



## **Volunteer Information**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer at Ballan Primary School. At our school we strive to provide the best Learning Programs to allow students the opportunities to reach their full potential. We value our volunteers and we could not do it without you!

### **Vision of our school**

'To ensure that every child has the opportunity to be the best they can be'.

### **Your commitment to us**

In order to achieve our aims we need people who are not only enthusiastic about making a difference but who are also able to make a genuine commitment. You can volunteer on any day and within a range of classes, however it is highly desirable that volunteers commit to the same times each week and consider volunteering with us for at least one term or semester. This allows your relationship with the children to develop and also makes it easier for you to be comfortable in your environment. It also helps with planning! Volunteers are limited to staying between the hours of 9-11am, unless otherwise stated.

It is essential that volunteers hold a current Working with Children card, and are linked to our school. Working with Children Checks are now mandatory in most states and territories in Australia, for people who do 'child-related' work. Please visit the local post office for working with children application forms or apply online.

### **What will the teachers need from me?**

The main qualities teachers are looking for are for volunteers to have a positive attitude with the students. In addition, confidentiality is also *vital* as there are many different challenges that come with learning and we would like to ensure that our student's privacy is maintained. Finally, your understanding if volunteering in the classroom isn't working out. Sometimes having families in the room may not be the best for a child and we may have to rethink how you can offer your time and support to the school.

### **Can I bring my other children?**

Unfortunately, siblings are unable to attend when we have our volunteers.

### **How can I best support students in the class?**

- Avoid comparing children and their work.
- Please be respectful of all students' privacy related to their class work.
- Give all children equal time and attention where possible.
- Encourage children to be independent - we expect children to try everything themselves before we help them.

- Let the classroom teacher know if a child discusses a matter that concerns you.
- Be aware that some days/times may not suit individual classroom teachers.

### **An important note on confidentiality**

- Parents and volunteers are not to discuss any information they obtain at school with anybody, other than the classroom teacher or the Principal.
- As schools are mandatory reporters with Family and Community Services any disclosures by students made to parents and volunteers must be reported to the Principal or nominee.
- You may see children struggling with work, becoming upset or misbehaving. You might also hear/see other information concerning a child while you are helping at school. It is vital that you do not share anything about specific children with friends, family or a child's parent.
- The class teacher has the responsibility of informing parents of any concerns about a child. If you have concerns or questions, please speak to your child's classroom teacher.

As teachers, parents and volunteers, our joint goal at school is to assist all children to reach their full potential in all areas of learning. Classroom teachers will provide you with specific tasks within the classroom. These may involve working with individuals or small groups of children. If you have any questions about what you need to do, please ask!

The following protocols must be adhered to:

- We must respect privacy and confidentiality.
- We speak respectfully and responsibly.
- All children learn at different rates and have specific needs; we do not compare children but ensure we cater to individual needs at the time.
- Children's learning difficulties and successes are not to be discussed with others outside the classroom; (Teachers will see parents as required.)
- We have a hands off policy for children and staff.
- We have wonderful children at our school, however all children experience issues and problems from time to time, please allow the teacher to deal with these.
- Volunteers will complete a personal Information form to be stored in the school office, in case of an emergency.

If you would like to volunteer, please ensure you have completed the following and presented it to the office staff:

- ☐ Valid Working With Children Check
- ☐ Volunteers Emergency Information
- ☐ Acknowledgement of Protocols

### **What you can expect from us**

**Recognition** – we know that the success of many of our Programs lies in the continual support of our volunteers, as much as the work of everyone else in the team.

**Support from the Ballan Primary School staff** – at the beginning of each session your classroom teacher will provide you with an outline of the lesson/ tasks that you will be involved in.

**A thoroughly rewarding experience** – in a healthy, safe, and friendly working environment, full of people wanting to participate in the joy of student learning.

#### **Some useful tips for volunteers:**

**Continuity:** It is highly desirable that as a volunteer you commit to the same time each week. It allows you to develop a relationship with the children and helps you become comfortable in your environment. It also helps the Specialists with their planning.

**Punctuality:** Arrive at the agreed time to be briefed on the day's class activities. Please ensure that you notify the relevant Staff member in good time if you are unable to attend or will be late for a session.

**Firm & kind instruction:** Your role is one of facilitator, rather than leader. Set a good example. Everyone is there to learn and have fun. Volunteers are not expected to be the disciplinarians, so seek intervention from Classroom Teachers if the firm-but-kind approach doesn't seem to be working!

**Hands-off:** Encourage all the children in the group to participate and share the load. Demonstrate and supervise, but don't do all the work. Ask the children how they might do something first, then show them if necessary. Don't tell them how straight away.

**Have fun:** The children and staff eagerly anticipate learning experiences and are always keen to learn more and be as hands-on as possible. Encourage a sense of enjoyment, we want every volunteer to enjoy their time at Ballan Primary School.

#### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

##### **What times can I volunteer?**

We ask that families come for one-hour timeslots and as our mornings are where students are ready to do the most learning we have 9.00 – 10.00am or 10.00 – 11.00am available. Not every grade is the same and teachers will notify families as to the available days for you to sign up for.

When arriving, all volunteers will need to sign in at the front office. We ask that all volunteers be signed out again by 11am as the recess period is a busy one for the office staff and a break time for the teachers.

##### **What might I be doing?**

###### In the classroom -

1:1 reading is the most important task of a volunteer. Students should be with a volunteer for no longer than ten minutes, in a space designated by the classroom teacher.

Classroom support with spelling tests.

Small handwriting groups.

Small Maths groups.

Additional help can be given by sharpening pencils and tidying and sorting the classroom library.

\* Please be aware that you may not always be working with your own child.

###### Out of the classroom –

Returning and sorting books in the school library

Weeding in the gardens

Covering new library books

Laminating resources

Sorting lost property.

Washing, drying and returning unlabeled clothes for the “spare uniform” supplies.

**Do I have to be qualified?**

No! Just enthusiastic. However, it is a requirement that all volunteers have a valid Working With Children Check and that this has been registered with the office staff. If you don't have a WWCC then you can apply for one by going to your local post office or online at [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) It is free for volunteers to apply.

