

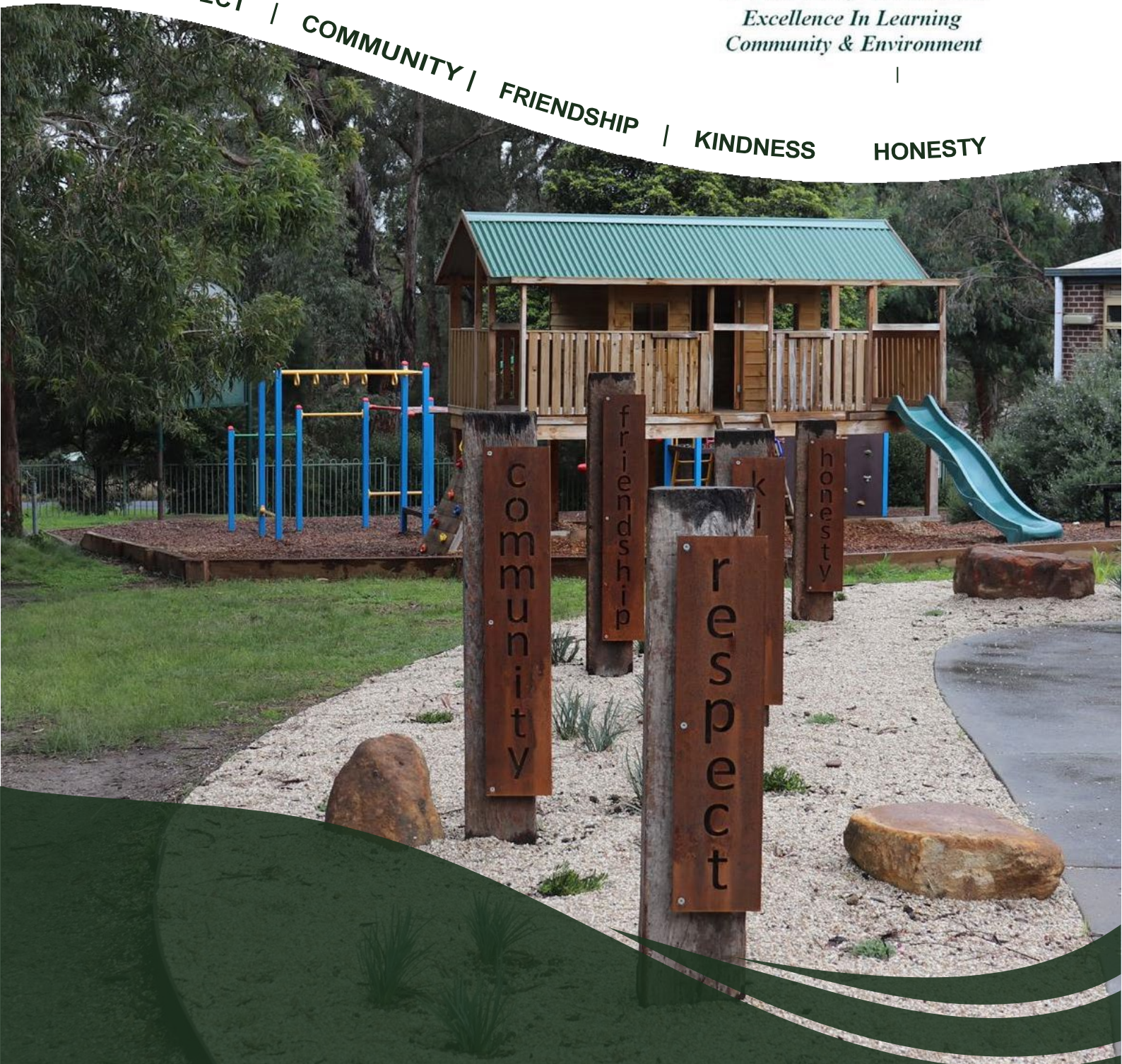
Beaconsfield Upper



Primary School

Excellence In Learning
Community & Environment

RESPECT | COMMUNITY | FRIENDSHIP | KINDNESS | HONESTY



Volunteer handbook

Introduction

On behalf of all the students and teachers, I would like to thank you for volunteering and contributing to providing the best possible education for our children. You have an important role in their success. Your presence in the classroom will provide the teacher with valuable support in giving individual and small group assistance.

In whatever way you choose to help, whether in the classroom or other school programs, you can be sure your contribution is valued.

This handbook is to support and guide you in your experience as a school volunteer. The roles and responsibilities of the school volunteer listed in this handbook will provide you with the 'basics' for making your volunteering an enthusiastic success.

Some of the techniques and strategies you can use to help children learn are discussed briefly. Naturally, the teacher will always be nearby to provide directions and to answer your questions.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of the school volunteer program with classroom teachers or myself.

We are most appreciative of your time. We hope you will be rewarded by the appreciation of the students and staff.

Thank you very much for your support.

With kind regards,

Vicki Miles
Principal

Beaconsfield Upper PS Classroom Volunteers Handbook

Research has shown that parents who take an active role in their child's school life increase their child's ability to learn and have a positive effect on academic achievement.

Classrooms are a hive of activity especially in our modern world where teaching practise is more focused than ever before on meeting individual needs. When you stand at the door of a classroom in the middle of a reading or a maths session, you'll see a variety of activities taking place.

Some students will be working by themselves, some in small groups, some in a small group with the attention of the teacher and sometimes (often at the end and the beginning of lessons) all the class will be together.

Some children will be writing, drawing, making, some will be reading, some on computers or using technology and some using all sort of materials from toys to counters to calculators.

To make sure that learning is happening in our busy rooms, teachers need students to be 'on task' and to 'make good choices' and we do a lot of talking and setting up classroom rules and procedures to get this happening. Of course, you can see where an extra pair of adult hands, eyes and ears would help!

At Beaconsfield Upper Primary we encourage parents and volunteers to actively support student learning by becoming involved in a range of school and classroom activities and greatly appreciate the parents and community members who assist and support our programs.

Aims of the Volunteer Program to:

- Enrich the educational possibilities for the children;
- Make the teaching within the school more effective;
- Promote the partnership between home and school;
- Demonstrate that education continues through life;
- Give adults the opportunity to use their talents in school while keeping the sole focus on the children and their education;
- Enable children to have more time to communicate their ideas and thus develop their understanding.

Programs and activities may include:

- Joining the School Council or PFA
- Listening to students read.
- Helping students change Take Home Books
- Assistance in our library borrowing times
- Supporting class activities such as cooking, arts and crafts etc.
- Attending excursions and camps.
- Providing administrative support, such as:
 - laminating teaching aids and covering library books.
 - photocopying
 - processing library books
- Supporting fundraising activities.

- Participating in school activities such as Book Week, open mornings, classroom celebrations.
- Assisting in specialist classrooms
- Work with small groups of students on tasks that don't require direct teaching but may require an adult hand.
- Working as a 'roamer' – patrolling the room and keeping everyone on task while the teacher is focusing on a small group
- Helping students with their writing/maths/reading etc
- General classroom activities
- Editing school magazine
- Typing children's stories

THE THREE Rs FOR VOLUNTEERS

RESPONSIBILITY

- The effective volunteer is dependable and recognises the vital importance of regular attendance.
- Appreciative of the efforts of the school to educate all children and to provide maximum learning opportunities for each child
- Supportive of the administration and teaching staff
- Aware of the importance of planning
- Sincerely concerned about the students
- Able to generate enthusiasm about each child
- Willing to be discreet, dedicated and punctual
- Professional in his or her commitment and manner

RAPPORT

- The understanding volunteer recognises the child's need to improve self-image and independent learning
- Supports the child by offering genuine guidance
- Recognises the individuality of each student
- Provides a relaxed, friendly and caring atmosphere with students
- Respects the teacher and school's ultimate responsibility for the health, welfare and education of each student
- Provides opportunities for each child to be successful
- Cooperates, coordinates and communicates continually with teachers
- Is comfortable asking for clarification and is willing to express concerns and questions with school staff
- Recognises the essential need for confidentiality and will not comment or gossip about individual students, staff members or the school.

REWARDS

- The successful volunteer shares with the child the warm personal satisfactions that results from successful human relationships
- Provides the teacher or staff member with the satisfaction of knowing that the students' needs are being met and that quality education is being promoted, extended and enriched
- Receives the sincere gratitude of the school community
- Celebrates in the knowledge that he or she has made a difference in a child's life.

At Beaconsfield Upper Primary we have high expectations of our Volunteers.

We expect all volunteers will:

- Promote a positive attitude towards learning.
- Encourage their child to demonstrate positive behaviours and appropriate conflict resolution strategies – e.g. informing the teacher if there is a problem.
- Support school decisions regarding behaviour management.
- Ensure all interactions are respectful and appropriate language is used at all times within the school grounds.
- Contact the school if they have a question or are unsure of something.

Role of the Teacher

The foremost responsibility of every teacher is the duty of care they have for the children in their class. Parents and classroom volunteers are expected to acknowledge this important role and minimise interruptions to classroom learning and commitments of teachers during class time.

The teacher is the professional educator in the classroom with the responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** students in the class. Therefore the teacher is responsible for:

- Organising the classroom
- Grouping the students
- Planning and delivering the program
- Monitoring the learning
- Making informed, professional decisions about students individual needs
- Communicating formally and informally with students, parents and volunteers about teaching and learning programs and individual progress.

Role of volunteers

A duty of care applies while students are under the care of the school. The same duty of care applies to employees and volunteers who assist at the school.

In order for your experience to be pleasurable and rewarding BUPs has the following expectation:

- Liaise with the teacher
- Support the teacher's educational program through a variety of classroom tasks/activities.
- Provide individual or group support.
- Keep the group or individual on task
- Encourage positive behaviour
- At all times maintain confidentiality
- Treat all students in a positive, impartial and fair manner.

Classroom Volunteer Guidelines

When parents/carers assist with school programs they are classed as **volunteers** working at the school.

Any person whose duties usually involve or are likely to involve work in a school (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engaged in 'child-related work' and must be compliant with the Working with Children Act 2005 (the Act). www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/.

A duty of care applies while students are under the care of the school. This duty applies equally to school based activities and out of school activities. The same duty of care applies to employees and volunteers who assist at the school.

Prior to assisting in our classrooms at BUPs volunteers are expected to complete the following:

- Obtain a **Working with Children** check for volunteers, as they are considered to be engaged in 'child-related work' and must be compliant with the Working with Children Act 2005. A register of volunteers with a copy will of their WWCC will be kept at the office.

A receipt of application is acceptable until the official check is delivered.

- Operate within **professional standards** and **confidentiality**. Classroom volunteers are in a position of trust and should not discuss with other parents, adults or children any personal information about students, staff or other classroom volunteers learnt whilst involved in school programs.
- Sign the schools **confidentiality agreement**.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality of all members of the school community is respected. Classroom volunteers operate on the premise of genuine respect and trust for each child and adult.

The most important gift children and their families give us is their trust. Children will talk about everything and anything. In fact it's often quite entertaining to hear their stories and opinions. However that very innocence means they have very little filter on what they say, so to protect their own and their family's confidentiality, the adults working with children almost need a 'what's said in the classroom, stays in the classroom' approach. Of course, if something said concerned you, please see the classroom teacher.

We also respect students by keeping their academic and social progress confidential. Each family has the right to expect that their child's progress, lack of progress, social difficulties, or their special needs are not shared around the school community. So we ask that you don't discuss with other parents or community members how children are progressing, how they compare to each other or any behavioural difficulties.

Certainly, if you have concerns, make these known to the teacher.

Further guidelines

- Volunteers sign in and sign out of the School, via electronic sign in with the office staff.
- Wear a visitors pass while working in the school indicating to staff and students that they are allowed to be in the school.
- Work under the direction of the teacher who is responsible for the class or group of children.
- Refer any behavior management issues to the classroom teacher, as he/she will then determine what course of action is to be followed.
- Be willing to assist all children or group of children within the classroom. This could mean that you may not always work with your child.
- Parents as classroom volunteers *must* comply with the school's expectations and practices. All supervising adults have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to protect students in their charge from risks of injury that are *reasonably foreseeable*.
- Unfortunately preschoolers and infants are unable to be present in the classroom or on excursions if you have nominated yourself as a volunteer. It is essential that when you are a parent volunteer, that your full attention is given to your role.
- When adults are working with or supervising students, a teacher *must* be within the vicinity at all times.
- Volunteers *must* respond to any emergency management procedures
- Volunteers *must* be prepared to work with an individual/small group that *may not* necessarily include your own child/children.
- Volunteers assisting with school or classroom programs *must* only discuss or convey relevant curriculum or program details with students as authorised by the teacher in charge. No other matters are to be discussed with students.
- Volunteers *must* ensure mobile phones *are on silent* during the direct supervision of students and only check for messages when not directly supervising children. It is not appropriate to allow any student to use any mobile phone/electronic devices at school or from their bag.
- Taking photos *will* only be the responsibility of the BUPs staff (for privacy reasons).
- It is *not* the responsibility of parents to contact the parents of individual students regarding their welfare and participation whilst working at school. A teacher is responsible for this if/when required.
- Volunteers are *not* responsible for disciplining students. They must refer them to the teacher in charge.
- Volunteers are to direct any concerns regarding students and/or the facilities promptly to a BUPs staff member and/or the teacher in charge.
- As a number of children have allergies and /or special dietary needs parents *are not permitted* to provide any additional food during the activity to any child.
- Volunteers are expected to comply with the Education Department's zoning of schools and their grounds as smoke free zones.
- Concerns relating to parent volunteers should be addressed to the Principal or Assistant Principals.
- Failure to observe any of the above guidelines will result in that volunteers no longer participating in school programs.

UNDERSTANDING OUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Child Safe Standards

Beaconsfield Upper Primary School as part of the Victorian Government state school system is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, regardless of their age, culture, beliefs, socio-economic circumstances, disability, family living situation, child rearing practices or educational level. There is a culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse. In response to the recommendations in the 'Betrayal of Trust' Report, there are new regulations surrounding child safety, which are underpinned by the Child Safe Standards.

These standards are:

- Disclosure of Possible Abuse in Victoria, it is the legal obligation to report any suspected case of child abuse. If a child indicates to you that he/she has been or is the victim of abuse, or you have strong suspicions that a student may have been abused, inform the child's teacher or Principal immediately.
- Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.
- Supervision- It is important that a VIT registered teacher is with you at all times when you are with children. The teacher is required to maintain a visual line of sight with you at all times.
- No volunteers will be left unsupervised with children and should avoid any unnecessary physical contact with students. There are times when you will need to touch a student, for example, if they have fallen over and need assistance in standing up. It is important to remember that as volunteers you are seen as another professional within our school community so it is expected that you act in a professional manner at all times.

Volunteers must read the suite of policies and procedures in the links below before commencing any work where children are likely to be present.

Key messages

- Beaconsfield Upper Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- We are committed to creating inclusive environment where diversity is supported and students feel safe to bring their whole selves to school.
- Allegations and concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of our school community will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

- Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, speak up. If you have any concerns about any inappropriate behaviours in the school community you should speak to the Principal or Assistant Principal. If this would not be appropriate in the circumstances, you can contact the South Eastern Victoria Regional Office of the Department of Education on 1300 338 738.

Induction materials – must read

This induction pack contains the following documents that all new volunteers must read and familiarise themselves with. Please click on the hyperlinks to access each document. If you would prefer a hard copy of this pack, please contact the team in the office who will happily provide you with one.

- Beaconsfield Upper Primary School Volunteers Policy
- Beaconsfield Upper Primary School Child Safety Policy
- Beaconsfield Upper Primary School Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Beaconsfield Upper Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct
- [PROTECT: Four Critical Actions for Schools – Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse](#)
- [PROTECT: Identify child abuse](#)

Contact

We value your feedback on ways we can continue to improve and strengthen our child safety approach and encourage you to contact the principal with any comments or questions.

Emergency Procedures

The School is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of its staff, students, parents, volunteers and visitors. The School has an Emergency Management Plan in place. As a volunteer/parent volunteers it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the School's Emergency Management procedures.

A summary of the school's Emergency Management Plans are located within the buildings throughout the school.

We perform Emergency Management drills at different times during the year. Ensure that you are aware of the processes for your classroom as well as the time that you may be in other areas of the school. e.g. Gym, Library etc. If you have any question please ask the teacher.

Occupational Health and Safety

Beaconsfield Upper Primary School's HSR and Management OHS Nominee is Matthew ayne

Hazards and Incidents

Volunteers are also responsible for:

- Reporting hazards and incidents to Kathryn Smith
- Cooperating with incident investigations
- Follow safe work procedures and instructions

Examples of Hazards that may be reported include;

- Trip or slip hazards;
- Storage and/or use of chemicals;
- Noise associated with the operation of plant and equipment; and
- Blind corners/ uncontrolled traffic intersections

All injuries (either physical or psychological) that occur in the school ground must be reported immediately to the classroom teacher to be entered on eduSafe.

Accidents/ First Aid

If a child is ill or has an accident please tell the nearest teacher at once.

All of our teaching staff and office staff are First Aid and Anaphylaxis trained (in alignment with the school's Anaphylaxis Management Policy and First Aid Policy). All EpiPens are stored in the Sickbay. Disposable gloves must be used when dealing with wounds, sickness or other bodily fluids. If hypodermic needles or syringes are found, do not touch them but notify a member of staff immediately.

Smoking is not allowed in the school building or anywhere on the premises.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What name do the children use when addressing parent volunteers 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's 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 volunteers 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 volunteers/volunteer?

All visitors are asked to sign in via the electronic sign in point at the office. 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 volunteers/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 volunteers/volunteers in the classroom?

Individual class teachers and parent volunteers jointly organise the time and type of support that best suits both parties. Typically parents volunteer 1 to 2 hours per week. The School appreciates any assistance classroom volunteers and volunteers are able to provide.

What do I do if I am unable to make it to my weekly time?

Teachers appreciate it if you can let them know if you won't be available. Communication via a note, Sentral, a phone call to the office is appreciated. Teachers understand that there are many times when your routine will change.

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 volunteers 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. 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 parent/carer is 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, if you can plan your assistance in advance then please contact the teacher to arrange this extra support.

What do I need to know about reading if I'm a reading volunteer?

Teachers will assist volunteers and explain tasks to be completed.

Do I go and chat with my own child when volunteering in the classroom?

If appropriate, a smile and/ or quick kiss is always OK. Do not interrupt their own activities or learning groups and remember that older children never like to be embarrassed!

What if I'm late – or cannot attend my roster?

Ring the school – leave message for teacher