

MPW CLASSROOM HELPERS

What is the Classroom Helper Program?

The Classroom Helpers' Program is a program designed for teachers and parents to work together to assist children in the development of Reading, Writing and Numeracy skills.

How can I get involved at MPWPS?

We welcome parents, carers and family members to volunteer across many different areas of the school. This includes in the classroom, on excursions and whole school events.

How to become a classroom helper or volunteer.

Step 1: Organise your Working with Children Check

It is a requirement that all school volunteers have a valid Working with Children Check to work with students. The Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria. A volunteer WWCC can be obtained from the [Working with Children Check website](#).

Step 2: Familiarise yourself with our School Policies

Following this, it is important for you to familiarise yourself with our Volunteer policy and the school's Child Safe policies available on the [MPWPS website](#). It is paramount that all volunteers are aware of our policies and processes in place to keep our students safe.

Step 3: Register your WWCC

Once you have a WWCC and have read and understood the required policies you will need to register your WWCC with the school.

Step 4: Contact your child's teacher OR Respond to the email sent by the class representative.

Please contact your class representative if you are available to assist in the classroom. They will pass on your details to the teacher who will schedule their classroom helpers at suitable times and will communicate this. When you visit the school to assist in the classroom, you will need to sign in at the front office through the Compass kiosk and present your WWCC for our records.

Following your initial visit, each time you visit the school to assist in the classroom you will need to sign in and out at the front office, through the Compass kiosk. You will be given a visitors' sticker which you are asked to wear for the duration of your visit.

Please note, we cannot accommodate younger siblings when volunteering in the classroom.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) I have applied for my Working with Children Check but the processing time is a few weeks, can I start volunteering?

A) Yes, once you have applied for a WWCC you will be given an application receipt which you will need to present when you check-in at reception.

Q) Do I need to go through this process, if I am only helping on an excursion?

A) Yes, Moonee Ponds West Primary School requires all volunteers to have a valid Working with Children Check when working with students.

How do I know what to do?

At MPWPS, we offer a training session for Classroom Helpers, which focuses on the roles you may undertake as a classroom helper, and provide strategies for supporting children in the classroom.

This training is recommended to ensure you feel comfortable to support within the school.

EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO PRIVACY.

EACH CHILD IS ON THEIR OWN JOURNEY, SO WE ASK THAT YOU KEEP YOUR OBSERVATIONS BETWEEN YOU AND THE TEACHER. IF A CHILD SAYS ANYTHING THAT IS A CONCERN TO YOU, YOU MUST INFORM THE CLASSROOM TEACHER. DO NOT COMPARE WITHIN OR ACROSS DIFFERENT CLASSROOMS AND DO NOT DISCUSS CONCERNS WITH ANY FAMILIES. IF ANYONE ASKS, PLEASE DIRECT THEM TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHER.

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The most important aspect is, if you're not sure, ask the classroom teacher.

Helping with Reading in the Classroom

1. Parent *reading to* a small group or individual child.

- emotional warmth
- reading is enjoyable
- focus on meaning (What might happen next? What was that about? Has that ever happened to you? Tell me about it. Was that a fair thing to happen? What would you have done? Why did the author write this story?)
- talk, laugh, cry together about the story.

2. Parent *reading with* a small group or individual child.

Sometimes children want to read by themselves but need some support. You might suggest you take it in turns or that the child joins in the parts they know, which works well with books with a repetitive refrain, e.g. Where is the Green Sheep, Wolf Won't Bite, Going on a Bear Hunt, just to name a few.

3. Parent listening *to* individual *reading by* a child:

- a. If the reading becomes too arduous for the child, you, the adult, take over and read to the child.
- b. If the book is relatively short and the child cannot read it, try repeated readings.
 - adult read aloud
 - adult read aloud leaving out occasional predictable words
 - both read aloud together
 - child reads by themselves
- c. Efficient readers use three main cue systems
 - grapho-phonetic (sound/symbol)
 - semantic (meaning)
 - syntactic (grammatical)

When listening to a child read aloud, and **the child comes to an unknown word**, you might say,

- 'Can you break the word into smaller parts to help?'
- 'Put in a word that makes sense. Now let's look at what the word starts with.' This helps the child use meaning and letter/sound together.
- 'Leave the word and read to the end of the sentence, then we'll go back.' This is to use the context as well as the letters in the word.
- 'Start the sentence again. Put in a word that makes sense.' (See below for what you can say if the word makes sense but does not visually match what is on the page).
- 'Can you see anything in the picture that might help?' Then go back to the word.
- If the word is a proper noun (Adelaide, Farrugia) and the child cannot read it, tell the child the word.

Where a child miscues (an oral reading error) and the miscue makes sense, do not stop the child. This interrupts the flow of meaning making. Let them finish the sentence/paragraph.

e.g. A child reads 'river' for 'creek'.

When the child has finished the sentence or paragraph, you might say, pointing to the word, 'creek', 'You read 'river' here. It made good sense. This word begins with 'c'. Do you know what this word is?' Do not do this with every miscue (oral reading error).

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Where a child makes a reading miscue (oral reading error) which *does not* make sense, and does not self correct, or re read, interrupt the child and say, 'Did that make sense? Or 'I'm not sure that made sense. Read that again and get it to make sense.' If they continue to read it in a manner that doesn't make sense, read it for them and have them restart at the beginning of the sentence you read.

Talk about the book, whether it was read to you or by you. For example:

'Tell me what happened in the book again, I can't remember.'

'Has something like that ever happened to you or someone you know?'

'My favourite part of that was... because... . What was your favourite part? Why?'

SEE THE NEXT PAGE SUPPORTING ORAL READING FOR A BREAKDOWN OF DIFFERENT STRATEGIES

4. **Help children find take-home books** around their interests, books that can be read independently, and books they want to read.
5. **Play rhyming games with words from the text**, e.g. *Pig the Pug...* you might focus on the word pig and break it into an onset (initial letter OR blend (bl, br, cr, cl, dr, fr, fl, gl, gr, pr pl, sc, sk, sl, st,) OR digraph (sh, th, ch, ph, gh, wr, wh, kn, - these are all two letters that make one sound), then add the rime, the end of the word – pig = p ig so we can make big, dig, fig, etc. This allows children to see if they know one rime they can read many other words. If they create a nonsense word, tell them they have made 'h/ig' but it's not a word we use. Praise them for being able to manipulate the language.

We are aiming to develop lifelong readers. Reading should not be arduous for children.

PHONICS

What do these terms mean?

Phonics – the set of relationships between letters and sounds of a language

Phonetics – study of all human speech sounds

Phonemic awareness – the ability to hear and identify each individual sound in a word.

Phonic Principles

Letters only represent sounds in the context of words. A letter by itself has no sound value.

In written English, one letter can represent different sounds e.g. class, circle.

In written English, one sound may be made by different letters and different letter combinations e.g.

day, weigh, rain, great, they, baby, cake

It is therefore important that letters in isolation are not given sound values. Refer to any letter in isolation by its letter name. Any discussion of sound/letter relationships must occur in the context of words, that is, of words the child can read and pronounce. Sometimes the context needs to be a full sentence. (e.g. 'wind' Please wind down the window.' 'The wind blew the fruit from the tree.')

Much learning of phonics occurs as the children are writing. In fact, phonics is of much greater significance in learning to write than it is in learning to read. The children's temporary spellings, in their writing, inform of us of their current phonic understandings.



Supporting Oral Reading

| <p>If the child makes a mistake and corrects the error ...</p> | <p>If the child comes to a word they don't know and pauses ...</p> | <p>If the child makes a mistake which <i>does not</i> make sense ...</p> | <p>If the child makes a mistake which <i>does</i> make sense ...</p> |
|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer praise or support for making the correction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait and give them time to work it out. • If they're successful, encourage them to read on to maintain meaning. • If they are likely to know the word, ask them to go back to the beginning of the sentence and have another go at it. • Ask them to guess a word which begins with the same letter and would make sense. • Ask a question which will give a clue to the meaning, e.g. "<i>How do you think Johnny feels? Angry?</i>" • If the word is not likely to be known, say it quickly and encourage them to keep reading to maintain fluency and avoid loss of meaning, you might even suggest they go back to the start of the sentence and re read. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait to see if they work it out for themselves and offer praise if they do. • If they don't correct the word themselves ask, "<i>Does that make sense?</i>" • Ask a question which will give a clue to what the word is, e.g. "<i>Where will he go to catch the train?</i>" • If the word is not likely to be known, say it quickly and encourage the child to read on. <p>Later, when the whole sentence or paragraph has been read, go back to the unknown word and help the child use other word identification strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sounding out individual sounds in a word, this will not always be effective – sounding out chunks of words, e.g. <i>base or root of the word, prefixes and suffixes</i> camp/ing – re read the sentence and leave out the unknown word, then revisit using chunking, known patterns, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nothing until the child has finished. • When they have finished go back to the word and say "<i>You said this word was ____; it made sense but it begins (or ends) with the letter __ so what do you think it could be?</i>" • You may wish to discuss the letters of the word with the child and see if they can think of any other words with similar letters. |

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Helping with Writing in the Classroom

The most important aspect is, if you're not sure, ask the classroom teacher.

1. Helping with an idea.

Writers choose ideas that they know about. Helping children with ideas means talking to them and suggesting they write about something that is important to them. It doesn't have to be something they have done. It could be something coming up where they could write about their feelings about what is coming up.

2. Listening to a child read their writing.

Sometimes children might like to read their writing to you. If they are writing strings of letters with no connection to conventional spelling, you might ask, 'Would you like me to write what you say underneath?' That way the teacher can see what has been written, and if the child reads it again, whether they assign the same message.

If you are working with students who have temporary spelling (misspelt words) you might help them find some high frequency words to re attempt. It's important that we have students identify and re attempt misspelt words themselves, and this is a good way to prompt independence.

3. When a child asks you to help with spelling.

If a child asks you to spell a word for them, encourage them to have a go. If you are working in a younger classroom, direct them to the alphabet strip on the table to help them choose the letters they can hear. (This is where phonics and phonemic awareness is constantly used). You can also ask them to think of other words they know that sound the same. Please don't take too much time with spelling individual words, or the meaning of what is being written will be lost.

4. Working on spelling after they've finished writing.

After you read a child's writing, you might find a high frequency word, or a dependable rime (e.g. ay, ad, am, an, at, ap, ack, all, en, et, ell, im, in, it, ig, ip, op, on, ot, up, um, etc.) You could write that word at the bottom of the page and then work with the child to find as many other words as they can by changing the rime. Just as in the '**Play rhyming games with the text**' (see above) use letters of the alphabet to change the onset and/or some blends and/or digraphs.

E.g. d/ay b/ay h/ay l/ay pl/ay

You might start the list with the child and then say, '*Use the alphabet chart to help make more words just like the ones we made together.*' This shows the child how many words they are able to write and spell once they know that first word.

5. Listening to writing to provide feedback.

Students are asked to seek feedback all the time, when they do this with their peers, it's called a peer conference.

Sometimes *you* might be asked to sit with a student or a group of students, and provide direction or feedback. Ask the teacher what they would like you to focus on, e.g. continuing writing from the day before, staying on track, word choice, etc. Listen to the child read their writing, and at any stage if you are unable to follow it, interrupt the child and say, 'I'm not sure how that happened, can we go back a bit and add something in so that all readers will understand?'

For older students, you could write the suggestion on their editing page (blank page next to their writing) or a sticky note. With younger students, you could help them write the extra information with them, but make sure they provide the ideas, even if you have to discuss it with them.

6. Typing writing to be published (see the next page).

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Parent Helpers: Typing Writing...

Have children read their writing to you while you type. Use the list below to help.



1. Making Sense:

If you think something doesn't make sense, ask the child to read it aloud to you and then ask them if it makes sense. They might like to add a comma or full stop to fix it. If they aren't too sure, change it so it does make sense.

2. Mistakes:

The writing may be strings of letters, groups of letters with spacing, some beginning letters, so yes, children will have some spelling mistakes in their writing. If it's written underneath their writing type it like that, or if a word is spelt incorrectly, just type it in correctly. The teacher has already gone through the spelling with the child and conferred with the child about their spelling.

3. Front Page:

Children need a front cover. Please have the title and include 'Written and Illustrated by'. Children can choose font and sizing themselves. This page needs to be printed twice (one for a front cover and one for a title page).

4. Using Speech:

- Every time a new person speaks, please put it on a new line.
- At the end of the talking there should be a comma...
e.g. *"Hello, my name is Ted," said the bird.*

If that person continues to speak, it can continue on the same line...
e.g. *"Hello, my name is Ted," said the bird, "and this is my friend Bill."*

5. Paragraphs & Pages:

A book should have a minimum of four pages plus a title page. This might mean a sentence on each page. If it is longer than that, involve the child in the decision making process about where page breaks should go.

For older grades, the children should have already sorted their writing into pages and paragraphs. If they haven't, just type the whole lot out and then talk to the child about paragraph breaks and ask the child what they want on each page. You may need to guide them.

6. Page Numbers:

Once the pages have been sorted, please put a page number at the bottom right hand corner of each page.

Thank you for your help creating authors.

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Helping with Maths in the Classroom

The most important aspect is, if you're not sure, ask the classroom teacher.

Avoid jumping in with answers or solutions. Encourage the child you're working with to talk about how they might work out maths problems. This helps boost confidence and deepens their understanding. Remember, focus on the process and not the outcome.

One of the most important things you can do when helping with maths is ask questions so that the child thinks about how they might solve the problem.

We know that sounds simple, but asking questions is extremely helpful in having students explain their thinking, or extend their thinking.

If a child says, **'I don't know how to do this.'** OR **'Can you help me with this?'**

You might respond with:

'Have you read it more than once? Read it again.' Or you might read it with/for the child.

'Let's have a look at the information you know.'

'What is the question asking?'

'What are you thinking about this?'

'What maths might you need to help you with this?'

'Is there any equipment around the room you can use to help?'

When a child says they're done, you might ask:

'Can you explain your strategy?'

'Is there a different way you could solve this?'

'Is there another way to show your thinking?'

The teacher may or may not ask you to write down what children said to you, or might ask you to tell them what was said. This builds on knowledge and enables assessment of the teaching and learning process.

If in doubt, always ask!