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**Royal  
Children's  
Hospital**

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**Volunteer  
Handbook**

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Flemington Road, Parkville 3052  
Telephones: 345 5880, 345 5879



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**WELCOME TO  
THE ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

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You are now a member of a dedicated team, united in a single aim of doing everything possible for the speedy recovery and well being of sick children and adolescents who have been placed in our care.

Our hospital is a very complex and expensive organisation. It has a budget of approximately \$100 million per year; a staff of 3,240 caring for almost 25,000 inpatients, and we have nearly 200,000 outpatient visits a year.

The work of the volunteers is varied but each activity contributes to the achievements of the hospital.

I am sure you will find working here a most rewarding and satisfying experience and that you will follow in the tradition of past members of the service by winning the affection of our patients, the gratitude of their parents and the respect and appreciation of the staff.

With every good wish for your long and happy association with the hospital.

Yours sincerely



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## HISTORY OF THE VOLUNTEER SERVICE

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In 1960, the manager of the Royal Children's Hospital, Mr W C Feint, returned from an overseas visit and recommended the establishment of a volunteer service.

Coincidentally, Miss Carmen Winter (founder and patron of the Royal Children's Hospital volunteer service) also returned from a visit to the USA. There, she had seen volunteers in action in hospitals, and had herself learned to organise and direct such a service.

The president of the hospital, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch (then Lady Murdoch), and the committee of management, agreed it would be of great value to have a volunteer service.

Therefore, on 29 June 1961, this new service was launched, and by December 1962, there were seventy volunteers working in the hospital in Carlton and in the orthopaedic section at Frankston.

In January 1963, the hospital was moved from Carlton to Parkville. Now, approximately 200 volunteers work in many different departments.

The volunteers are part of a dynamic movement growing and changing as the needs of the hospital grow and change.

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## "THE PELICAN"

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Ancient mythology said that the pelican, in times of 'travail' when food was not plentiful, would pluck blood from its own breast and feed its young.

The pelican, therefore, is known for the caring of its young and living in groups - all working together for the good of the community.

It was for these reasons that the pelican was chosen as part of the coat of arms for the Royal Children's Hospital, and the symbol of the volunteer service.

Volunteers who have given 20 years of service are presented with a silver pelican brooch.

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## STRUCTURE OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IN THE ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

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### OFFICE BEARERS:

**President** (member of the board, appointed annually)

**Committee** (members of the volunteer service)

**Head of Volunteer Service**

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## PHILOSOPHY

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The volunteer service enhances and complements the Royal Children's Hospital staff with the aim of promoting the highest quality of patient care and constantly striving to improve the health of the paediatric and adolescent community for whom the hospital exists.

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## OBJECTIVES

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- ◆ To support and assist professional staff in providing and promoting the highest quality of patient care, both in paediatric and adolescent health.
- ◆ To support the professional staff in making the patient's stay at the Royal Children's Hospital as comfortable as possible.
- ◆ To endeavour to be of assistance and support to the families and friends of patients.
- ◆ To provide a channel through which members of the community can contribute their resources, energy and ideas for the benefit of the hospital.

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## VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RIGHT:

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- ◆ To receive a job description that will help them perform their duties more confidently and competently.
- ◆ To experience job satisfaction, and inform the volunteer office if an assignment is unsatisfactory.
- ◆ To receive training, initial and on-going.
- ◆ To ask for a new assignment when ready for a new challenge.
- ◆ To feel free to consult the head of the service regarding suggestions or complaints.
- ◆ To have a safe place of work.
- ◆ To receive medical attention should a volunteer become ill whilst on duty. An appointment will be made by the volunteer office to see the staff medical officer.
- ◆ To be kept informed of new developments at the hospital via newsletters and meetings.
- ◆ To know to whom they are accountable and to have clearly defined channels of communication.
- ◆ If in an urgent situation, to receive a message. Use of telephones in hospital departments is actively discouraged.

## **VOLUNTEERS RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

All volunteers will have a direct line responsibility to the head of the volunteer service.

### **PUNCTUALITY:**

Report to assigned area promptly, according to job description.

### **ABSENCE FROM DUTY:**

If you feel ill, or are unable to report for work, notify the volunteer office , NOT the assigned department (this information will be kept confidential).

If no notification is received for 3 weeks, the volunteer will automatically be taken off the roster.

So that we may contact you in the case of an emergency, you must always notify the office if you intend to move from your allocated place of duty.

### **REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION:**

We ask that you:-

Sign the volunteer register on arrival and collect identification badge (ID).

Record departure time on leaving, and return I.D. badge to registration desk.

Each member of staff and all volunteers are issued with an identity badge which must be worn at all times within the precincts of the hospital. This strengthens security control in the hospital, particularly in restricted areas

and enables easier identification of staff and volunteers in dealing with patients, the public and other staff members. Staff and volunteers must not deface this badge as it remains hospital property. The loss or accidental damage to your badge should be reported to the volunteer office immediately.

### **UNIFORM/APPEARANCE:**

Female volunteers wearing the uniform are advised to wear natural stockings and low heeled neutral shoes for comfort and safety.

Volunteers wearing the apron are requested to maintain a clean neat appearance.

Jewellery should be kept to a minimum for both security and safety reasons.

Strong perfume should not be used.

Long hair should be tied back.

Neat casual clothing is appropriate for men.

### **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:**

We ask you to notify the volunteer office of any change of address or telephone number.

### **FAMILY/FRIENDS:**

We request that whilst a volunteer is performing duties, they do not bring a family member or friend into their work area.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE:**

Application for leave of absence should be made in writing to the head of department for leave of up to six months.

**RESIGNATION:**

Should you decide to resign, would you please notify the volunteer office in writing, and return your uniform. An "exit" interview should be conducted with the head of department.

Volunteers who have resigned will not be re-appointed.

**FIRE DRILL:**

All volunteers are required to attend fire drill twice yearly and be familiar with the fire and emergencies information in the staff handbook and emergency procedures set out in the laminated chart.

**SECURITY:**

To protect your belongings, all personal items should be left in lockers in the change room and while on duty keep the key of your locker on your person. On departure, replace key in locker. Do not bring valuables, as the hospital cannot be responsible for losses.

**INNOCULATION:**

Any female volunteer of child bearing age should discuss with their doctor, inoculation against rubella.

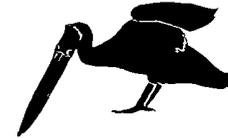
**INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS:**

If you have an accident whilst on duty, or if you are involved in any type of incident, report it to the office immediately.

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## CODE OF ETHICS AND PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

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When a patient enters the Royal Children's Hospital, the hospital assumes an obligation to keep in confidence all that pertains to the patient and his or her affairs. This obligation is shared by every person employed and volunteers. You are therefore obliged to refrain from discussing any patient or information regarding a patient with any person in or out of the hospital, except in the course of your duties. Failure to do so is not only a breach of confidence and the hospital by-laws but may involve you, and the hospital, in legal proceedings.

Under no circumstances may any unauthorised statement be made to the press, radio or television. Any requests from the media should be referred to the person in charge of the area.

Some examples of breach of ethics and/or confidentiality:

- ◆ Repeating remarks overheard about the hospital, other hospital workers, volunteers or patients.
- ◆ Answering questions about a patient's condition.
- ◆ Reading a patient's case notes or chart.
- ◆ Performing duties outside your area of responsibility.

- ◆ Being critical of or interfering with the hospital routine.
- ◆ Accepting money or gifts from a patient or family.
- ◆ Imposing your own beliefs (including religious) or attitudes on anyone in the hospital.
- ◆ Becoming personally involved with patients and families.
- ◆ Giving personal details to a patient for them to contact you at home.

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## AWARDS

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Service by volunteers to the hospital is greatly appreciated by members of the board of management, the chief executive and all the hospital staff. Specific awards for hours of service are presented at the volunteer's annual Christmas function and for years of service at the annual general meeting.

A special award in the form of a plaque was inaugurated in 1971 and is presented to those volunteers who have completed ten years of continuous service.

A further special award in the form of a silver pelican brooch was inaugurated in 1981 in recognition of volunteers who have completed twenty years of continuous service.

A life governorship certificate was inaugurated in 1989 and is awarded on completion of 25 years' service.

These awards are presented at the volunteers' annual general meeting.

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## AMENITIES

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Volunteers are offered car parking facilities, but are reminded that space is very restricted. Therefore parking in the hospital car park is permitted only whilst on duty at the hospital. Volunteers should present their car park ticket to the volunteer office for authorization.

Food may be purchased from McDonalds, or the convenience store. Tea and coffee is provided in the volunteer lunchroom and staff dining room.

Personal medical advice should only be sought from the staff clinic.

Friendship fund: Volunteers are requested to contribute to this fund once a year. This money is used to send cards, flowers or small gifts to volunteers who are ill in hospital.

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## **VOLUNTEER OFFICE STAFF**

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The staff of the volunteer department are here to help you share reactions and to be your point of contact for any purpose. Do ask if uncertain about anything at all.