Rationale:
The College believes that there are many benefits to be gained from parents, grandparents and carers working in partnership with school programs and activities.

Our Core Beliefs:
1. We believe all children have the ability to engage in a learning environment.
2. We believe our parents, grandparent and carers are a critical asset to our community.
3. We believe that children should have the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of adults who model excellence in learning behaviour.
4. We believe that supportive inclusive programs can aide all community members.
5. We believe in promoting participation and the development of self-esteem and learning confidence.

The College’s Parent Helper Program focuses on enhancing community relationships and establishing an ongoing partnership.

• Parents will be invited to participate in a parent helpers information session. Without this attendance, they cannot assist in classroom programs.

• All parents must undergo a Working With Children Check (WWCC) in accordance with the current legislation, that is up to date at the time of volunteering. It is the parent’s responsibility to maintain this registration.

• Teachers will outline to the helpers the task to be carried out and discuss the responsibilities and expectations of both teachers and helpers.

• Parents are not to be left unsupervised with children at any time and are not to administer any form of discipline or assessment tasks. All incidents of concern relating to children, eg. academic ability, discipline or accident, must be reported to the teacher.

• Parents are to maintain confidentiality in relation to any child’s progress and performance in accordance with the Privacy Act. If this is breached they will be required to relinquish their role.

• Any helpers who are not reliable, or do not meet the school expectations, will be required to relinquish their role.

• Children who are not enrolled at the College (younger siblings) cannot accompany the parents.

Parent helpers volunteer their time, skills and efforts. There are numerous roles that parent volunteers can be involved in, to support the school in its core operation of improving learning outcomes of students. Parent volunteers are one of the greatest resources a school can have - with numerous benefits for the school and for parents including:
Benefits for school:
- To offer better prepared, more individualised programs to each student.
- To offer better services and facilities.
- An active parent body is an essential part of a vibrant, positive school climate.

Benefits for our students:
- They see their parents and community members helping the school and they realise that it is important to all of us.
- They see adults working together effectively and interacting in friendly, positive ways and follow the example.
- They feel really special when their mum, dad or carer are helping in the school.

Benefits for parents:
- An opportunity to be actively involved in your child's school.
- Build a strong, positive relationship with school staff.
- Learn skills which can, in turn, assist you in helping your child.
- Be informed about what's happening at the school.
- To be a parent volunteer in the school, there are several guidelines to follow. These are set to help you understand how you can best help out, and to ensure that volunteering is a positive experience for everyone.

The Working with Children Check (WWCC) creates a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. The WWCC helps to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work. If you work or volunteer with children you may need to apply for a WWCC. To be a parent volunteer in the school, you need to have a current WWCC.

Ways you may be asked to help in the classroom ......

Activities which will take place with one child at a time:
- hearing the child read
- helping the child learn the key words
- helping or testing the child in the weekly spelling
- changing home reading books and recording achievements in the student's diary/reading log book

Activities which involve working with a small group of students:
- reading in a group
- working on the computers
- working with the students on the tasks set by the teacher

Practical jobs that need doing:
- photocopying and laminating
- filing and arranging students’ work into folders or portfolios
- sharpening pencils and keeping class stationery in order
Confidentiality and Privacy

To make sure that students, staff and families feel secure and happy in their environment, we need to respect their privacy.

Parents must adhere to the following:

- not discuss what occurs in the classroom with any adults.
- not discuss the children’s learning ability.
- not inform the teacher on how to conduct the class.
- not interrupt the lesson.
- not take any photos or video of the children or teachers.

Parents helping in the classroom should complete the Parent Volunteer Agreement.
PARENT HELPER GUIDELINES

We believe the parent helpers’ involvement can be extremely beneficial for all and request participants are aware of the following:

- Act as a good role model for the children by being safety-conscious in language and action.
- Always sign in and out at the school office and wear the visitor’s pass.
- As a courtesy, please turn off mobile phones while in the classroom.
- Always follow the correct safety procedures during a DISPLAN (emergency drill). Follow the teacher’s instructions and stay with the class you are helping.
- Do not bring food or hot beverages in the classroom, bottled water is permitted.

CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEERS

- Sign in at the office before and after attending a classroom as a volunteer. A lanyard provided by the school must be worn at all times and returned at the end of the session.
- Find out where you are to put your personal things and what your task/role is for the sessions.
- Determine the way in which the teacher will communicate with you.
- Find out classroom standards and rules.
- Meet and develop rapport with children.
- Try to learn names of children.
- Assist students when possible.
- Be punctual. Email the teacher if you will be absent.
- Use of mobile phones is prohibited while you are helping in the classroom unless in the case of an emergency.
- Refrain from talking to another parent volunteer who is also helping in the classroom as this may interrupt the flow of the activities which in turn affects the students’ attention.
- Attend the parent volunteer briefing session(s) which will be conducted at the school.
- All activities in which the parent volunteer is involved must take place under the direct supervision of the teacher.

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO WORK WITH CHILDREN

1. Be warm and friendly - learn the children's names and show interest in what they are doing and telling you. You are very important as a listener.
2. When working with children, encourage them to do their own thinking. Give them plenty of time to answer questions (3-5 seconds). Silence often means they are thinking and organising what they want to say or write.
3. If you don't know an answer or are unsure of what to do, admit it to the children and work it out together. Please ask the teacher for assistance when you need it.
4. Use tact and positive comments. Encourage children and compliment them, especially when children are having difficulties.
5. Accept each child as he or she is—you do not need to feel responsible for judging a child's abilities, progress or behaviour.
6. If a child is upset, inform the teacher and they will support the child.
7. Maintain a sense of humour.
8. Be consistent with the teacher's rules for classroom schedules and behaviour.
9. Wear appropriate clothing for your role (smart, clean, casual) and don't hesitate to get down to a child's height.
10. Respect a child's privacy and right that the learning behaviour stays with the classroom and is not communicated to parents.
11. If parents and friends ask about what you do at school, tell them you enjoy working with the children and discuss the activities you do rather than specific information about the child, the teacher or the school.
12. Maintain your commitment. The children expect you and look forward to your attendance.

HOW TO KEEP CHILDREN ON TASK

- Call each child by name
- Give positive, specific praise - “I like the way Jimmy is working quietly.” “You are doing a great job of working co-operatively.” State positive actions - “Walk quietly” instead of “Don’t run!”
- Give sufficient warnings and time. Here are some examples:
  
  "Jessie, in five minutes you'll need to stop drawing and put your smock away, wash your hands and then go and sit on the floor."
- Keep your voice as low as possible. The children will get louder as your voice gets louder.
- Have an unhurried attitude. Enjoy them and they will enjoy you.
- The teacher must be informed of discipline issues and they will deal with the students.
- Be sure a child understands what you're saying. We sometimes use words that children do not know. Ask them to repeat directions to check for understanding.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN

- Children learn by doing, by asking questions and by searching for answers to their questions.
- They learn by discovering and experimenting.
- They learn by using all their senses when possible.
- They learn by sorting and combining objects and ideas.
- They learn by repeating experiences.
- They learn by building confidence in themselves.
- Children learn behaviour by observing people they respect.

1. Let children participate in activities as frequently as possible.
2. Ask children questions that may lead them to the correct answer instead of informing them directly.
3. Let children explore and discover by themselves.
4. Encourage children to feel, smell, taste, talk and listen, as well as look at objects.
5. Let children try new methods of doing things even though you already know an easier way.
6. Let children sort and combine according to their own ideas.

7. When speaking to children:
   - Praise their good efforts
   - Use a tone of voice that will encourage them and make them feel confident
   - Avoid comparing children and their work
   - Give children a choice only when you intend to abide by the choice
   - State directions in a positive form (“We use blocks for building” rather than “Don’t throw the blocks”)

8. Let children observe you as a model for appropriate and positive behaviour (sharing, showing respect, talking quietly, taking turns, etc.).

Confidentiality and Privacy

Working in the classrooms give you the opportunity to learn a lot about the students. You will learn about their strengths and weaknesses, their behaviour inside and outside the classrooms. It is very important that all parent volunteers maintain strict confidentiality of such information. It is therefore not appropriate to speak with other parents about their children and other children. Kindly refer any queries to the child's teacher. Information gained from your experience at our school must not be shared with any other person(s), except the teacher with whom you are assisting. If confidentiality issues are compromised, the support provided by the parent volunteer will be reviewed.

If you find that parents who are friends ask about the progress or behaviour of their children in the classroom, this is a matter requiring a great deal of tact on your part and it is very important that you suggest that if they are worried in any way about their child, then they must discuss the matter themselves with the class teacher. We need to respect the privacy of students, staff and families.

Interaction with students - Follow the guidelines of the teachers to manage the students behaviour. All discipline issues must be reported to and dealt with by the student's teacher. If in doubt- ask the teachers for advice. It is not appropriate for a parent volunteer to talk to another person's child about incidents in school even if the incident involves their own child. If you have any concerns with someone else's child at school- refer it to the teachers.

Other children - Parent volunteers may not bring other children when helping in the classrooms. This is to ensure that they will be able to focus their attention and effort in helping the students, and play a vital role in the smooth running of the activities.
Parent Volunteer Agreement

This page is to be signed by the parent volunteer and returned to the Homeroom teacher. Attach a copy of the current WWC check if you have not submitted it to the office previously.

Parent volunteers are expected to:

- be outstanding role models for all students
- sign in at the office before and after helping in the classrooms
- have a current WWCC and provide a photocopy to the office
- work under the professional direction of staff, following all school policies
- allow the teacher to deal with discipline issues
- maintain confidentiality at all times
- report any issues of concern to teachers (and not directly intervene)
- speak in a kind and friendly way to all students, be fair
- establish and maintain a rapport with students based on mutual respect
- contact the teacher if they are unable to attend via phone call or a note
- be properly attired for the day
- help in other classrooms other than their child's classroom
- turn off their mobile phones or leave them in silent mode while helping in the classroom
- leave younger child(ren) with a carer while helping in the school
- focus their attention in helping the students assigned to them
- follow the school's emergency evacuation plan
- attend the parent volunteer briefing session(s)

Parent volunteers have the right to expect:

- good manners and acceptable behaviour from students
- the teachers to deal with discipline issues that arise
- to be informed of the tasks expected of them
- to be notified if sessions are cancelled or the timetable has changed
- to be treated with respect
- support by the teachers.
I have read and understood the Parent Volunteer Guidelines, and endeavour to abide by these expectations.
I understand that if I do not meet the school’s expectations, I will be required to relinquish my role.

Name of parent volunteer: ____________________________  Date: ________

Name and class of parent’s children ____________________________

__________________________________

__________________________________