# 2019 Volunteer Handbook

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School History

In 1938 the Dominican Sisters opened a school in Homebush for visually impaired children. The school was established under the patronage of St Lucy – “the traditional protectress of the blind”. In 1959 St Lucy’s school relocated to a cottage on the corner of Billary Avenue and Cleveland Street, Wahroonga.

In 1960 St Lucy’s intermediate students joined Prouille High School. This trend continued and students pursuing the Leaving Certificate attended Catholic senior schools in the district. In 1970 Pope Paul VI blessed the foundation stone for the new St Lucy’s School. Between 1971 and 1973 the present school was built. Cardinal Freeman and Mr Gough Whitlam officially opened the new buildings.

In 1980 students of secondary school age who had additional disabilities or learning difficulties transferred to St Edmund’s where they were able to do a modified School Certificate course and if necessary received supplementary instruction at St Lucy’s.

1988 saw the first enrolment of a child without a visual impairment and a formal review of the school was undertaken in 1993. This review reiterated the school’s ongoing commitment to providing services for children with vision impairment, validated services to other children with a wide range of disabilities and recommended the development of integration and outreach services. This review greatly influenced school directions during the nineties.

In 2000 the first Satellite class was established on the northern beaches inside St Joseph’s school at Narrabeen. It was a Start Right class for children in their first years of school. The aim of this class was to develop the skills necessary for the children to integrate into their local schools. In 2003, another Satellite class for children in their final years of primary school (Aim High) was formed at St John’s school, Narraweena. Finally in 2007 another Start Right class was added at Narrabeen.

In the 21st century, St Lucy’s continues its tradition of servicing children with special needs. The number of St Lucy’s students with vision impairment is small.

We remain committed to providing opportunities for our students to develop their intellectual, creative and spiritual life while targeting individual goals for physical, social and emotional development.
Our Mission

St Lucy’s mission is to provide “an excellence in education that empowers students with the values, knowledge, attitudes and skills to flourish and participate fully in society”.

Our Vision

We believe that by providing an educational experience which caters for individual needs and differences within a caring and supportive atmosphere, children will grow in the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for life.

Christian values underpin the whole educational endeavour of St Lucy’s. The children are led to grow in a loving relationship with God, and from that to respect themselves, other people and all of Creation.

Through lived and shared experiences, children are led in an awareness of their self-worth, encouraged to have pride in themselves, and to feel empowered to take their rightful place in the community.

A strong commitment to collaborative decision making, partnership with parents and ongoing professional development of staff will ensure that children’s gifts and potential are recognised and developed.
The Values of St Lucy’s

The values of St Lucy’s School are based on the teaching of St Dominic and of the Catholic Church. These values are modeled by our behaviour; expressed in our decisions, practiced in our relationships and taught to the children.

Truth
Truth (Veritas) is St Lucy’s motto. God is truth and we find what is true through open discussion and attention to the knowledge and thinking of others, reflected on through study and prayer.

Community
We are open to all, especially the stranger, the unwanted and unnoticed, welcoming and caring for the Christ in each other. We value the uniqueness of each individual. We enable all to participate actively and contribute to the community of St Lucy’s.

Individuality
Every individual is precious as each has been uniquely made in the image of God. We rejoice in and celebrate difference; know and accept each one’s gifts; acknowledge the life and faith journey of each.

Joyfulness
The experience of joy is a way to God. Our own experiences of joy call us to assist in the transformation of the suffering and pain of those who do not know the fullness of joy.

Justice
Christ calls us to stand compassionately with those in need to help them seek for themselves their rights and dignity when these are denied.

Knowledge
We see complexities and contradictions as capable of ultimate resolution within God. The Dominican value is to thirst for understanding and life meanings. We evaluate new thoughts, ideas and movements carefully before passing judgement.

Peace and peacefulness
Peace in Dominican terms is developing right and just relationships with others. We are committed to healing and reconciliation between peoples based on justice; responding with Christ’s compassion and forgiveness to all.

The Aesthetic
We view all people, including ourselves, as a work of God’s art. We value and explore creative and artistic expression as an expression of God’s being. We foster the imagination and creativity within each individual.

Unity of Creation
The interdependence of all God’s creation calls us to collective stewardship of our earth. We believe that all the world’s people should be able to access its natural and manufactured goods. As part of creation, we accept our responsibility for a just sharing of resources.

Contemplation and Prayer
We seek to nourish the children’s inner spiritual life and to satisfy the hunger for the sacred in us all, exploring forms of prayer and worship that are meaningful to the children and pleasing to God.
St Lucy’s Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

St Lucy’s School is a registered member of Volunteering NSW.

It is your right:

• To be assigned a job that is worthwhile and challenging
• To receive the orientation, training and supervision necessary to do the job
• To feel that your efforts have real purpose and contribute to the organisation’s mission
• To receive feedback and evaluation on the work that you perform
• To be treated with respect within the organisation
• To be kept informed on relevant matters within the organisation with which you work
• To expect that your time will not be wasted by poor planning or coordination by the organisation.

It is your responsibility:

• Not to take on more responsibility than your role entails. Staff ultimately have responsibility for duty of care of the students
• To perform the tasks assigned to you to the best of your ability
• To provide input on ways your tasks might be better performed
• To follow organisational policies and procedures
• To respect those confidences entrusted to you
• To notify the organisation in advance of absences or schedule changes that may affect them.

St Lucy’s is fortunate in being supported by a large number of volunteers who are recruited from the community by the Administration Department. The volunteers provide invaluable support for St Lucy’s programs by giving generously of their free time. Volunteers are as integral to the St Lucy’s community as the students, staff and parents.

Staff members have an obligation to respect volunteers’ rights including their right to be advised when they are not needed on their regular day with plenty of notice, their right to be carefully instructed and if necessary, trained to do the job they are assigned to, and their right not to be left with a child without supervision.

In return, volunteers have an obligation to follow the staff member’s instruction, to be discreet, respectful of the children and parents and confidential, and to observe the code of conduct for staff. Volunteers are not to be left unsupervised with a student or students. They may assist on the playground but may not have sole responsibility for supervising a specific activity.
St Lucy’s aims to provide a safe environment ensuring the health, safety and welfare of students, staff, volunteers and others.

Your Safety Responsibilities
- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety
- Take reasonable care to ensure you don’t affect the health and safety of others
- Carry out your tasks in a safe way
- Follow the reasonable work health and safety instructions given to you, and
- Co-operate with the reasonable work health and safety policies and procedures.

Fire Evacuation Procedures

Volunteers working within the school should be aware of St Lucy’s fire evacuation procedures. These procedures will be explained as part of your volunteer induction. The evacuation route is shown in each room of the school and volunteers should familiarise themselves with the evacuation routes from their volunteer station. When a fire alarm sounds a public announcement over the PA system will advise the location and nature of the emergency. Volunteers will evacuate the premises along with others. Volunteers assisting directly with students are required to assist staff with the children as necessary to the Emergency Assembly Point on the Oval. All volunteers are then required to group by the dodecagons (10-sided shapes), in the far right corner in the Oval, so that their names can be checked off by the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

St Lucy’s Work Health and Safety Rules:
- Any urgent WH&S issues, arising through the school day should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Principal or administration staff.
- Matches and all hazardous chemicals to be locked away
- No hazardous chemicals to be kept in classrooms
- No sharp implements to be left in accessible places
- No child to be left unsupervised at any time
- All exit points from the school to be secured at all times
- Children with a history of seizures to have 1:1 supervision in the pool
- First aid bags to accompany all outings and to be available in the playground
- Obstructions not to be left in corridors or walkways
- Any flickering fluorescent light to be turned off until replaced
- Repair or maintenance items are to be reported immediately via email to repairs@stlucys.nsw.edu.au
- Medication to be out of reach of children at all times
- Be aware of school fire drill and evacuation plans and meeting areas
- Food to be kept out of reach of children
- No peanuts or other nuts allowed in the school
- Rubbish bins to be secure
- No hot drinks near children
- Wear protective clothing if necessary
- Volunteers are not allowed to lift students
- Follow correct manual handling procedures
• Report and record all incidents or hazards that may cause injury or illness to the Deputy Principal or Business Manager.
• Communicate openly with St Lucy’s regarding any WH&S issues

Child Wellbeing and Child Protection Policy

As a Dominican and Catholic School, the safety, protection and well-being of all students is of paramount importance to St Lucy’s School. As a special school for students with additional education needs, St Lucy’s recognises that its students are at particular risk and in need of the highest level of care and protection.

Research tells us that people with disabilities are more likely to be victims of neglect, physical and sexual abuse and can develop a poor sense of appropriate boundaries due to the amount of touching from others necessitated by education, therapy and care.

Both staff and the school have a range of different obligations relating to the safety, protection and welfare of students including:
  a) a duty of care to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent harm to students;
  b) obligations under child protection legislation; and
  c) obligations under work health and safety legislation.

The school requires staff to report any concern they may have about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the School Principal. Volunteers should raise any concern relating to child protection to the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

If you require a copy of the Legislation please contact our Administration Co-ordinator.

A Working With Children Check (WWCC) is a prerequisite for anyone in child related work including at St Lucy’s. A child-related worker is defined as a person who has physical contact or face to face contact with children.

Child-related workers and eligible volunteers are required to:
  (a) hold and maintain a valid Check;
  (b) not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a ban; and
  (c) report to the Principal if they are no longer eligible for a Check, the status of their Check changes or are notified by the Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG) that they are subjected to a risk assessment.
  (d) be aware and follow the expectations of conduct expressed in the School Staff Code of Conduct.

Appropriate Behaviour

Students are taught about protective behaviours and appropriate social and physical interactions with different groups of people through a program called “So Safe”. Volunteers fit into a group called “Other People I know” These are people who students can talk to, shake hands with or be given a helping hand. Other behaviours such as hand holding and hugs are inappropriate from volunteers.
Discipline
St Lucy’s is required by Government regulation to have a policy on discipline which states publicly the consequences for serious breaches of school rules. As a volunteer we ask you to report directly to the Principal if you have any concerns.

Use of corporal punishment is not permitted at St Lucy’s.

Confidentiality
In performing your duties, you may learn confidential information about the children (including their families) or about teachers or other personnel. We expect that you keep this information confidential within and outside the school.

In certain rare cases student confidences cannot be kept. For example if a student indicates a desire to harm himself/herself or others, this should be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal immediately. Ask yourself, if I share this information will it save someone from harm? If yes, then share it.

Volunteers are not to probe staff or students about their backgrounds, disabilities or other private information.

Code of Conduct
Volunteers have an obligation to follow the staff member’s instruction, to be discreet, respectful of the children and parents and maintain confidentiality at all times. St Lucy’s procedures, safety guidelines and dress code are to be respected. Volunteers are not to accept gifts or have any contact with media in relation to St Lucy’s.

Useful Information
Daily Procedures
All volunteers are asked to sign in and sign out. Place your name, the time and your signature in the volunteers sign in book. You will be issued with swipe keys to allow access through the school. You are reminded to sign out on your departure and return keys.

“Volunteer” badges are provided and are required to be worn whilst on school grounds.

School Hours
- School starts : 8:50am
- Recess: 10:30am – 11:00am / 11:00am – 11:30am
- Lunch : 1:00pm – 1:30pm / 1:30pm – 2:00pm
- Home : 2:50pm

Morning Tea & Lunch
Located in the Convent area (accessed by the Tagliaferro Gallery) is the Volunteer Kitchen. Here you can make your own cup of tea/coffee and enjoy some biscuits.
Dress Code
Your conduct and appearance reflects the image of St Lucy’s. It is everyone’s responsibility to dress appropriately for the job.

Be comfortable at all times. For comfort and safety, the school recommends flat or low heeled, closed shoes, no dangling jewellery and as much covering of arms, legs, chest and midriff as is possible in the prevailing temperature. It is preferable that shorts or culottes are worn rather than short skirts in hot weather.

Personal Belongings
Every classroom has lockable storage for your personal belongings. Ask the teacher to put your items in there upon arrival. Please keep track of your personal belongings while on-site. Please do not take handbags or other bags to play areas. Mobile phones must be kept in your bag during class time.

Photography of Students
Please note that you are not permitted to take photographs of students at any time, especially on your mobile phone. All photography will be conducted by class teachers and/or the Communications Officer.

Photography of Volunteers
All volunteers will be requested to complete a Photo Permission Form at their induction, which verifies your consent to be featured in any publications or social media used by St Lucy’s.

Accessing Areas of the School
As a volunteer, you are given keys/swipes that give you access to the school. We ask you to respect the limits of the access given and not use your key/swipes to roam to other areas of the school premises (unless you have been asked to do so).

Supervision of Volunteers
Volunteers work in co-operation with an assigned teacher or staff member. For your own legal protection it is essential that you are never alone in a room or other secluded area with a student.

Volunteers are not permitted to take or assist with students’ toileting or student medication.

If you have any questions, suggestions or feedback please contact the Administration Officer, (volunteer@stlucys.nsw.edu.au) or phone 9487 1277.
Communication
Our website is constantly updated and contains all school information, including term dates, current newsletters and the latest St Lucy’s news and dates. Visit us at www.stlucys.nsw.edu.au

You are welcome to view our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/STLUCYSSCHOOL

You are also welcome to join special liturgies and school assembly with staff, students and parents. School assembly is held on Fridays 9:00am – 9:30am throughout term.

Volunteers will be sent fortnightly newsletters and occasionally other information relating to St Lucy’s throughout the year. If you do not wish to receive this information please contact the Administration Co-ordinator.

St Lucy’s Guidelines on Positive Behaviour Support

At St Lucy’s we use positive behaviour support principles to encourage positive interactions between all individuals, and to ensure the safety of all staff, students, and volunteers.

We have 3 main school rules (found on page 14):
Be Kind
Be Safe
Be Your Best

The rules are also displayed around the school and on visuals on lanyards which you will be given. We remind the students of the rules using positive language. e.g., instead of saying “don’t hit”, say “be safe, keep your hands to yourself”. Praise the children if you do notice them following the rules.

Be patient with the children. Many children at St Lucy’s have difficulty not only expressing themselves verbally, but also understanding verbal instructions. They may require extra time to ‘process’ what you have said to them. If you need to give an instruction, give a short, simple sentence, then wait up to 10 seconds for the student to follow, before you repeat. Repeating instructions too many times may cause the child to become more anxious.

If you are in the classroom or playground when a child demonstrates a behaviour of concern, refer to the nearest staff member in class or on duty for assistance.
Helping children with comprehension impairment

The Do’s and Don’ts when communicating with children who have severe comprehension issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’T</th>
<th>DO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t focus on what not to do</td>
<td>Focus on what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No hitting walls”</td>
<td>Say “Carry this”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t overuse words like</td>
<td>Redirect and engage the person in an alternative activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Stop, no wait, not now, soon</em></td>
<td>“Time for morning tea”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t change the way you say things</td>
<td>Use consistent language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the child responds to:</td>
<td>When you know the words the person responds to, use them consistently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Shut the door” don’t say</td>
<td>“Push the door closed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t talk too much.</td>
<td>Leave plenty of silences and use pauses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It just makes it more difficult to understand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t talk loudly.</td>
<td>Talk at a normal volume with intonation that varies!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising your voice only in an emergency to get the person’s attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t talk about topics not important to the child.</td>
<td>Talk about relevant topics:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they are doing, what they like, what they are about to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Do’s and Don’ts when communicating with children with less severe comprehension issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DON’T</th>
<th>DO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t say ideas out of order:</td>
<td>Say thing in the order in which they will occur:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>We are going to McDonalds later but first we are going shopping.</em></td>
<td>“First shopping, then McDonalds”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid using statements and common sayings that could be misunderstood.</td>
<td>Explain common sayings that have double meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Stop horsing around”</td>
<td>“He’s over the hill”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for working with children at St Lucy’s

- Speak slowly using simple words and natural gestures (such as pointing).
- Use the visual aids you will be given to wear.
- Mix with a number of children; don’t let yourself be dominated by one or two.
- Do not touch the children and don’t encourage them to touch you (Hi 5’s are accepted).
- Check with the teacher if you are unsure whether something is appropriate.
- Do not get the children overly excited.
- Keep their safety in mind at all times.
- Do not speak to a child who is being disciplined or is in “time out”.
- Many of our children have allergies or food disorders. Do not share food with them. We are a nut free school.
- Children with disabilities often thrive on routine and may dislike change. Do not surprise them. Do not change plans without plenty of warning.
- Children with disabilities are often very sensitive to sound and/or to touch. They may become upset by sudden loud sounds or by the texture of unfamiliar things.
- Be quick to ask for help if you need it. Go to the nearest staff member.
- Be careful not to discuss the children where they can hear you. They may understand more than you realise.
- Respect our children.
- Remember the law on privacy. Do not talk about the children by name out of the school.
St Lucy’s School Rules

Be Safe

Be Kind

Be Your Best
St Lucy’s School Prayer

God our maker and friend,

we love you

and we thank you for loving us

Be with us always

Give us food each day

Help us to do only what pleases you.

Forgive us when we hurt others,

and help us to forgive those that hurt us.

Keep us safe

For we are your children

Amen
Beatitudes for Friends of People with a Disability

Blessed are you…who take the time to listen to difficult speech, for you help me to know that if we persevere, I can be understood.

Blessed are you …who never bid me to ‘hurry up’ or take my tasks and do them for me, for often I need time rather than help.

Blessed are you…who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures, for our failures will be outweighed by the times when I surprise myself and you.

Blessed are you who ask for my help, for my greatest need is to be needed.

Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words.

Blessed are you who with a smile encourage me to try once more.

Blessed are you who never remind me that today I ask the same question twice.

Blessed are you who respect me and love me as I am, just as I am, and not as you wish I were.

(From The Catholic Standard, Washington ,D.C.)

Thank you for becoming a volunteer at St Lucy’s School.

Together we can achieve great things.
"Key Word Sign" is a key word signing system used by individuals with communication difficulties. It was developed in the UK in 1972. The major principles of Key word sign are:

- **Always use sign and speech together.**
- **Sign key words but say the whole sentence.**
- **Use facial expression and body language with sign.**

Why do we use Key Word Sign?
- It provides visual information to accompany speech which helps children to understand the message.
- It encourages eye contact and attention.
- It promotes good language models i.e. when you sign you tend to speak slower, highlight important words and simplify your language.
- It promotes use of language while a child’s speech is developing.
- It reduces frustration for children who have difficulty expressing their needs.

*Children will not use sign unless sign is being used consistently around them. It is important that adults use the same signs and use signs consistently across a range of environments.*
Daily Routine Signs

**WHAT?** - Extend dominant index finger, palm away from body. Move formation at wrist from side to side, twice, at mid-chest height.

**WHERE?** - Open both hands and simultaneously move each hand from side to side, twice.

**TO COME** - Extend dominant crooked index finger and hold in front of body. Move hand back in an arc towards centre of chest.
*(Natural gesture)*

**TO GO** - Swing dominant hand slightly cupped forward in relevant direction. Finish with straight fingers.

**THERE** - Point dominant index finger away from body.
*(Natural gesture)*

**GOOD** - Move extended dominant thumb forward with stress.

**TO SEE/LOOK** - Move dominant index finger forward from eye.

**TO LISTEN** - Place slightly cupped dominant hand behind ear.
*(Natural gesture)*
Daily Routine Signs

NEXT/TURN - Crook dominant index finger around thumb, palm down. Turn formation to palm up.

WAIT - Bounce open dominant hand palm down in front of dominant side, twice. *May use both hands.

QUIET - Rest extended dominant index finger in front of lips. (Natural gesture).

INSIDE - Move extended dominant index finger towards the body over the top of barrier of open non-dominant hand. It may be more appropriate to use COME and directionality (e.g. ‘Come inside’).

OUTSIDE - Move extended dominant index finger over the top barrier of open non-dominant hand away from body.

TIME/DURATION - Extend thumb and index finger of dominant hand. Place thumb in palm of non-dominant hand and swivel formation to palm down.

TO STOP - Move open dominant hand forward from shoulder height.

UP - Move open dominant hand upwards.

Wash hands (Natural Gesture)
Mealtime Signs

**DRINK** - Shape dominant hand as for holding a glass - tilt to mouth as for drinking. (Natural gesture)

**TO EAT** - Close dominant fingertips onto ball of thumb. Tap formation on chin, twice.

**MORE** - Cup dominant hand and place fingertips on centre chest - move hand forward.

**TO FINISH** - Extend dominant thumb, fingers closed. Rock hand formation from side to side several times.

**TO HELP** - Place dominant hand into non-dominant hand, palms together - move formation forward.

**TO SIT** - Place open dominant hand on back of non-dominant hand and move formation down slightly.

**WAIT** - Bounce open dominant hand palm down in front of dominant side, twice. *May use both hands.

**PLEASE** - Move open dominant hand straight forward from chin, while closing into a fist, thumb extended.

**THANKS** - Move fingertips of open dominant hand forward from chin, once.
I ____________________________________ acknowledge that I have read and understand the St Lucy’s Volunteer Handbook and it is my responsibility to comply with all policies & procedures contained in this document.

___________________________________
Signature

___________________________________
Name

______________
Date

*Please return to the Volunteer Coordinator