



## GUIDELINES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

1. The Neighbourhood Rep program is coordinated by the Community Engagement and Fundraising Sub- Committee of School Council. The program involves assigning 2-4 parents/carers for each Learning Neighbourhood to the role of Neighbourhood representative. Their role is to facilitate communication amongst families and teachers in the neighbourhood.
2. Objectives  
It is well known that students benefit from the involvement of their parents in their education which may include involvement in the classroom and the wider school community. The main objectives of the Neighbourhood Rep Program are:
  - a) To encourage and coordinate parent involvement in the educational and social activities of their child's neighbourhood in collaboration with the neighbourhood teachers;
  - b) To act as a liaison between teachers and parents and assist in obtaining parent support for particular activities, e.g. excursions, swimming program, special events and neighbourhood programs;
  - c) To assist in the organisation of the annual Bazaar.
3. Neighbourhood rep tasks can include:
  - a) Organising a neighbourhood event early in the year for families to get to know each other- for example a picnic or an event at an indoor venue
  - b) Preparing and distributing a neighbourhood contact list for contacting parents when needed
  - c) Arranging parent volunteers to staff the stalls assigned to the neighbourhood for the annual Bazaar held in November.
4. Selection of Neighbourhood reps occurs at the start of the year. A notice can be put up outside the Neighbourhood or in Talking Point asking for parents to volunteer for the role of Neighbourhood rep. If no volunteers come forward, teachers can approach parents who they believe may be interested. It is appropriate there be two to four Neighbourhood reps for each Learning Neighbourhood.
5. While the role does not involve a big time commitment, the role suits people who are organised, are experienced with using email and who are confident communicators. For example, there may be a shortage of parents volunteering for the neighbourhood stall at the Bazaar. The Neighbourhood rep may need to contact parents and encourage them to volunteer.
6. Neighbourhood reps are to be approved by school council, in consultation with the Community Engagement and Fundraising Sub-Committee of School Council. If there are more than four nominees for the role, the Neighbourhood reps will be selected by school council.

## 7. Organising the first neighbourhood event

This can take place on a weekend or after school, but it is up to each group of parents to decide what best suits them. In the past, venues have included nearby parks such as Princes Park or North Carlton Railway Park. Neighbourhood picnics and other events organised by Neighbourhood reps out of school hours are not official school functions and the supervision of the children is the responsibility of the parents. Therefore, the school is not legally liable in the event of injury. The statement below will be sent out via COMPASS at the start of the year, when notifying parents of the Neighbourhood rep program.

*Please note that the event is a private event and not a school event, excursion or activity. The School, School staff and the School Council have no involvement in, management of, or control over the event. School staff will not be in attendance at the event.*

*Given that the event is not an official school event, excursion or activity, school staff are not in any way responsible for the supervision/and or safety of students attending the event. Parents and carers are responsible for the supervision and safety of their children attending the event.*

## 8. Neighbourhood contact list

The purpose of a neighbourhood contact list is for parents/carers to share their contact details with other families in the neighbourhood, on a voluntary basis. When completing your child/ren's enrolment form you will be invited to have your details included in the neighbourhood contact list. Parents can use the list to contact other families to arrange play dates and birthday parties, and the list can be a useful way to remember the names of parents and children. Usually about half to two-thirds of families agree to go onto the list. The list includes the name of the student, names of the parents/carers and their mobile or contact phone number. The parents are invited in the form to provide their email to the Neighbourhood rep to enable the Neighbourhood rep (only) to communicate with them. Emails are **not** included in neighbourhood lists, which is consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements.

It is important that email addresses are only to be used by Neighbourhood reps for the purpose of communicating with parents about neighbourhood or school related matters. Paragraph 10 discusses this further. Parents have the option of not agreeing to go onto the neighbourhood contact list but giving permission for their contact details to be used by the Neighbourhood Rep to inform them about school activities and the Bazaar.

## 9. Bazaar - annual school fundraiser in November

The Bazaar is the main fundraiser for the school and also an important community event. Each neighbourhood is allocated a number of stalls and the Neighbourhood rep organises the roster of parent volunteers to staff the stall. This may involve preparation on the day before, setting up on the day or working on the stall. This is a busy time for the Neighbourhood reps, and usually they need to make direct contact with parents to fill the roster. The Bazaar coordinating committee manages this process and provides templates for the Neighbourhood reps to use.

## 10. Neighbourhood reps communicating with parents

All special neighbourhood or school events or excursions are notified to parents Via COMPASS by the teachers, or through the neighbourhood blog. There are times when the Neighbourhood rep may need to contact parents at short notice, e.g. a neighbourhood excursion requires parent helpers and

there is a shortage. The Neighbourhood rep can contact parents by email or telephone using the neighbourhood contact list, asking for volunteers. When sending a group email to parents about school activities or the Bazaar, the Neighbourhood rep should send the email as a **“blind copy”** (abbreviated to **“BCC”**), therefore the recipients of the emails do not know the email addresses of the other parents. This avoids the potential for inappropriate use of parent emails. The way blind copying is done varies with different email systems. If a Neighbourhood rep needs assistance with sending group emails as a blind copy, they should contact a member of the Community Engagement and Fundraising Sub-Committee who can help them.

#### 11. Contacting families new to the school (not Preps)

In the past, one of the roles of the Neighbourhood rep has been to contact new families in the neighbourhood to welcome them and provide them with information and assistance. Parents new to the school are given the Parent Handbook when they first enrol and are asked whether they agree to have a parent contact them. If they agree, their contact details are given to the assigned member of the Community Engagement and Fundraising Sub-Committee of School Council who contacts the Neighbourhood rep, or on occasions, a member of the Community Engagement and Fundraising Sub-Committee may be the person to contact the new family.

The Neighbourhood rep usually speaks to the parent over the phone or in person and finds out what their needs are and what services or organisations we can put them in touch with. They might need a GP, hairdresser, after school activities, music lessons or a sports club. We have helped connect new families with the local netball team and indoor soccer competition. Their names can be added to the neighbourhood contact list if they are interested.

#### 12. Ensuring we are an inclusive school

Sometimes parents may not wish to attend social events for personal reasons, or because they do not have the resources to do so if payment is involved. Some parents may lack confidence or do not understand this aspect of school life. It is important to establish the reason parents may not be attending, which needs to be done in a sensitive manner, as it is particularly important that we reach parents who may benefit from making social connections. If the Neighbourhood reps have any concerns regarding this, they should see the neighbourhood teachers.

Endorsed by PHPS School Council on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2020