School Policy

Parents, and Volunteers at Sylvania Heights Public School
INTRODUCTION

Parents naturally want the very best for their children.

What exactly is "the best" of course differs greatly from one parent 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 ; K- 6 Social Club and their 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 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 School 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.
Involvement and Participation

Involvement . . .

This refers to the contribution which parents make to the life and business of a school without necessarily being part of the decision-making process.

Many parents are already involved in their child's school in a variety of ways. Their involvement may range from assisting with special classes to working in the canteen or listening to children read. Parents can also be involved through consultation on particular issues by decision-makers.

Participation . . .

This refers to parents sharing in the making of decisions about school aims, policies and programs with staff and students. Participation may be through membership of the School Council, the P&C, K-6 Social Club and their many sub-committees, or in preparing submissions on issues of special interest.

The Department of School Education is committed both to increasing parents' involvement and to ensuring that parents can participate in school decision-making, if they wish to do so. The nature and level of each parent's involvement and participation remains a matter of individual choice.

Involvement and participation are equally valuable and parents should have the opportunity to choose how they are involved, or how they participate, from a wide range of options agreed upon by the school community.

Any involvement and participation must not conflict with the specific professional responsibilities for which Principals and teachers are accountable.

Values

This policy demonstrates our school’s commitment to ensuring quality education and administrative practices that reflect and reinforce our National, State and School values.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>NATIONAL</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Doing Your Best</td>
<td>Care</td>
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<td>Respect</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Trust</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Membership</td>
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<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Fair Go</td>
<td>Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Care and Compassion</td>
<td>Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Honesty and Trustworthiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
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PURPOSE

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 Training and Development 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

Agreed Principles

- All members of the community are expected to abide by the following Code of Conduct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents, Visitors and Volunteers Code of Conduct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All parents who enter onto any Public School premises do so in the knowledge that the school community and the Department of Education and Training expect them to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parent, Visitors and Volunteers are expected:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- to be outstanding role models for all students</td>
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<td>- to work under the professional direction of staff, following school policies</td>
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<td>- to speak in a kind and friendly way to all students</td>
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<td>- to keep confidentiality</td>
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<tr>
<td>- to report any issues of concern to teachers (and not directly intervene)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- to keep a safe and professional distance from all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>- to respect school procedures and routines</td>
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As Parents and Community members we expect

- our children to be respected
- our children to be safe and to feel secure
- our children to be protected from inappropriate behaviours and language

endorsed by the P&C  October 17, 2007
endorsed by the School Council  September 12, 2007
• Parents may observe a breach of school rules by a student. This should be reported quietly and confidentially to a staff member. There should be no physical or verbal contact with the child. Only in the case of imminent danger should an adult intervene.

• Volunteers should sign on in the classroom, the canteen or the office (as appropriate). Volunteers will be covered by insurance, through the P&C in these circumstances. Schools are required to monitor the access of visitors within the school grounds to ensure the safety of students.

• Volunteers must sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration prior to working in the school in any capacity.

• Parents should receive a copy of this policy on enrolment.

• This policy will also be posted on the School Internet site.

www.sylvaniaht-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

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.
• Children should be reminded of:
  - road rules,
  - parents’ expectations for moving to and from school, and
  - the responsibility of the RTA crossing supervisor.
• 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.
• Parents dropping or picking up children from the before and after school care unit may enter the grounds via Lisbon St up until 8am and not before 4.30pm.
• 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.
• 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 call the police to assist.

Canteen
• Canteen volunteers are rostered on to support our P&C run the canteen.
• The school has a healthy food 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.

Classrooms
Teachers rely heavily on parent volunteers to support many classroom programs. At all times parents, volunteers and Teachers Aides 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 by the P&C Volunteers insurance.

**Excursions**
Parents and volunteers may have an opportunity to assist with some excursions. This may be restricted by numbers and parents must be aware that their attendance is to support the teacher and the excursion program.

**Insurance**

1. There is no personal insurance cover provided by the NSW Department of Education and Training for students in relation to school sporting activities, physical education lessons or any other school activity.

   Parents and volunteers are advised to assess the level and extent of their child’s involvement in the sport program offered by the school, zone, area and state school sport associations when deciding whether additional insurance cover, above that provided by Medicare, is required.

   The NSW Supplementary Sporting Injuries Benefits Scheme, funded by the NSW Government, covers any injury resulting in the permanent loss of a prescribed faculty or the use of some prescribed part of the body.

2. Parent volunteers are insured through the P&C when they are working in a volunteer capacity and have signed on in the volunteer books.

**Family Law Issues**

If parents and volunteers have special requirements in this area (eg court orders, AVOs) they must discuss the issues with the Principal and provide a copy of all relevant documentation. The Principal will inform classroom teacher(s) on a need to know basis and will ensure that records are maintained to ensure compliance with any such orders.

**Notes**

- Absence notes must be supplied when the child returns to school. Notes go directly to the class teacher. (Stating absence dates, full name and reason for absence)
- Permission notes should be given directly to the class teacher as early as possible.
- Rolls and notes are legal documents. Notes must be carefully completed by parents and filed appropriately by staff.
- Special application must be made for the purpose of a holiday or work in the entertainment industry exceeding 5 days in a school year.

**Sport**

Children may participate in sporting excursions from time to time. Specific notes will need to be completed. Student participation / representation is based on appropriate behaviour, attendance and uniform compliance. (see school sport policy for more details)

**Use of private motor vehicles by parents and students for department activities**

If students are required to attend departmental activities away from the school site, parents may provide transport to and from the activity subject to the following conditions –

- at no time will a single child be allowed to travel with a parent; other than their own;
• written permission from the parent/caregiver(s) of the student being transported is obtained;
• the driver must be licensed;
• the motor vehicle must be registered;
• the number of passengers in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts or in the case of larger vehicles, the number of passengers that the vehicle may be licensed to carry;
• current driver's licence and car registration details must be sighted prior to giving permission for students to be transported in the vehicle. Comprehensive third party insurance is not required. Legal Issues Bulletin No 8.

**Communicating concerns**

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, or 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.

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<tr>
<th>CONCERN</th>
<th>APPROPRIATE ACTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>The academic progress of own child</td>
<td>• Contact the child’s teacher either by note, phone or in person to arrange a suitable time to discuss the child’s progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>The welfare of your own child</td>
<td>• For minor issues directly contact your child’s teacher to clarify information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 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</td>
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<td>• To convey information about change of address,</td>
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telephone number, emergency contact, custody details, health issues etc. Please contact the office

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions of other students</th>
<th>Contact the class teacher for a classroom problem</th>
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<td>Contact the stage supervisor or Principal for</td>
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<td>playground problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions of other parents</td>
<td>Contact the office and state concerns to the Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions of a staff member</td>
<td>Contact the office and state concerns to the Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Policy or practice</td>
<td>Contact the office and state concerns and make an appointment to see the Principal and/or appropriate member of staff.</td>
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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.

**Written Enquiries**
Written correspondence should clearly indicate the intended recipient. Correspondence addressed to the Principal will be acknowledged via a receipt returned to the correspondent. Correspondence sent to the school via email should be addressed to the Principal. Such correspondence should be sent to sylvania-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au. Emails will be printed and forwarded to the intended recipient. If you require a receipt for your email please activate this option in your program.

Teachers may choose to share their individual email address with parents but this is at the discretion of each individual. Anonymous correspondence will be discarded. Please be sure on all correspondence 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 50c per annum) may vote on decisions. The role of the P&C; School Council and K-6 Social Club is available from the Presidents of each organisation and through the Principal.

Parents wishing to raise matters with P&C; K-6 Social Club; or School Council 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.
Complaints /Suggestions/ Improvement
The DET has established a formal process for dealing with such matters in a formal way. The Principal can assist in this process. The forms are available at the school office and on the DET internet site.

EVALUATION
This policy reflects current practice. The policy will be reviewed in 2010. The policy may be amended should DET policy or legislation change.

RESOURCES
a. Child Protection Legislation
b. Working with Children Check
c. OH&S legislation, Risk management processes
d. Family Law
e. Legal Issues Bulletins
f. Crimes Act and Inclosed Lands Legislation
g. Anti-bully Plan (DET)
h. School Sport Policy
i. School Excursion Policy
j. School Welfare Policy
k. School Anti-Bullying policy
l. P&C Guidelines
m. School Council Constitution
n. School Values Statements
o. School Core Beliefs about Learning
p. School Medication Policy
q. School Supervision Policy

"Working together to make a good school better"