



School Policy: Parents/Carers and Volunteers at Sylvania Heights Public School

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Introduction

Parents/Carers naturally want the very best for their children. What exactly is "the best" of course differs greatly from one parent/carer to the next, but basically we all want our children to be successful and happy - and to feel secure in all aspects of their lives. We want to give them every opportunity to achieve their true potential in life.

During their school years, the home and school occupy the greatest part of a student's time - and carry the greatest influence on their development into adulthood. Obviously, the more harmony there is between home and school, the greater will be the chances of achievement and fulfilment.

The contribution which parents have traditionally made in schools is highly valued. Sylvania Heights has a long and proud tradition of positive relationships with parents through formal partnerships, symbolised through the established bodies such as School Council; P&C and numerous sub-committees. We also have a culture of openness based on mutual respect and refined systems of communication and accountability. We actively promote the involvement by parents in the day to day activities at the school and encourage an open dialogue to resolve any issues and discuss ideas.

The "best" possible outcomes for all children's education are very much enhanced by a strong partnership between parents, teachers and students.

This policy is about parents/carers and our school. It uses the term "parent" to refer to people who have responsibility for the care of children attending school.

Children learn best when school programs offer some understanding of their family and cultural background, therefore a strong partnership between parents and school becomes all the more important when the complex and rapidly changing nature of our society is considered.

The Department of Education, and this school, encourage participation because:

- Parents have a unique knowledge and understanding of their own children, being their first and most influential educators
- Parents have the right, through their responsibility to and for their children, to be informed about their children's learning and to participate in reaching decisions which affect them
- Parents have talents, interests and skills which enrich the life and program of the school.

Purpose and Implementation

This policy describes the important roles that parents are able to play in this school. This policy outlines ways that students, parents and teachers can work together in a supportive and positive learning environment to enhance teaching and learning programs.

All involvement will occur within the framework of relevant legislation and NSW Department of Education administrative guidelines and will not conflict with specific professional responsibilities for which Principals and teachers are accountable. Teachers have a legislated duty of care, which cannot be delegated.

It is our clear purpose to enable parents to support our programs and thereby act as mentors, role models and volunteers to further improve the learning environment for all of our students.

Parents should receive a copy of this policy on enrolment. It will be presented at the annual Meet the Teacher Evenings and presented in the school newsletter. This policy will also be posted on the School website.

Behaviour code for parents/carers of Sylvania Heights Public School

NSW public schools are committed to providing safe, supportive and responsive learning environments for everyone. We teach and model the behaviours we value in our students.

Sylvania Heights Public School has an outstanding level of parental support in classrooms as well as in the canteen and uniform shop. Our school could not function at the optimum level without parent and volunteer support. All parents who enter onto any Public School premises do so in the knowledge that the school community and the Department of Education expect them to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Be outstanding role models for students
- Show respect for students, teachers, school staff, school volunteers, parents and other community members
- Comply with school safety rules and policies, following the directions of teachers and departmental employees who hold 'duty of care' when on school grounds or supervising students
- Support the highest standards in learning and avoid interrupting lessons
- Resolve conflict respectfully, calmly and fairly through complaint handling procedures
- Refrain from defamatory comments on social media platforms and bring matters to the attention of the principal and executive staff
- Ensure children in their care attend school every day and on time (unless legally excused)
- Maintain confidentiality involving children

- Encourage the development of children's personal responsibility, independence and resilience
- Value and accept the professional judgement of teachers and staff when selecting representative sporting, performing arts and extra-curricular teams
- Be respectful of teachers personal/family time outside of working hours
- Keep a safe and respectful distance from all students, reporting any behaviour concerns to teachers (and not directly intervene)
- Comply with Working with Children Check legislation and student safety policies
- Not be violent or bring weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco into our schools
- Vacate the school playground by 3:45pm to ensure the school can be cleaned and resources allocated for the following teaching day
- Not bully, harass, intimidate or discriminate against anyone in our schools

Parents/Carers are encouraged to make appointments through the office to meet with teachers to maximise the learning and social outcomes for students.

Staff have an obligation and a commitment to treat all members of the community with respect and courtesy and we ask that you do the same for our staff, other parents and our children who enjoy our school environment built on respectful relationships.

Bringing children to and from school

- Parents and volunteers should ensure that children arrive at school safely from 8:55 am onwards, which is when direct supervision commences. No student should be on school grounds before 8:55am unless attending a teacher supervised activity or under the care of the BASC (Before and After School Care).
- No parents/carers are permitted to park on school grounds or in staff carparks at any time.
- Parents must also park in the appropriate places and obey the road rules which will ensure the safety of all students. N.B. To ensure student safety parents and volunteers must not enter staff parking areas without explicit permission from the Principal.
- If children arrive late or leave early parents and/or students must sign their children in and/or out in the register kept at the office and give a copy of the "pass" to the class teacher.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is picked up at the end of the school day, 3.25pm. Parents are asked to notify, with ample notice, the school office if any delay will occur with the normal end of day routine. All students should be off school premises by 3:45pm
- Staff will attempt to contact parents of any child not picked up on time. If children are not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the school day and we are unable to make contact with parents it may be necessary for the school to enrol the child into BASC at the expense of the parent or call the police to assist.

Canteen Volunteers

Canteen volunteers are rostered on to support our P&C run the canteen. The school has a healthy canteen policy and parents must abide by all relevant Health Department regulations. The canteen committee has developed a set of simple protocols for the canteen, which will be explained to all new volunteers.

Classroom Volunteers

Teachers rely heavily on parent volunteers to support many classroom programs. At all times parents, volunteers and SLSO (School Learning Support Officers) work under the direct instruction and supervision of the classroom teacher.

Parents may be privy to confidential information and must agree not to discuss other children or incidents with anyone but school staff.

Parents are required to sign on and off in the Volunteers Book in each classroom, so that they will be covered relevant insurance.

Complaint Handling Procedures

Sylvania Heights Public School will follow the NSW Department of Education 'School Community and Consumer Complaint Procedures' to resolve complaints. The Principal can assist in this process.

Our complaint procedure is intended to:

- enable us to respond well to complaints
- resolve complaints in a timely, fair and helpful manner
- give the public confidence in our administrative processes
- provide information to enhance our services, systems and complaint handling, and
- prevent complainants or students from suffering detriment because a complaint has been made by them or on their behalf.

There will be times where parents wish to query something or make a complaint concerning something which has occurred at school.

So that we have the best possible chance of arriving at a solution which is best for all parties concerned, it helps if parents can give us a clear view of:

- What is seen to be the problem?
- What action or outcome is desired?

In many cases, the class teacher may be the appropriate person to approach. All teachers are willing to set times where they can meet with parents to discuss concerns. Parents should either contact the teacher to arrange a time to meet, or you can arrange this through the office.

In other cases, parents may wish to discuss their concerns with a member of the school executive or the Principal. It is essential that the Principal be approached regarding concerns, as little can be done to address concerns which are not communicated directly and in a timely manner.

It must be understood that it is not always possible for the action which is requested to be followed or for the desired outcome to be attained.

It is hoped, though, that if concerns are communicated at the time they are felt, then everybody can do their best to get as close as possible to a fair and workable solution.

Who do I approach to seek information or express concerns?

The following guidelines aim to ensure that all concerns are dealt with in a fair and open manner. These guidelines protect the rights of students, teachers, parents and volunteers and they ensure sensitivity and confidentiality to help us all to reach an agreed solution. Occasionally concerns may cause frustration and anxiety. At such times it is always important to organise a time to talk with school staff in an unhurried and confidential atmosphere.

CONCERN	APPROPRIATE ACTION
The academic progress of own child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the child's teacher either by note, phone or in person to arrange a suitable time to discuss the child's progress
The welfare of your own child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For minor issues directly contact your child's teacher to clarify information • For more serious concerns, contact the office. State nature of concern and arrange a suitable time to talk with class teacher or appropriate staff member • To convey information about change of address, telephone number, emergency contact, custody details, health issues etc. Please contact the office
Actions of other students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the class teacher for a classroom problem • Contact the stage supervisor or Principal for playground problems
Actions of other parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the office and state concerns to the Principal
Actions of a staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the office and state concerns to the Principal
School Policy or practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the office and state concerns and make an appointment to see the Principal and/or appropriate member of staff.

In very rare cases, where people wishing to express concerns do so in an aggressive, threatening or violent manner, the Principal (or nominee) has the legal authority under the Inclosed Lands Act to:

- direct the person to immediately leave the grounds;
- call the police;
- withdraw future permission for the person to enter the grounds;

- seek further Legal avenues.

Community members are welcome to access our Complaints and Compliments form at https://education.nsw.gov.au/media/c-and-e/complaints_and_compliments_form.pdf. All complaints and compliments should be sent to the school email address sylvania-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Contacting teachers by email

All email correspondence to school staff is to be sent to the school email address sylvania-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au and should clearly indicate the intended recipient in the subject field. Emails will be forwarded to the intended recipient. Please be sure on to indicate not only the author's details but also the name and class of your child enrolled at the school. Response to correspondence will be made at the first opportunity but may be delayed by compelling school priorities.

Providing information to school

In order to ensure the health and safety of all students, parents and caregivers may need to share a range of important information relating to the special needs of their child with the school. Eg we will need information about disabilities, allergies and changing family situations. We will always treat information of a personal nature sensitively and parents and caregivers should be willing to work in partnership with the school in these situations to ensure the best outcomes for their child. The school has a "Medications at School" policy that is posted on the school internet site.

Parent Bodies

All parents and members of the school community may attend and play an active role in P&C meetings and activities. Financial members (Cost \$1 per annum) may vote on decisions. The role of the P&C and School Council is available from the Presidents of each organisation and through the Principal. Parents wishing to raise matters with the School Council, P&C, and Sub-committees should forward their correspondence in a sealed envelope to the school clearly addressed to the Secretary of designated body. This correspondence will not be opened but passed onto the nominated secretaries via the system established in the office area.

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This policy replaces the Parents, and Volunteers at Sylvania Heights Public School, 2007. It is supported by the Department of Education Parents Code of Behaviour.