



Penshurst Public School

Arcadia Street, Penshurst NSW 2222

Ph: 02 9580 3400

Email: Penshurst-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

School Policy: Parents/Carers and Volunteers at Penshurst Public School

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions will apply:

Definitions

<i>Parent/Carer:</i>	A guardian or other person who has a legally recognised custody or care of a child.
<i>Volunteer:</i>	An approved person who works at Penshurst Public School without being paid. Volunteers must also be aware of the Department's Code of Conduct.
<i>Child/ren:</i>	A minor or minors, under the age of 18, under the care and custody of a legally recognised guardian or parent. In the context of this policy, the child is also a student at Penshurst Public School.
<i>Teacher:</i>	An employee of the NSW Department of Education, Penshurst Public School and the Teaching Service as recognised under the Teaching Service Act 1980.
<i>School:</i>	A government school established under the Education Act. In the context of this policy, the school shall refer to Penshurst Public School.
<i>Conflict of Interest</i>	Situations where conflict arises between public duty and private interest. Refers to circumstances where a member of the school community could be influenced or could reasonably be perceived to be influenced by private interests when performing an official function.
<i>Social media</i>	Refers to a range of online platforms and applications – such as social networking sites, wikis, blogs, microblogs, video and audio sharing sites, and message boards – that allow people to easily publish, share and discuss content.

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. Penshurst Public School has a long and proud tradition of positive relationships with parents through formal partnerships, symbolised through the established bodies such as the P&C. 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 NSW 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/carers and volunteers 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.

Behaviour code for parents/carers and volunteers of Penshurst 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.

Penshurst Public School has an outstanding level of parental support in classrooms and across the school. 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 and volunteers 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, including at excursions. All parents/carers/volunteers/visitors **MUST** present to the school office **FIRST** prior to proceeding any further in the school.

- 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/procedures
- Not be violent or bring weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco into our schools
- Vacate the school playground/premises by 3:10pm 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 school
- Not exercise authority over Penshurst Public School staff or any matter relating to the control or management of the school.

Parents and 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/carers should ensure that children arrive at school safely from 8:30am onwards, which is when direct supervision commences. No student should be on school grounds before 8:30am unless attending a teacher supervised activity
- No parents/carers /volunteers 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/carers and volunteers must not enter staff parking areas without explicit permission from the principal
- If children arrive late or leave early parents/carers 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, 3.00pm. 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 3:15pm
- 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.

School Volunteers

Teachers rely on parent volunteers to support many classroom and school programs, including excursions. All parents/caregivers and volunteers seeking to support these programs and events must comply with Working with Children Check legislation and student safety policies. While the Department has a duty of care owed to students, teachers retain ultimate responsibility for supervision and as such,

parents/carers and volunteers work under the direct instruction and supervision of the teachers for the duration of the excursion, including overnight.

If your child has specialised/high support needs during overnight excursions, and you are attending the overnight excursion to support the needs of your child, you will be required to cohabit/stay with your child in separate onsite accommodation during sleeping and overnight arrangements. This will assist the school in supporting the needs of your child during these excursions.

As such, the school will also subsidise the cost of you attending these excursions. At present, this subsidy amounts to 50% of parent/caregiver costs. This has been the consistent expectation and practice of the school over the past years.

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

As part of Work, Health and Safety (WH&S) procedures, all volunteers including parents and caregivers are required to sign on and off in the sign-on book in the school front office before proceeding any further on school grounds. All visitors are required to wear a visitor sticker on their chest while on school premises. To minimise disruption to student teaching and learning, deliveries or messages for your child/ren can be left at the school office for us to pass on.

Social Media and Online Activity

As the school must seek parental consent when publicly publishing any identifying information such as full name or image of a student, the school asks all parents/carers/volunteers to NOT publish any images of other children on their personal social media platforms, especially with respect to school organised functions and events, without seeking authorisation from the school. This is to ensure that the safety of all our students is maintained.

Parents/carers/volunteers can only post images of their own children without authorisation.

Should the school ever engage social media to facilitate communication and learning, then the rules of engagement are mandatory to support acceptable behaviour for all participants. Users are governed by specific terms of use set out by each online channel. These include but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Additionally, the school will also require compliance with our own rules of engagement in line with the NSW Department of Education's policy and procedures. Should comments be permitted, we ask that comments on the page are respectful and civil. Personal attacks, trolling or spam will not be tolerated.

The school reserves the right to remove comments that do not adhere to the rules of engagement and school community standards including comments that:

- are deemed racist, sexist, abusive, profane, violent, obscene, spam
- advocate illegal activity
- are wildly off-topic
- libel, incite, threaten or make personal character attacks on students, staff, guests or other individuals at Penshurst Public School
- sell products or promote commercial, political or other ventures.

The school also reserves the right to remove any participant that does not adhere to the social media rules of engagement at Penshurst Public School.

Conflict of Interest

If your participation and involvement in school programs or events leads to a perceived or real conflict of interest, the matter should then become the responsibility of teachers **and** members of the executive to remediate. Teachers and school executive should recognise and acknowledge any events, programs or selections that may actually generate a potential conflict of interest, either perceived or real. Once a conflict of interest is apparent, a school executive should be invited to preside.

Parent/Caregiver and Volunteers' Children

Some basic guidelines for parent/caregiver and volunteers' children at school:

- Should be on the playground and follow the same rules as **ALL** students. This includes, but not limited to, access to staff areas, access to canteen facilities, functions including receiving treats from school organised morning teas/lunches
- Should not be in classrooms where it is not a privilege extended to all students
- Should not have special access to school facilities or equipment
- At first point of call, should seek medical assistance from the school office/sick bay
- Should not have access to school/staff documents/material/resources without authorisation from a teacher that is not their parent.

Complaint Handling Procedures

Penshurst 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
- 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 make a query or complaint concerning matters which have 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 concerns are 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 implemented 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 a calm 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.

Issues/concerns and compliments can also be sent to the school email address

Penshurst-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:

Penshurst-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 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, e.g. 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 operates under the NSW Department of Education's "Medications at School" policy.

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 \$2 per annum) may vote on decisions. The role of the P&C is available from the President and through the Principal. Parents wishing to raise matters with the P&C can contact members of the P&C executive either in person or via email.

Supporting Documentation

This policy is to be read in conjunction with correspondence that have previously been sent home: the *NSW Department of Education School Community Charter, A Place for Respectful Learning* (dated: 18/02/2019); *Inclosed Lands Act* (dated: 06/09/2018); and *Penshurst Public School and the Hurstville Aquatic Centre Expectation Guidelines* (while Penshurst PS is temporarily relocated to the shared site at Peakhurst West Public School).

Mr J. Lie

Principal

Appendix: Supporting Documentation



Penshurst Public School

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Inclosed Lands Act

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

As principal of Penshurst Public School I want to make sure that the school environment remains a safe, happy and productive learning environment. We understand that, at times, issues may arise between our students. As a matter of child protection, we ask that all school issues, especially those between students at the school, be referred back to the school for us to resolve. Parents and caregivers are **NOT** to approach another student or parent/caregiver to address matters of student conflict.

As a reminder to all our parents, caregivers and members of the school community, the school is an inclosed land and as such falls under the provisions of the Inclosed Lands Protection Act.

Primarily, this Act ensures that staff, students, parents and other visitors are safe and secure while on school premises.

This Act can be invoked if:

- Actual physical assaults or threatened physical assaults on students, staff, parents or community members at the school or during the course of school activities
- Inappropriate behaviour in the presence of students, staff, parents or other visitors that is so serious that it warrants action being taken immediately
- Behaving in a manner in the presence of students, staff, parents or other visitors to the school that could reasonably be expected to cause alarm or concern
- Use of offensive language in the presence of students
- Use of abusive, threatening or offensive phone calls, text messages, websites or emails to or about staff, or directed towards staff or the school
- People persistently interrupt the learning environment of the school by entering classrooms without permission
- People persistently enter onto the school site without permission or legitimate reason

When this Act is invoked, you will **NOT** be permitted to enter school grounds for any reason.

Your cooperation in this area will ensure that the school remains a safe and happy learning environment for everyone.

Mr J. Lie
Principal
06/09/2018



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A Place for Respectful Learning

Dear Parents and Carers,

The NSW Department of Education has introduced a School Community Charter for all members of NSW Public School communities. It has been developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

The School Community Charter outlines the responsibilities of parents, carers, educators and school staff in NSW public schools to ensure our learning environments are collaborative, supportive and cohesive.

The School Community Charter was produced to support a respectful environment in our schools. It outlines a framework for positive interactions and provides parents with guidance in engaging as partners in their children's learning. It also highlights unacceptable behaviour that has no place in our school communities.

NSW Public Schools work to create positive environments for students, staff and the entire school community that support student learning. We strive to ensure that every student is known, valued and cared for.

The best education happens when students, parents and schools work together. The School Community Charter aligns with the department's [Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022](#).

We all play a part

Parents and carers play an important role in the school community. The School Community Charter informs parents and carers on how to engage with NSW Public Schools. Read the School Community Charter to ensure you understand how important it is to create a positive learning environment for our students.

Parents and carers can expect:

- to be welcomed into our schools to work in partnership to promote student learning
- communication from teaching staff will be timely, polite, informative and solutions focussed
- professional relationships with school staff will be based on transparency, honesty and mutual respect
- to be treated fairly. Tolerance and understanding are promoted as we respect diversity.

Communicating with our schools

Our staff will find a time to talk to you when they can give you their full attention. Please remember that while our staff are in class or dealing with other matters, they may not be available to answer your questions immediately.

Our schools and communities will try to make sure that written communication is appropriate, fair and easy to read. We encourage you to use email and social media appropriately to connect with your school and stay up-to-date with events in the school community.

Respectful communication is a right

In all workplaces people have the right to feel respected. Unacceptable and offensive behaviour has no place in our school communities.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, staff and the community in our schools, steps will be taken to address unacceptable behaviour. This may include restricting contact with the school community or, in more serious cases, referral to NSW Police.

Unacceptable behaviour in our schools

Unacceptable behaviour may include but is not limited to:

- Aggressive or intimidating actions, such as violence, threatening gestures or physical proximity.
- Aggressive or intimidating language, including the use of obscenities, making sexist, racist or derogatory comments or using a rude tone.
- Treating members of the school community differently due to aspects such as their religion or disability.
- Inappropriate and time wasting communication.

I have attached the School Community Charter for your reference. Please read this in line with information that was detailed in the last newsletter about the Inclosed Lands Act. Please note: As a matter of child protection, we ask that all school issues, especially those between students at the school, be referred back to the school for us to resolve. Parents and caregivers are **NOT** to approach another student or parent/caregiver to address matters of student conflict.

Your cooperation on this matter will ensure that the school remains a respectful, successful and supportive learning environment for our students.

Mr J. Lie
Principal
18/02/2019

School Community Charter

 **Collaborative. Respectful. Communication.**

The following School Community Charter outlines the responsibilities of parents, carers, educators and school staff in NSW public schools to ensure our learning environments are collaborative, supportive and cohesive.

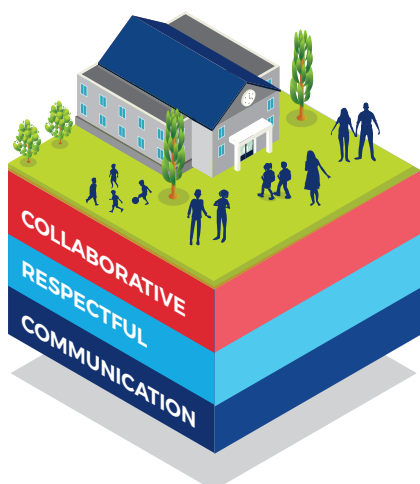
We treat each other with respect

What our schools provide

NSW public schools work to create positive environments for students, staff and the entire school community that support student learning. We strive to ensure that every student is known, valued and cared for.

The best education happens when parents and schools work together.

The School Community Charter aligns with the NSW Department of Education Strategic Plan 2018 – 2022.



Positive environments

It is important that our NSW public schools are positive environments and that parents and carers are kept informed of students' progress and school announcements.

Parents and carers can expect:

- to be welcomed into our schools to work in partnership to promote student learning.
- communication from school staff will be timely, polite and informative.
- professional relationships with school staff are based on transparency, honesty and mutual respect.
- to be treated fairly. Tolerance and understanding are promoted as we respect diversity.

We prioritise the wellbeing of all students and staff

Unsafe behaviour is not acceptable in our schools

We work together with the school

Ensuring respectful learning environments for all members of NSW Public Schools communities.



We create **collaborative** learning environments

We all play **a part**

We work **in partnership** to promote student learning

Communicating with our schools

Our staff will find a time to talk to you when they can give you their full attention. Please remember that while our staff are in class or dealing with other matters, they may not be available to answer your questions immediately.

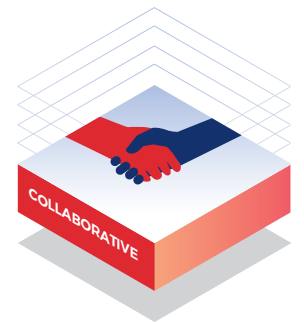
Our schools and communities will make sure that written communication is appropriate, fair and easy to read. We encourage you to use email and social media appropriately to connect with your school and stay up-to-date with up-coming events in the school community.

Our guide for parents, carers and students provides useful information about the complaints process: education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions/guide-for-parents-carers-and-students

Respectful communication is a right

In all workplaces people have the right to feel respected. Unacceptable and offensive behaviour has no place in our school communities.

To ensure the wellbeing of students, staff and the community in our schools, steps will be taken to address unacceptable behaviour. This may include restricting contact with the school community or, in more serious cases, referral to NSW Police.



Unacceptable behaviour may include but is not limited to:

- Aggressive or intimidating actions, such as violence, threatening gestures or physical proximity.
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- Treating members of the school community differently due to aspects such as their religion or disability.
- Inappropriate and time wasting communication.



Collaborative.
Respectful.
Communication.

School Community Charter

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