learning programs ensures that the school provides a friendly and safe learning environment.

A genuine friendship, mutual trust and respect exist between teachers and learners.

A **Student Code of Behaviour** is based on the school's MPW Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy which incorporates the aspects of Child Safe. All student interactions with adults at this school are consistent with the development of self-discipline and self-esteem according to the underlying principles of fairness, honesty and respect for the rights of others.

MPWPS continually works to establish and maintain a safe and orderly environment for all. Elements of Kids Matter and **School Wide Positive Behaviours** are becoming the framework for the engagement of students. This aspect was highlighted during the School Review (2018) and is a strategy for implementation.

In 2019, a new leadership position of **Learning Leader Engagement and Wellbeing** has been introduced so that we can train and heighten the aspect of engagement through student voice and agency in the learning tasks we are presenting. This structure will continue in 2022. All year levels have a Learning Leader Engagement and Wellbeing representative.

### Statement about Learning

We facilitate learning through a focus on the elements of a whole language approach, and an inquiry-based model where concepts and skill development support the content of the curriculum. These frameworks provide authentic opportunities for deeper levels of thinking and engagement. Student learning engagement requires students to be active in the learning tasks with the teacher as 'enabler' of this learning. These structures enable students to take

responsibility and be accountable for their learning. The school aims to develop self-motivated and regulated learners at all levels.

The content of our curriculum is drawn from the Victorian Curriculum including Health and Physical Education, Social and Personal Learning, English (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening), The Humanities, Economics and Business, Geography, History, Civics and Citizenship, Languages (Japanese), Mathematics (including Problem Based Learning), Science, The Arts, Visual Communication, Design and Technologies.

**Capabilities:** Critical and Creative Thinking, Ethical, Intercultural, Personal and Social Learning framework

### **Specialists Programs**

Our specialist programs: Physical Education, Creative Arts, Japanese, and Hall and access to the Library on a weekly basis taken by classroom teacher). Our extensive Library collection is ably maintained by Library technician's (Michele and Jennifer)

Extra-curricular activities presently offered are: Moonee Vale Instrumental Music Program (MVIMP), Sound-Garage, Music, Chess and Senior Choir. Students also have the opportunity to participate in Junior School Council and The Green Team.

In 20120 Kid's Club is offered at recess and lunchtimes as a quiet place for students to engage with Education Support Officers. This will continue in 2022. The Education Support Staff facilitate this program.

### **History and facilities**

MPW, established in 1888, is located in the historic inner western suburb of Moonee Ponds. Reflecting the Victorian era, the buildings have been updated to keep the period façade with internal improvements to provide optimal learning conditions for all students. The school has an interesting combination of gracious Victorian and modern buildings, with specialist rooms for Library, Japanese, Music and Creative Arts. The Library is centrally located within the school and boasts an extensive range of student and teacher resources. The Gymnasium caters for a variety of indoor sports and includes a spacious performance stage. Another major refurbishment was completed in 2011 consisting of six classrooms, a music and performance space as well as an upstairs Community Room.

The school grounds offer both active and passive areas for play; two adventure playgrounds, a GaGa Pit, a synthetic oval (Tiger Turf) with running tracks, athletics sandpit, football and soccer fields as well as a courtyard and centenary garden. The Amphitheatre provides a pleasant environment for learning and social interaction. Parents, staff and children form an active Environment Committee that contributes to many areas of the school ensuring we are minimising our environmental footprint. The children and wider school community actively maintain a school vegetable patch.

Many artistic creations such as ceramic totem poles, mosaic stepping-stones and silk wall hangings can also be found within the school grounds. These are representative of our Year 6 Arts projects, undertaken by each year's graduating class.

Our school has an Open Gate Policy that encourages community groups and families to use the school buildings and grounds in the afterschool hours.

The original buildings (Library and Hall) are considered to be significant structures of historical interest to the National Trust.

At the peak of enrolment in the 1930s, in excess of one thousand students attended the school. As a result of an Enrolment Policy around local neighbourhood, the student population of MPWPS for 2022 will be 439.



## School Directory TBC

Principal	Kerri Simpson
Assistant Principal	Jarrold Sutton
<b>Professional Learning Team Leaders:</b>	
F/1	TBC
2	TBC
3/4	TBC
5/6	TBC
<b>Specialists Leader</b>	Kerri Simpson
Curriculum Action Teams-English	Kim Simmons (Learning Specialist 2022)
Curriculum Action Team-Numeracy	Jess Greenbaum (Learning Specialist 2022)
Curriculum Action Team-Inquiry	Fiona McKenzie
Curriculum Action Team-Engagement (Student and Staff)	Kerri Simpson
<b>Intervention Team</b>	Marg Wright, Robyn Patrick, Adele Freeman, Classroom Assistants: Lisa Angelo, Julie Davis, Donna Butler
<b>OH&amp;S</b>	Kerri Simpson Principal
OH&S Principal (Nominee)	Sandra Monaghan
OH&S Staff Representative	Diana Vivian
First Aid and Health Officers	Xavia Bicheno and Sharyn Reinke
<b>Administration:</b>	
Business Operations Manager	Sandra Monaghan
Administration	Sharyn Reinke
Administration Trainee	Xavia Bicheno
Library Technician	Michele Birch
Library Assistant	Jennifer Kidd
Choir/Music Co-Coordinator	TBC
Maintenance Officer	Brian Lees
IT Technical (TSSP)	Ryan Thompson

# Appendix 1



## EXAMPLE 1:

### LETTER FROM CLASS TEACHER TO PARENTS RE CONTACT LIST

<b>Parent and Carers Contact Details</b>
------------------------------------------

Dear Parents/Carers in Room \_\_\_\_\_,

We would like all families to feel included in all our classroom activities and social events this year. We have a Classroom representative(s) whose role it is to organise social activities and provide information to families across each term.

In Room \_\_\_\_\_, your classroom representative(s) is (are):

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

We are collecting our class's families contact details so that we can inform you about what's happening in Room \_\_\_\_\_ and invite you to these social activities.

If you would like to be involved in social gatherings for your child's room, please complete the form and return to your child's classroom.

Looking forward to many fun events this year,

From

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Please return this to the class teacher.

### Room \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Carers contact details

My child's name is \_\_\_\_\_

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

The best contact number for me is \_\_\_\_\_

My email address is:

\_\_\_\_\_



## EXAMPLE 2:

### Electronic LETTER FROM CLASS TEACHER TO PARENTS RE CONTACT LIST via COMPASS

Hello all,

\_\_\_\_\_ (----- Mum or Dad) has volunteered as our Parent/Carer Representative for 2022.

Thank you \_\_\_\_\_!

In order to assist communication, \_\_\_\_\_ needs your email addresses.

If you DO NOT want to pass on your email addresses, as they are listed in Compass, please email me by 5pm tomorrow on \_\_\_\_\_ [@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:_____@education.vic.gov.au).

Otherwise, no reply is needed and I will pass on your email addresses to \_\_\_\_\_.

Providing \_\_\_\_\_ with your email addresses will assist in planning out of school get togethers, relevant classroom needs and perhaps fielding some questions or comments you may have.

Anyone who would like to add their mobile phone numbers to the email list are welcome to do so via email to me.

Should you want to assist \_\_\_\_\_ in his/her Parent/Carer representative role, please let me know via email.

We are trying to limit printing paper. We will be emailing copies of correspondence wherever possible.

With many thanks,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class teacher

(Also: the next two weeks will be a temporarily changed timetable due to Planning Weeks. Please check COMPASS Class Homepage for updates)



## **EXAMPLE 3:**

### **PARENT REPRESENTATIVE INTRODUCTION LETTER**

Date

Dear Room x Parents/Carers

I wish to introduce myself and extend a warm welcome to you and your family.

As the parent Representative for your child's class, I help to foster communication within the school, and to assist with the development of the school community. This is another means of uniting the school community and enhancing the quality of relationships within the school between teachers, parents/carers and the children.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to help in the classroom or if you require information on how you can be involved as a parent/carer at Moonee Ponds West Primary School. I look forward to meeting you at our first social function.

Yours Sincerely

Parent Representative – Room x

Phone:

Email: