

MOONEE PONDS WEST

PRIMARY SCHOOL

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**PARENT  
REPRESENTATIVE  
HANDBOOK**

**2024**



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**We think, we create  
and learn together**

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## Introduction

Thank you for volunteering for the role as Parent Representative for your class. As a Parent Representative, you are a valued member of our school community, and your time and commitment are very much appreciated. The purpose of the Parent Representative is to help foster good communication in the school and to assist in the development of the school community. It provides another means of uniting the school community and enhances the quality of relationships within the school between teachers, parents, and the children. Each class from Foundation to Year 6 will have at least one Parent Representative.

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Moonee Ponds West Primary is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

## Moonee Ponds West Primary has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Moonee Ponds West Primary is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Moonee Ponds West Primary has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

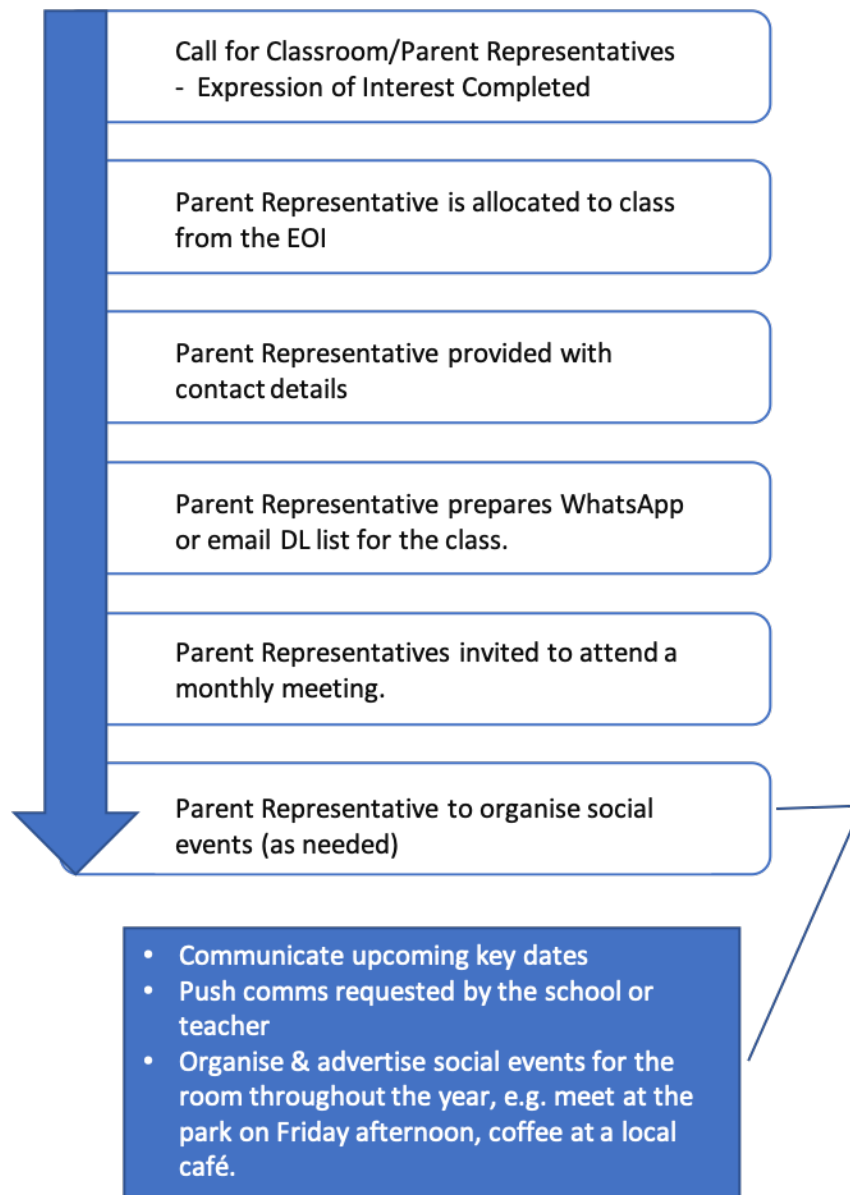
## Implementation - Principles for Child Safety

In its planning, decision-making and operations Moonee Ponds West Primary will

1. Take a preventative, initiative-taking and participatory approach to child safety.
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff, volunteer supervision and professional development.
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect, or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Please be familiar with our Child Safety and Volunteers Policies. Available on our website [Childsafe \(mooneewestps.vic.edu.au\)](http://Childsafe.mooneewestps.vic.edu.au)

## The Parent Rep Process at a Glance



## What do I need to provide for the school?

- A current **Working with Children's check** must be provided to the school.
- Participate in the **Child Safe Standards** online training provided by the school.
- A commitment to learning from and supporting within the MPWPS community.
- A photo that you are happy to have displayed.

## Protocols of the Classroom Parent Representative

Paramount to the role of the Classroom Parent Representative is the understanding of **confidentiality** of the parents and/or carers, the children, and the teachers within the school community. This role **requires mutual trust**, communication, and a willingness to promote a harmonious environment for all.

Primarily, the class teacher is responsible for the children in his/her care. The Classroom **Parent Representative** should direct all enquiries from parents to the class teacher or Principal. Parent Reps should direct any formal complaints/concerns to the school [Concerns and Complaints Policy](#). The **Classroom Parent Representative** is to support the class teacher and therefore adhere to the teacher's directions.

## Structure of the Parent Representative Team

A Parent Representative will volunteer for a particular class group for a calendar year. Normally there is one Parent Representative for each class group, but to share the load and/or provide back-up, there may be two Parent Representatives for each class group. Working in pairs can be less daunting, especially for new parents in the school community. The reps within a year level team will be able to come together for mutual support and consistency.

## Confidentiality

The Parent Representative should always be respectful of the privacy of others. Moonee Ponds West Primary School recognises and respects your privacy and is committed to protecting the privacy of all families. No family information will be disseminated unless the family gives permission. This will be obtained through an **OPT IN** process. The school will ask all families to share their contact details. The Parent Representative will form the WhatsApp group or Email distribution list.

The **Parent Representative** is responsible for the administration of the What's App group in line with the agreed **Communications Guidelines**. Please see appendices.

## Role of the class Parent Representative

The role provides a link between the **class** and **parents of that class** with a focus on the organisation and co-ordination of educational and social activities, and classroom assistance. The parent representative will also be connected to the other parent representatives in this year level for a team approach.

The role also establishes a line of communication between the parents and the school. Each class would have a nominated parent/parents who function as the class Parent Representative.

Parent Representatives guidelines:

- Organise and advertise social events for the room throughout the year, e.g. Meet at the park on Friday afternoon, coffee at a local café.
- Attend Parent Forum and Information nights regularly to stay up to date with school information and events.
- Support other families by being a contact person for your child's room, e.g. Point to appropriate process/policies.
- Assist the class teacher with activities – e.g., parents attending excursions, assisting in the classroom.
- Welcoming new parents to Moonee Ponds West in your class.
- Other tasks as discussed between yourself and your classroom teacher.
- Support the fundraising efforts of the school.
- Monitor and ensure the What's App group doesn't become a forum for inappropriate conversation, it is for news and information sharing.

## What the Parent Representative is NOT Responsible For

The Parent Representative is **not** involved in the parent/teacher relationship. If any parent/carer approaches a Parent Representative with any concerns regarding their child's education or experiences at school, the Parent Representative must advise the concerned parent/carer to go to the Complaints Flow chart and converse with the teacher firstly and then as the flow chart outlines. The Flow chart is in the Information Booklet. They are acting as a 'signpost' to get or give information.

## Parent Representative Meetings & Support

A meeting of the Parent Representatives across the school will be held once per month. This meeting will be chaired by the Parent Representative Co-Ordinator. These meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to the role and to share information about upcoming school events and class/year level activities. The role of the Parent Representative Co-Ordinator is to provide support and guidance to the Parent Representatives. The Parent Rep Co-Ordinator is Sandra Monaghan, please contact be at [sandra.monaghan@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:sandra.monaghan@education.vic.gov.au) throughout the year.

## Photocopying Facilities

If you require any photocopying of notices/flyers, please contact the school Office, or email your request to [moonee.ponds.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:moonee.ponds.west.ps@education.vic.gov.au)

## How to Begin the Year

Below are suggestions on how to begin the new school year:

- Introduce yourself to your class teacher.
- Once you have received the contact details for the families in your class, introduce yourself to your class families. You can do this by ways of the attached 'Parent Representative Introduction Letter' which is attached as an Appendix.
- Be available for the Basket Tea (Friday, February 23rd, 2024, which is the first community event on the school calendar)
- Organise a family activity for your class outside of school hours so all families can meet.
- Suggest to families the different ways in which they can volunteer time at the school

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### ***Where can I apply for a Working with Children Check, and how much does it cost?***

Applications for a Working with Children 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 classroom helper/volunteer?***

All visitors to Moonee Ponds West Primary are asked to sign in at the office. You will be given a Moonee Ponds West Primary identification label to wear. Please sign out again when you leave school.

### ***Can I bring my toddler/baby with me when I help in my child's class?***

We ask that classroom helpers/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 their learning without distractions.

### ***What is the usual time commitment for classroom helpers/volunteers in the classroom?***

Individual class teachers and parent helpers jointly organise the time and type of support that best suits both parties. Parent helpers who listen to students read usually come weekly for an hour, but this can vary depending on your availability and the class program. The school appreciates any assistance classroom helpers and volunteers can provide.

### ***I noticed that my friend's child is having a lot of trouble reading. Should I talk to my friend about this?***

As a classroom helper 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 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 their 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 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 cannot 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. Where possible a little notice will allow the best use of your time.

***I have noticed that children are on different reading levels. What do they mean? If 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 time to meet with your child's class teacher.



## School information

### School Directory

Principal	Jarrod Sutton
Assistant Principal	Elisha Katsonis
<b>Professional Learning Team Leaders:</b>	
F/1	Toula Fenech
2	Kim Simmons
3/4	Fiona McKenzie
5/6	Jess Greenbaum
<b>Learning Specialist</b>	Kim Simmons
<b>Specialists Leader</b>	Elisha Katsonis
<b>Intervention</b>	Dilek Yarici
<b>OH&amp;S</b>	Jarrod Sutton Principal
OH&S Principal (Nominee)	Sandra Monaghan
OH&S Staff Representative	TBC
First Aid and Health Officers	Xavia Bicheno I Sharyn Reinke
<b>Administration:</b>	
Business Operations Manager	Sandra Monaghan
Administration Officers	Sharyn Reinke I Xavia Bicheno
Library Technician	Michele Birch
Library Assistant	Jennifer Kidd
Maintenance Officer	Brian Lees
IT Technical (TSSP)	Ryan Thompson

## Appendix 1



### PARENT REPRESENTATIVE INTRODUCTION LETTER

Date

Dear Room x Parents/Carers

I wish to introduce myself and extend a warm welcome to you and your family.

As the parent Representative for your child's class, I help to foster communication within the school, and to assist with the development of the school community. This is another means of uniting the school community and enhancing the quality of relationships within the school between teachers, parents/carers, and the children.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to help in the classroom or if you require information on how you can be involved as a parent/carer at Moonee Ponds West Primary School. I look forward to meeting you at our first social function.

Yours Sincerely

Parent Representative – Room x

Phone:

Email:

## Appendix 2

# Moonee Ponds West Primary School



## Parent Representative Group Communication Protocols

### Purpose

These protocols have been developed to ensure that the contact information provided to Parent Representatives at Moonee Ponds West Primary is used to facilitate inclusive, respectful, and appropriate communication across your classrooms and year-levels. The use of this information is to be used in conjunction with privacy guidelines.

### Communication tool

Parent representatives are encouraged to primarily use email to communicate with their classrooms, ensuring privacy guidelines are followed. WhatsApp is also a popular choice for instant messaging communication. Parents are required to provide their consent to use communication tools, both email and WhatsApp.

Parent Representatives are reminded that if parents do not consent to the use of platforms other than direct email, that they are not excluded from communications.

### The primary purpose is to facilitate communication for:

- classroom and school activity reminders
- any communication support requested by the teacher
- organisational and support requests for class events
- supporting communication across the classroom and/or year-level team, in conjunction with the other parent reps in your year-level team
- organising social activities e.g., play dates and parent social opportunities.

### This information is not to be used to facilitate communication for:

- complaints regarding students or the school
- a forum for discussion regarding individual students, incidents, or school-related issues.

### If the communication tool is being misused, please:

- remind parents of the purpose of the communication group
- delete inappropriate messages from group (with a reminder about appropriate use)

- change settings in the group to stop others in group from sending or contributing to inappropriate comments or messaging, so that action can be taken
- redirect questions or discussion points raised to the school rather than the communication group
- direct parent concerns or complaints to the [Parent Complaints Policy](#) and processes
- report misuse to the school via the Parent Representative Group Co-ordinator, Sandra Monaghan @ [sandra.monaghan@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:sandra.monaghan@education.vic.gov.au), or the Principal, Jarrod Sutton @ [jarrod.sutton@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:jarrod.sutton@education.vic.gov.au).

**Ongoing misuse of the communication tool may result in the disbandment of the WhatsApp group.**