



SCHOOL COORDINATORS HANDBOOK

October 2024



It Takes a Village to Raise a Child

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Welcome SVPACT Volunteers

Volunteer mentors can provide enrichment opportunities that enhance the education experience for students, while supporting teachers and staff.

The School Volunteer Program ACT (SVPACT) Incorporated gives students that one to one experience that teachers cannot always provide.

With your guidance, volunteer mentors will support what the students are learning in the classroom.

SVPACT mentors help their students in many ways including assisting in reading, general literacy, and numeracy, Meccano building, craft and working with students in gifted and talented programs.

This handbook will help you gain maximum benefit from your SVPACT mentors. It provides you with an overview of SVPACT, and the variety of activities that you may wish the mentors to pursue with their students.

Thank you for taking on this important role in this worthwhile and rewarding program. Volunteers can, and do make a significant contribution to the education program, but it is vital that they feel valued and included as part of your school community.

Your role is pivotal to the success of the program.

The President
SVPACT Inc
October 2024

Our Purpose

To connect volunteers who want to make a difference, with young people who would benefit from having an adult mentor. To harness the wisdom and skills of mature adults to enrich the learning experiences of students.

Our Vision

Our community helping young people to succeed.

Our Mission

To prepare and connect volunteers with students who have been identified by their school, as likely to benefit from a mature role model.

Mentor Qualifications and Skills

No formal qualifications are required to be a volunteer with SVPACT. However, three key skills are required to be a successful mentor:

Patience – it is important to be prepared to progress slowly and steadily, and be able to cope with possible lapses of student progress. We all learn at different rates but often students who are involved in our program may be slower at grasping new ideas and concepts.

Empathy – having an unbiased, friendly outlook towards young people is vital. Mentors need to accept that children are sometimes embarrassed, tentative or can be overly assertive – like adults.

Life Experience – mentors who can share their life experiences, challenges and skills with students, impart their wisdom and be a mature role model, are best suited to the School Volunteer Program.

Who to Contact

The SVPACT Management Committee aims to support its volunteers according to best management practices. They are available to answer your queries and to support you in your mentoring role. Link to [SVPACT Website](#)

Secretary

Melissa Sykes

Mobile: 0432842550 Email: svpact2018@gmail.com

Mentor Coordinators

North Canberra– Nola Shoring Mobile: 0434 537 555 Email: shoringnola@gmail.com

South Canberra – Monica Pflaum Mobile: 0414 510 556 Email: monpflaum@gmail.com

Meccano Mentors – Bob Greeney Mobile: 0407 737 131 Email: greeneyb@iimetro.com.au

School Coordinators' Role and Responsibilities

School Coordinators must have a clear understanding of the purpose and scope of the School Volunteer Program. They are the essential link between the volunteer and the student(s).

Mentors operate under the direction of school staff at all times. All our volunteers sign the Directorate's Code of Conduct form and functions within ACT Education Directorate's Child Protection and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy. [Please Click](#)

The key criteria for whether we can place volunteers in a school depends on the availability of volunteers in your local area and also whether the school has identified the School Coordinator. It takes time to liaise between the Classroom teacher, the students, the parents and the volunteers so a School Coordinator needs to have some free time in their timetable to accommodate this.

The School Coordinator and first point of contact will need to

1. Liaise with teachers to identify a student(s) who would benefit from mentoring and brief the Mentor about the student(s) and the areas in which they need support and liaise with the Mentor to enable an effective match to a student.
2. Communicate regularly with the SVPACT Mentor to confirm that the mentoring relationship with the child is progressing effectively and respectfully.
3. Communicate with parents about their child participating in the program, prior to commencement.
4. Ensure that the Mentor feels welcome and valued. The strategies below are very important.
 - Introduce them to the key people in your school – the Principal, the Front Office staff and teachers.
 - Make sure that they know where they can park, where the toilets are and what they should do in the case of an emergency.
 - Show them where you can be found and where they can make themselves a cup of tea. Explain how the timetable works and when the classroom breaks occur.
 - Coordinate with Front office in school sign-in/out procedures.
 - Give the Mentor school evacuation procedures and safety rules and relevant school policies and procedures.
 - Discuss school expectations of the Mentor and a communication strategy for providing feedback to the coordinator, teacher and child.
 - Add the Mentor to the distribution list for the school e-newsletter how to access the newsletter.
 - Discuss contact procedures with the for unexpected absences or changes in timetable affecting the School Volunteer Coordinator the Classroom Teacher or the student.

5. Work with the Mentor and teacher to find a quiet, pleasant location to work together, eg the library, a common area or another quiet space. Ideally the area will be in line of sight of a member of staff.
6. Consult with the Teacher to identify tasks to be undertaken during the mentoring sessions and where the necessary resources can be found. Ensure that the tasks are appropriate to the time available. For the first few weeks, the Mentor will want to spend time getting to know the student and developing rapport possibly using games and other activities.

General Information

Mentor Training SVPACT conducts training events to prepare volunteers for their roles in schools. Opportunities are also provided to support volunteers who are working with students to improve their literacy and/or numeracy. Volunteers receive **no** special training to prepare them to work with children with learning difficulties or behavioural challenges.

Materials It is expected that schools will provide all materials that will be required for mentoring sessions. There is no expectation that our volunteers will need to provide any materials for their sessions.

Time With Students Mentors usually spend up to one hour per week with the student. However, some volunteers are keen to do more. They often work one on one with students, but in some cases small group mentoring may be preferred.

Memorandum of Understanding A document has been created to clarify the partnership between the School Volunteer Program of the ACT Inc and the ACT Education Directorate. A copy of the document is available on request.

Insurance SVPACT Inc has public liability and volunteer insurance in place for approved SVPACT volunteers and approved volunteering activities.

Staff Development

SVPACT Members would be happy to come and have a chat with your staff team and encourage it as part of our engagement process with your school. Normally this can be at a staff or a team meeting.

From experience, where school staff are clear about our programs and services, our volunteers integrate quickly into school, and themselves feel supported and valued which helps providing positive outcomes for your students.

SVPACT Code of Conduct

All out Mentors have signed our SVPACT Code of Conduct as part of their Initial Training Seminar .

As a volunteer with SVPACT Inc I will:

1. Know and understand all my responsibilities in my role working with students.
2. Always represent SVPACT with professionalism, dignity, pride and courtesy.
3. Treat all people respectfully, with honesty and integrity and not influence students on matters of a religious, political or personal nature.
4. Be alert and focussed when undertaking my volunteer role and not be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or prescribed medication that affect my perception or mobility.
5. Advise SVPACT if I experience significant changes in my physical or mental wellbeing that may adversely affect my volunteering role.
6. Respect the privacy of students and staff and hold in confidence any private and personal information I may come across during my role as an SVPACT volunteer.
7. Always be circumspect and professional and refrain from making and sharing judgements about the school in which I am volunteering.
8. During each school visit at my allocated school, sign in and out, wear my SVPACT name badge and carry my Working with Vulnerable People Card.
9. Undertake my volunteer role with my allocated student(s) in a public area of the school such as a corridor, staff room or library, within eyesight of at least one member of staff.
10. Never email or engage with my allocated student(s) via telephone, text messaging, and social networking and other technologies such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter.
11. Never transport students as part of my SVPACT role.
12. Never photograph students without written permission of the school and the student's parent/guardian.
13. Accept that all SVPACT volunteering activities are school based, during regular school hours and occur within the confines of the school premises.
14. Agree that I will not continue, in any way, the in-school relationship I have developed with my student(s) outside the school premises, out of school hours or attend the student's home.
15. Consult with the School Coordinator if I have any concerns about my volunteering role or the tasks allocated. If unable to resolve the matter at the school level, I will contact the SVPACT Mentor Coordinator for advice and assistance.

We appreciate that teachers lead very busy lives and that they have many demands on their time. We thank you for taking on the role of School Coordinator and for making our volunteers feel welcome and appreciated. Your support for our volunteers is vital to the success of our program. Thank you for your support.

Thank You !

