



TARNEIT
P-9 COLLEGE

Parent Helpers and Volunteer Workers Handbook

LEARNING INCLUSIVE

Tarneit P-9 College Parent Helpers and 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.

At Tarneit College we encourage parents 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.

Programs and activities may include:

- listening to students read.
- 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.
- supporting fundraising activities.
- participating in school activities such as World Reading Day, open mornings and school assemblies.
- joining the Parents' Association and School Council.

Parent Helpers and Volunteer Workers

When parents 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.

Parent helpers/staff support/volunteer workers are expected to assist the programs within the following guidelines:

- treat all students in a positive, impartial and fair manner.
- work under the direction of the teacher who is responsible for the class or group of children.
- always be in sight of the classroom teacher when working with a student/s.
- refer any behaviour management issues to the classroom teacher, as they will then determine what course of action is to be followed in line with the Tarneit College's School Positive Behaviour processes.
- operate within **professional standards** and **confidentiality**. Parent helpers are in a position of trust and should not discuss with other parents, adults or children any personal information about students, staff or other parent helpers learnt whilst involved in school programs.
- 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.
- 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.

Parent Code of Conduct

At Tarneit P-9 College we have high expectations of our Parent Community. We expect all parents 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 College decisions regarding behaviour management.
- ensure all interactions are respectful and appropriate language is used at all times within the College grounds.
- Contact the school if they have a question or are unsure of something.

Tarneit College Procedures

- Parents and Volunteers need to provide the school with a Working with Children’s Check prior to any volunteer work occurring. A register of parent helpers with a copy will of their WWCC will be kept in our online management system. **A receipt of application is acceptable until the official check is received.**
- Parents and Volunteers **must** sign in and sign out for each visit of the College via the kiosk, located at the office.
- All appropriate documentation and induction must be completed prior to any volunteering occurring.

Guidelines for Parent Helpers and Volunteers

*We value **Learning**.*

*We are **Responsible**.*

*We are an **Inclusive** community.*

*We take **Pride** in ourselves, each other and our College.*

The following guidelines are provided to support parent helpers and volunteers.

Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Use encouraging/positive words.➤ Adopt a pleasant tone of voice.➤ Use warm, open body language. For example, maintain eye contact.
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Role model class expected behaviours. For example, look at and listen to the teacher when they are speaking.➤ Give students opportunities for decision making by offering limited and appropriate choices. For example, “Which book would you like to read?”
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Accept child-initiated contact where appropriate. For example, a child who high-fives you every time they see you.➤ Redirect child-initiated contact where that contact is inappropriate. For example, a student who wants to cling onto your leg as you walk around the classroom.➤ Reinforce Hugs are for Home.➤ Discuss any concerns about appropriate contact with the class teacher.
Dress Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Wear appropriate clothing for anticipated roles and activities. To reduce the possibility of trip hazards, please ensure that you wear appropriate footwear. For examples, no thongs or open back shoes.

When in doubt about a situation ask, the class teacher, Professional Team Leaders or Assistant Principal.

Emergency Procedures

The College is committed to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of its staff, students, parents, volunteers and visitors. The College has Emergency and Security Management systems in place. As a volunteer worker / parent helper it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the College's Emergency procedures and map locations and exits in your work spaces.

Summary of Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Plans are located within buildings throughout the College. These plans show the evacuation routes emergency assembly area in **Goddard Street Reserve**.

Emergency management plan

Evacuation

In the event when the school needs to be evacuated the following procedure needed to be followed:

- A siren will sound or continual blows of a whistle.
- Instruct students to line up in pairs.
- Close doors, do not lock them.
- Lead class to Goddard Street Reserve oval next to the Kindergarten, following the direction outlined on the Evacuation Map.
- Once at the Assembly remain with the supervising teacher until indicating otherwise .

Lockdown

In the event the school needs to be lockdown the following process needs to be followed,

- Instruct students to
 - **(Red)** Sit on floor away from windows, out of sight in silence.
 - **(Amber)** sit away from windows out of sight; student may continue working quietly.
 - **(Green)** Continue working; students are not to leave classroom.
- Classes are to stay in lockdown until advised by the Principal Team via email and announcements.

You should remain calm during emergency situations. You will be given information regarding the emergency via supervising teacher as it become available. In most cases the school will always take extra precautions to ensure the safety of everyone on site. Students should be given age-appropriate information regarding the emergency.

Tarneit P-9 College performs Emergency Management drills at different times during the year. Ensure that you are aware of the processes of the College.

If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Principal team.

Digital Safety and Responsible Use of Technology

While volunteering at our school, we ask that mobile phone use be kept to a minimum and only for urgent matters. Volunteers should avoid using phones during interactions with students to maintain a focused and supportive learning environment.

To protect student privacy and safety, photographs or videos of students must not be taken under any circumstance without explicit permission from the school. If you have any questions about these guidelines, please speak with a staff member.

Tips for Engaging with Students

Your time and dedication make a meaningful impact on student learning and well-being. Here are some helpful tips to guide you in your role:

Engaging with Students

- **Encourage & Motivate** – A smile and a few kind words go a long way! Use phrases like: “Great effort! I can see you’re working hard.” “That’s an interesting idea—tell me more!” “Keep going! You’re making great progress.”
- **Ask Thoughtful Questions** – Encourage critical thinking with open-ended questions, such as: “Why do you think that happened?” “What would you do differently next time?” “Can you explain that in another way?”
- **Praise Effort Over Outcome** – Focus on the learning process rather than just the result. For example: Instead of “You’re so smart!” → Say “I love how you kept trying even when it was tricky!” Instead of “That’s a perfect answer!” → Say “You thought carefully about that—great reasoning!”

Cultural Sensitivity & Inclusion

- **Respect Diversity** – Our school community includes students from different backgrounds, abilities, and learning needs. Show kindness, patience, and an open mind in all interactions.
- **Use Inclusive Language** – Avoid assumptions about students’ experiences, families, or cultures. Simple adjustments make a big difference, such as: Instead of “Mom and Dad,” try “your family” or “your grown-ups.” Instead of “boys and girls,” try “everyone” or “students.”
- **Be Mindful of Different Perspectives** – Encourage students to share their thoughts and experiences while showing respect for different viewpoints.

Your support helps create a welcoming and inspiring environment for all students.

College Policies

Our school has clear policies in place to ensure a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for all students, staff, and volunteers. These policies cover important areas such as child safety, student wellbeing, privacy, and volunteer expectations.

We encourage all volunteers to familiarise themselves with our college policies, which can be found on our [school website](#). If you have any questions or need clarification, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator or a classroom teacher.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What name do the children use when addressing parent helpers 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 helpers once they have a receipt for their Working With Children check.**

What do I need to do when I arrive at school as a parent helper?

All visitors to Tarneit College are asked to sign in at the kiosk at the front office. Please sign out again when you leave school via the same kiosk.

What is the usual time commitment for parent helpers in the classroom?

Individual class teachers and parent helpers jointly organise the time and type of support. Parent helpers come weekly for an hour. If for any reason you cannot attend your weekly session, please let the class teacher know in advance by contacting the front office.

What do I do if I'm unable to make it to my scheduled time?

Class teachers appreciate it if you can let them know if you won't be available. Either jot a brief note and send it in with your child or phone the school office (Ph: 9749 0506) and leave a message. 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 parent helper or volunteer 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 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 since our school days. 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 mum or dad are 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 have noticed that children are on different reading levels. What do they mean? I would like my child to move up a few levels should I see their teacher?

Reading levels are a tool the teachers use to match a child to a book that is most appropriate for their instructional learning. There are many factors that go into determining a student's level. Comprehension is one of the most important elements. When students can read a book they also need to be able to understand what they have read. Home readers should be at an easier level than what they read in the classroom.

If you have any concerns or questions about readers, you should make a separate time to meet with your child's class teacher.

Parent Helper and Volunteer Worker Agreement

All Parent helpers and Volunteers are expected to read and agree with the guidelines and expectations contain in the ***Tarneit P-9 College Parent Helper and Volunteer Worker Handbook***.

Please complete the relevant [Google Form](#) to accept and agree to the guidelines and expectations.

Tarneit P-9 College must have received the signed Parent Helper and Volunteer Worker Agreement google form and a copy of the **Working With Children Check**, prior to commencing any voluntary work within the College and classrooms.