



SOPHIA
MUNDI

Steiner Education and IB World School



Class Carer Handbook

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*Class Carers strengthen the foundation of the school community as a whole,
by nurturing the relationships within the Class and the wider school community.*

Introduction

Class Carers play a very important role for the class and within our School community. They assist, organise, liaise, support, communicate and inform the members of our respective Class communities, as well as the broader School community.

These voluntary positions offer parents a wonderful opportunity to feel closer to the Class Teacher/Guardians and the School community as a whole. It is hoped that all parents will participate as a Class Carer/ Guardian for at least one year during their children's journey through the School.

It is intended that this documentation, which has been borne out of many meetings and discussions and comes from a wealth of experience of many who have come before us, will provide some clarity to the role. Your assistance in keeping this information current and updated is sought, so that what we learn can be passed on to those who follow behind us. Please see the Documentation section for further details.

Child Safe Policies and Procedures

Sophia Mundi is a Child Safe School. We strive to support a consciously created community in which children, parents, teachers and support staff all benefit in their personal journeys as a result of engaging with our unique School. Sophia Mundi works with parents to provide every possible assistance and support for the wellbeing of all students in our care. The Australian Government's National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) is an important guide for Schools in this matter. For more information on the NSSF: www.education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework.

Sophia Mundi has Student Wellbeing and Behaviour Management procedures and protocols which aim to foster and guide positive relationships within our School community. These documents outline expectations and responsibilities that promote mutual care, acceptance, courtesy and respect. These documents can be found on our School webpage. We also have policies and strategies for preventing and/or responding to bullying behaviours and serious offences. These policies and strategies are evidence based experience and research and comply with Government requirements. We have a team of teachers who work alongside Class Teachers and Guardians to support them in implementing the Welfare and Child Safe Standards.

Our School community has access to a wide range of student wellbeing support in areas which include:

- Anti-bullying education
- Behaviour management
- Child protection
- Drug education
- Personal development
- Resilience and mental health
- Respectful relationships
- Safety
- Student health services
- Sun protection

Class Carer Roles and Responsibilities

- **Class List** – Ensure all parents have copies of the Class List with emails addresses and contact details of the consenting parents.
- **Class Communications** – prepare and distribute regular emails in conjunction/consultation with your Class Teacher/Guardian; include items such as important dates, scheduled events news, reminders and class rosters.
- **Class Meetings** – Ask the Class Teacher/Guardian to set aside some time at each class meeting for Class Carers to remind parents about fort coming events, rosters etc. If parents have any suggestions regarding topics they would like to see discussed at the class meeting, pass these suggestions to the Class Teacher/Guardian. Ensure that either a Class Carer or another parent takes minutes at the meeting. The minutes need to be distributed to the all parents and the Class Teacher (to record in the School system).
- **Liaison** – Class Carers act to strengthen the relationships both within the Class and with the wider School community. As such, parents will often speak to Class Carers when they have questions, issues or concerns. In many cases, you will be able to easily respond to their questions. If you do not know the answer to a parent's question, it may be a simple matter to find out this information and get back to them. If a parent has serious issue or concern, you should direct them to the appropriate person or persons at the School (Such as Class Teacher/ Head of Primary/ Principal). It is essential that any discussions of this nature are kept confidential.
- **Contibuted Services Levy** – Class Carers may also wish to notify the Business Manager of their role and request the Contibuted Services Levy be credited to their account. Email: john.bradshaw@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au

Working with Children Check

The Victorian Working with Children Check (WWCC) helps to keep children safe by preventing those who pose a risk to the safety of children from working with them, in either paid or volunteer work. **To ensure that all employees, contractors, volunteers, parents and Class Carers at Sophia Mundi are compliant with the Working With Children Act guidelines, the School requires all parents undertaking any volunteer roles within the School to have a current WWCC.** Volunteer roles may include camps, canteen, walks, excursions, etc. Volunteer WWCC are free of charge and avaiable from: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/

Coordination and Organisation

Ask your Class Teacher/Guardian which activities/tasks they would like to have parental assistance for and organise rosters for these activities/tasks. Some of the common activities/tasks are as follows:

- Walks/ excursions/ camps – accompanying the children on walks, excursions and sometimes camps (this will depend on the class).
- Classroom activities – assisting with activities in the classroom such as craft, cooking and reading.
- Participation in School working bees

You will also need to coordinate the parents efforts in relation to scheduled events/responsibilities allocated to your Class (e.g. Festivals, Open Day & Spring Fair, etc.)

Caring for the Class Community

- **New Families** – It is important that new families are welcomed and provided with a support/contact family. You could ask your Class Teacher/Guardian to suggest a family that may be compatible or ask a family that lives in the same locality as the new family to be the support/contact family (they may be able to assist with travel routes or car-pooling). Provide the new family with a Class List and any other documentation that may help them settle in to the School. You may also like to welcome the new parents with a morning tea or drinks evening which can be, but does not need to be, a large gathering.
- **Departing Families** – It is also important to farewell families that are leaving the School. The Class Teacher/Guardian will arrange for the children to farewell the departing child in Class and you may wish to also have a small function to farewell the parents.
- **Social Functions** – Class Carers are suggested to organise some social functions for the Class during the School year, or ask for a volunteer from your parents to organise a social function. Suggestions include: Alternate family events such as picnics/ plays in the park/ camps and perhaps a parent only functions such as a Class Dinner. When organising your Class events, ensure that the proposed dates do not clash with the events on the School Calendar (located on the School webpage) and also consider parent commitments for those with children in other classes.
- **Supporting Families** – There will be times when families are in need of extra support (such as the arrival of a new baby or an illness or bereavement in the family). You may need to discuss with the family in question what help would be most appreciated and appropriate, however, organising a roster for meals or helpers or arranging for children to be dropped off/picked up from School can often be a good place to start.
- **Supporting Class Teachers/Guardians** – Class Teachers/Guardians make an incredible commitment to the families in their Class and we should be conscious that they also have an equally important commitment to their own families. We are on a long journey together and there may be times during this journey that your Class Teacher/Guardian is in need of some extra consideration and care. Work together to recognise these times and support your Class Teacher/Guardian and their family in the same way that you would support another family in need.
- **Class Teacher/Guardian Birthday** – Have someone provide a cake for the Class to share and liaise with the Class Teacher/Guardian to help make this a special day of celebration for them and the children.

Documentation

The **Class Carers Handbook** is still a work in progress and it's important that it remain current and relevant. Class Carers are requested to document their experiences when organising and coordinating events so that additional information and suggested improvements can be incorporated into future versions of the Class Carer Handbook. **Please document everything - your experiences are invaluable.**

- Where information has been provided, please note any changes or additional information at the time of an event.
- If there is no information provided, please write up information about the event as soon as possible afterwards (while it is still fresh in your mind).

Details to include:

- *Background* – what the event is for, when and where it is held.
- *Requirements* – number of people required, what and how much was used, where to get things from.
- *Additional information* – stories, songs, recipes, craft ideas.
- *Suggestions* – what worked well, what needed to be done differently and how to avoid problems for next time.
- All information and suggested amendments/improvements should be passed to the School Office.

Open Day & Spring Fair

Classes will be allocated responsibilities for the Open Day & Spring Fair by the Open Day committee.

The Open Day Committee is made up of parent volunteers from within the School community and may also include one or two staff members in the capacity of School representatives/liasons. The Open Day & Spring Fair is the largest single fundraising event on the School calendar and Class Carers are urged to encourage maximum participation from their class communities.

Fundraising

All funds raised through the School, whether through Class, whole or part School events are managed by the School administration and allocated to projects through discussion with the Principal, Business Manager, the College of Teachers and the Class Carers. Classes wishing to undertake class-targeted fundraising should raise the issue for discussion with the Class Teacher and Head of School.

Please note: Classes do not have individual bank accounts. All fundraising monies are deposited or withdrawn through the School account.



Tips and Planning Suggestions

- **It is recommended that Class Carers have a planning meeting with their Class Teacher/Guardian prior to the commencement of the School year.** Decide which of the Class Carers will act as the nominated representative and coordinate the efforts of the Class Carers and decide which areas will be the focus for each Class Carer during the year. Ensure you ask your Class Teacher/Guardian about their availability during School hours and after hours to give parents clear guidelines on the best times to contact the Class Teacher/Guardian (and when not to contact the Class Teacher/Guardian).
- As soon as possible after this meeting, send a Class Notice/ Class Newsletter outlining the commitments and responsibilities for the year as well as any introducing any new families and detailing events (such as Class Meetings and Festivals) and roster responsibilities for Term 1.
- Provide parents with a Class List (from the School Office) and provide updated Class Lists throughout the year as needed. **Also ensure parents notify the School Office of any changes to their contact details.**
- For the entry point of Prep you might consider starting the year with a welcome morning tea or similar function. Ensure you meet and get to know all the families in your Class, as they may be able to/wish to contribute their skills and ideas to the Class or wider School community. For those returning classes, sometimes a picnic or play in the park prior to the commencement of the School year can work well.
- Once the Class' Weekly Programme has been finalised (generally a couple of weeks into Term 1) provide copies to parents (if your Class Teacher/Guardian is happy for you to do so). This helps parents to have a picture of what their child is doing each day during the School week and also helps parents to ensure their child is properly prepared for each days activities (such as wearing the appropriate clothing for activities such as walks/ sport/ gardening/ design & technology/ science, etc).

- **Prior to the commencement of each Term:**

In liaison with the Class Teacher, aim to distribute a Class Notice/Newsletter including important dates/events, news, reminders and rosters. This allows parents to put important dates and rostered duties into their diaries/calendars in advance and be prepared for the coming Term.

- **Prior to the commencement of each Term:**

Aim to organise a classroom working bee prior to the commencement of the Term in order to ensure that the Class Teacher/Guardian and the children return to a clean, tidy and welcoming classroom environment.

- For your Class' allocated events/responsibilities ensure you coordinate with the Class Carers of the other Classes involved (if applicable). Aim to have rosters for these scheduled events (such as the annual Open Day & Spring Fair) completed at least 1-2 weeks prior to the event. Let parents know that each family is expected to contribute in some way, rather than only relying on those parents who you know will contribute. Also note that some events, which occur at the beginning of the School year, will require organisation at the end of the preceding year (e.g New Parents' Morning Tea).

- Don't feel that the Class Carers have to do it all, your role is to coordinate the efforts of the families in your Class. Ensure you request assistance if needed and don't be afraid to delegate. Be mindful of your families' individual strengths and weaknesses and remember that if you give families plenty of notice, there is a better possibility that they will be able to provide the assistance requested.

- The **School Newsletter** is also an effective means of reinforcing communication with parents. School Newsletter contributions must be received at the School Office by Wednesday for a fortnightly publication on a Friday.

Email: reception@sophiamundi.vic.edu.au





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