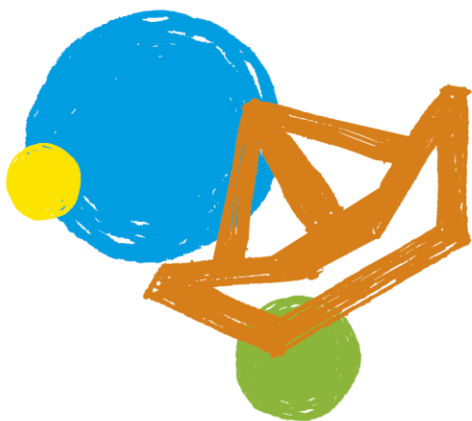




# Parent volunteer guidelines

2024-2025





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**OPTIMIST  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL**





Optimist International School supports family and community members in their effort to support our school, the teachers and students working and attending it. The regular involvement of parents within a school gives a positive signal to students and increases the sense of connection and belonging. The support of volunteers enables us to organise activities which allows us to give that important extra something and a personal touch. Parental support can take many forms, such as reading with students, library organisation, support activities, logistic assistance, help with special activities, excursions outside the classroom, parties/social events and with specific expertise.

Firstly we will explain the various volunteering groups we have, such as the Welcome Team and Class parents and other volunteers. Additionally the second chapter consists of a summary of the safety policy guidelines which are relevant to volunteers. At all times the parent volunteers are working within the realms of the health and safety policy and as contained here, are aware of the parent volunteer guidelines. More detailed information can be found in the [Safety policy](#).

The Floerer document which relates to [parent volunteers is here](#)

## OUR VOLUNTEERING COMMUNITY

We will explain the various volunteering groups we have, such as the Welcome Team and Class parents, the Participation Council, and other volunteers.



### Welcome Team

For new families we have a Welcome Team, which serves as non-school specific settling-in support. They also offer specific connections to current parents, in which they try to link parents in their own language or with some other connection (e.g. area where they live, previous country, or company they work with) if requested.

### Class parents

Each class / group should have one (or two) class representatives. Class parents serve as a liaison between the class teachers and the parents. Class parents are parents who volunteer to assist their child's class teacher with class and schoolwide activities. They are also a welcoming **informal** network of support to new parents and a source of assistance to the class teacher, on all sorts of **non-educational matters**. We estimate it takes 15 minutes a week. We consider class parents as a facilitator to help create these social groups rather than driving all of the organization and content within them.

Class parents do not have a formal role in the school like the elected members of the school Participation Council (PC), their role doesn't involve communication between parents and school about learning or teaching concerns, complaints, individual opinions, school policies or other school matters.



OIS gives a high priority to communication, openness and transparency towards parents which is why we encourage parents to express any concerns or dissatisfaction to the teacher directly. If it concerns something that happened in the class or to the school management if it concerns something which transcends the classroom setting.

Class parents respect privacy of all parents. We like to steer away from using emails and avoid sharing parent email addresses and telephone numbers unless parents agree this between themselves. Each class will have a dedicated parent what's app group for parents use only, in which the class parent can act as the main point of contact.

Tasks can include:

- Support your teacher(s) by volunteering or finding volunteers for field trips or assistance with organization
- Communicate to parents' information as requested by the teacher, special planning and arranging class social events (i.e., parties such as Sinterklaas or other class celebrations or initiatives etc)
- Support school-wide-events, often Class Parents work together on this, such as international cultural day, end of year party, sports day and/or organising volunteers for this
- Together with the other OIS class parents you work together on schoolwide events and form the activities committee
- Coordinate the teacher's gift(s) on behalf of the class as appropriate, e.g., Valentine's Day, and/or Teacher Appreciation Days
- When new students join the classroom, your child's teacher will inform you, and you could reach out to them to add them to the parent's what's app group

### **WhatsApp group**

Class parents run the class parent WhatsApp group. The class WhatsApp traffic is intended for announcements about practical matters and the provision of information. It is not intended for one-on-one conversations, discussions, disagreements or emotionally charged messages. We explicitly ask parents not to use the app group to express complaints about children/the teacher or to disclose information about their child. This entails insecurity for all those involved and is not in the interest of cooperation around children. In the group no pictures of children can be shared by parents, because of privacy reasons.

The app groups exist alongside Parro and email and are not a replacement for them. Participation in the group is always voluntary.

If the app group is used inappropriately by a user or if topics are more appropriately discussed offline, the group will immediately intervene and refer to this protocol. If there is a recurrence, the user can be removed from the group by the class parent. Improper use will always be reported to the class parent/school management.



## Participation Council

A Participation Council (PC) in a school is a body composed of representatives from different stakeholder groups within the school community. Its primary role is to foster democratic participation and ensure that various perspectives are considered in the decision-making processes affecting the school. The PC consists of elected representatives from the parent and staff community. Their contribution and support plays a vital part in school development. The PC has an advisory role and sometimes has to give consent on certain topics, in accordance with participation council regulations.

## Regular volunteers

We also have regular volunteers who assist teachers with specific support such as weekly swimming lessons, running the library, reading with children.

## Activities volunteers

At the beginning of each school year, we advertise all these voluntary opportunities and hope to recruit as many parents as possible to join our volunteering community in a role that suits them taking into account their availability. Parents who have occasional time available often register as an activities volunteer and could be contacted by teachers, class parents or event organisers to help at specific moments.

## VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

We apply the following basic rules of conduct and monitor compliance. All sections of the school including volunteering parents are expected to adhere to the established rules of conduct. The purpose of the code of conduct is to:

1. Create a good social teaching and learning climate, in which all those involved feel comfortable and secure
2. Contribute to the prevention of abuse of power in a broad sense
3. Promote and monitor safety, health, and welfare for all those involved
4. Protect the privacy of everyone involved

## Our rules of conduct

- \* We accept and respect each other as we are, while the school creates room for everyone to be different in sex, character, religion, race, physical and/or mental impairment, and we endorse that all have equal rights and of equal value
- \* We behave with courtesy and consideration, and we show respect for those in authority and for the feelings of classmates. This means we are polite to everyone, listen to each other and talk calmly and in a friendly manner
- \* We are careful with each other and each other's belongings
- \* We walk calmly in the school building





## Pedagogical climate

Most importantly, we believe it is important to prevent behavioural problems by behavioural management:

- \* We approach the children with an open and positive basic attitude.
- \* We ensure predictable volunteering parents' behaviour. The children know where they stand, what is expected of them and what the limits are. We are clear and consistent ("do what you say and say what you do"). All teachers react in basically the same way (predictably) to situations and behaviour.
- \* We provide structure so that the children know what is coming (e.g., a visible day planning, fixed sequence of activities)
- \* We exercise a positive control on behaviour to stimulate desired behaviour. This means that there is more positive than negative feedback (ratio at least 4: 1)
- \* We reward big and punish small. If behaviour needs to be addressed this is done appropriately and by the responsible teacher of department supervisor
- \* We anticipate possible problems. Because we know the children, we know in which situations it is more difficult for them to behave (e.g., in the corridor, at the gym). We make agreements in advance with those students who have difficulty with certain situations.
- \* We reinforce behaviour we wish to see and are clear about our expectations (and express them)
- \* We ensure that students are always under the supervision of a teacher, including when they are outside or when changing clothes for the gym. In this way, children also know there is always someone around who they can go to with questions or problems.
- \* We enable and invite both students and colleagues to participate in a safe manner – both physically and mentally – and anticipate and prevent threatening or unsafe situations.
- \* We assume that behaviour is learned, and it is often not unwillingness but powerlessness. If students find it difficult to behave in a certain way, we examine what these students need, and we teach them the necessary skills. In addition to socio-emotional methods and our own expertise (e.g. behaviour specialist, child coach), we may also use external assistance.
- \* We speak to a student about his/her behaviour, not his/her person (the behaviour can be the problem and not the child).
- \* We believe it is important to work closely with parents when seeking to improve behaviour and we keep the lines of communication short. We also work together by involving colleagues and learning from and with each other in dealing with specific behaviours.
- \* We make students aware of their duties through open communication, by being role models for them in displays of conduct, such as being respectful, courteous, and friendly.



## Unacceptable behaviour of students

However good the agreements and the predictability or the help provided, sometimes things go wrong. To be able to deal with such a situation almost immediately, at the first signs, the following step-by-step plan has been drawn up. From our step-by-step plan, one basic principle must always be overriding and that is that in addition to sanctioning, we also offer the helping hand. It is important that the teacher is always informed, who can provide more structural support or get in touch with the parents. Volunteers do not approach parents directly.

Approach on the first signs of unacceptable behaviour:

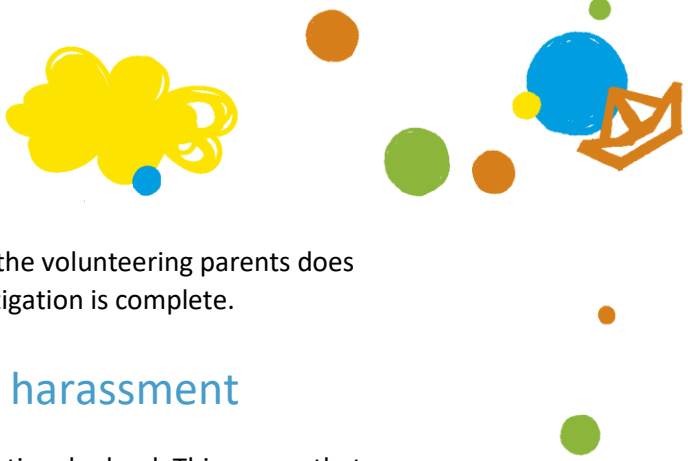
1. The volunteering parent observes the behaviour, e.g., the frequency and possible triggers. The volunteering parent informs the class teacher.
2. The teacher or volunteer has one-to-one communication with the child and finds a way to point out the behaviour, to support and give the child tools to express himself or teach the child the skills needed. Depending on the situation, the teacher discusses this with the parents.  
If several children are involved, the teacher or volunteer has a conversation with each child separately and then follows this with a conversation with all those involved. The teacher/volunteer will ask reflective questions like: What did you want to achieve? What was the effect? What else could you have done? How will you do it next time? In what situation did this happen? What do you think of your behaviour?
3. After an incident which involves others, a child offers his or her excuse to the student and/or teaching volunteer in question
4. The teacher choose the best course of action given the circumstances.

## Unacceptable behaviour of staff members or volunteers

Anyone (students, parents, staff members, volunteering parents and external parties) who exhibit behaviour that is perceived to be unacceptable, will be corrected. This can be done by any staff member and depending on the situation, this may happen individually or with groups. If the staff member believes it necessary, it is reported to the Senior Leadership Team.

In case of violation of the code of conduct the following procedure is followed:

If a volunteering parent or staff member makes a complaint with the Director in which a volunteer is involved, a meeting is arranged between the volunteering parent, the person involved and the Director. If no satisfactory solution is found during the above discussion or if a conversation is not possible, management advises the parents to lodge a complaint with the board and/ or the confidential adviser. The confidential adviser can refer the matter to the board or to the national complaints



committee. It maybe during the period of fact-finding, the volunteering parents do not continue with their tasks in school until a full investigation is complete.

## Racism, discrimination and sexual harassment

We live in a multicultural society, and we are an international school. This means that different groups from our society have their own folk culture. We all together create a good social teaching and learning climates for all students with mutual respect.

That is why the following principles apply to all in school:

- \* Everyone is treated equally
- \* No racist and / or discriminatory language or behaviour (including racist and / or discriminatory jokes) is used and / or displayed in school
- \* All adults refrain (especially in the presence of children) from using sexist language, sexually tinged jokes, allusions, and a manner of speaking that is perceived as sexist by students and / or other people involved in the school or sexually tinged behaviour or behaviour that can be experienced as such by students and/or other people involved in the school and ensures that such behaviour does not occur in the student - student relationship
- \* Every volunteering parent ensures that no posters, drawings, etc. which may be interpreted erotically are used or hung in the school

## Physical safety and emergency

Our policy explains our emergency response team, fire safety and traffic safety. Furthermore, you can find our measures regarding activities outside school, physical education lessons, weapons and smoking, alcohol and drugs.


### Emergency response team (BHV)

We have our own Emergency Response Team (BHV) who are trained to respond if there is an emergency and are fully familiar with the issues posed by the school. Being prepared for and helping in the event of an accident is a key role of the BHV. The number of trained ER officers within the school is regularly evaluated.

The coordinator of our BHV staff at Optimist International School is Jeanet Warmerdam, our concierge.

If something happens and a student needs emergency care during the school day, we take the following steps:

1. If it is a minor accident, then the child is treated by his/her own teacher sometimes assisted by one of the BHV-ers.
2. As mentioned above, at our school several teachers have received the proper training to respond correctly to accidents or emergencies the volunteering parent is not responsible for dealing with a safety issue.



## Fire safety

A good level of maintenance is important from a safety point of view, our school has several planned maintenance contracts and regular safety checking. The volunteering parents does not have any function in the event of a fire safety breach. It is important that he/or she leaves the building in a sensible manner and waits for further instruction.

There are enough trained emergency responders at the school. They follow a compulsory training in how to respond in these circumstances. A division of tasks amongst the BHV officers and between the First Aiders along with school Directors has been established. An evacuation plan has been drawn up. The evacuation plan is practiced at least twice a year. The appropriate occupancy permit has been issued by the fire brigade. Our insurance policies have been taken out through our Floerer School Board. These include insurance for: fire, theft, vandalism and public liability.

## Medical situations and medicines

Some of our students suffer from potentially serious allergies or medical conditions. We have a strict policy regarding medicines in appendix A. In our Safety policy more details can be found about students becoming unwell, the administration of medicines, long term medication and emergency medication, medical procedures, and emergency situations.

It is the policy of the school **not** to administer oral medicines during the school day.

We ask parents not to bring nuts to school and that they be avoided for snacks or lunch, since they provoke strong allergic reactions in some students.



Volunteers always contact a staff member immediately when medical support is required.

## Online and internet safety

Social media play an important role in the lives of students, teachers, and volunteering parents. The use of social media is part of the behaviour of everyone within the school. Social media can help to improve education and make lessons more fun, to stay in touch with friends, to experiment and to push boundaries. But social media also involve risks, such as bullying and the unintentional sharing of photographs or other data.

Discussions are often held at school, in the classroom or at home about what is (and what is not) acceptable on social media. The agreements apply to all students, staff, and volunteers of the schools within Floerer Board for the use of social media on mobile phones and other (mobile) devices. Not only at school and in the classroom, but also in the media use outside the school.





With the use of social media, we mean the use of programmes with which information can be searched for, shared, and presented online. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, but also all (new) similar programs and apps.

### **Agreements on the use of internet and social media**

These regulations apply to all students, staff and volunteers of the schools that form part of Floreer, regardless of where they use their social media.

- \* We treat one another kindly and with respect and accept everyone as they are. That is why we do not bully, hurt, stalk, threaten, damage, or vilify one another, also online.
- \* Volunteering parents and interns have no chat contact (e.g., WhatsApp or Facebook) contact with students. A group app with the teacher can be an alternative, only if all students can access it.
- \* Volunteering parents do not communicate with parents and students via their private Facebook page and similar private platforms in any official manner. An exception to this is the social media pages of Optimist International School itself, which is known to parents, students, and teachers and accessible to everyone.
- \* Personal sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) are not used at school.
- \* Children are not allowed to chat during school hours (unless there is a specific learning purpose, e.g., about social media us).
- \* The school will try to make targeted searches as safe as possible limit and / or prevent surfing behaviour without obligation.
- \* Everyone is responsible for what they place or forward/retweet on social media and can be held accountable for this. Everything that is communicated via the internet and social media can still be found for a long time to come.
- \* When using the internet and social media, we take account of the good reputation of the school, and everyone involved.
- \* Digital means of communication / devices are used for learning purposes. Also, mobile phones can be used for these purposes in some situations. Furthermore, the mobile phone is turned off during school hours.
- \* We respect one another's privacy. Therefore, when using the internet and social media, no private information, visible photos, or videos are distributed to others, if they have not given permission for this, or if they may suffer negative consequences.
- \* Internet is only used for acceptable purposes. The school does not work with filters. We point out to the children the responsible use of the internet and teach them. The teacher supervises this usage and can also monitor usage. At school it is not allowed:
  1. to visit sites or download and distribute information that is pornographic, racist, discriminatory, abusive, or offensive.
  2. to hack and gain unauthorised access to non-public sites or programmes.
  3. to hack, excessively download or overloading the network.
  4. to share information, photos or videos that are clearly not intended for further dissemination.

5. to send fictitious messages or use a fictitious name as sender.
6. to harass someone, to pursue them or to 'flame' them.

## Privacy/avg: photographs

The school processes personal data of all its students. The school considers that the proper handling of personal data is vitally important and is aware of the privacy legislation. The school is responsible for the careful handling of the child's personal data. In these explanatory notes we would like to explain how we handle your children's personal data.



Staff, parents, students and visitors are asked not to share or store any student photographs on personal devices.

Class parents are asked to regulate the use of photographs in the class parent app and notify the class teacher if needed inappropriate or excessive.

Parents are asked to respect the sensitivity and security of our community when taking photographs at school trips or class events.

For more information regarding privacy and our school policy, please read the [AVG Policy](#)



## Incident registration

The Occupational Health & Safety Act requires that a risk inventory and evaluation (called RIE for short) together with an action plan, are always available. This RIE contains an overview of the risks present within the school, as well as the associated 'plan of approach', in which measures are described by which the risks are managed/minimised as much as possible. During the various consultations at school and based on the annual appraisal interviews that are held with each staff member, issues can be identified that need to be included in the action plan.

If a volunteering parent has an accident which requires medical attention this must be reported to the Health & Safety Inspectorate. This is the responsibility of the Director.

## Safe recruitment of staff and volunteers

Optimist International School is committed to ensuring that those who take up appointments or who work in a voluntary context with the school do not pose a risk to the children in its care. For the school to make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with children all adults who work in an



unsupervised capacity will be required to apply relevant certificate of good conduct as follows:

- \* Volunteering parents will be asked to apply for a VOG (Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag). The VOG is a certificate that gives the school the assurance that your behaviour will not constitute an obstacle for voluntary work in a school. The certificate is issued by the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice.
- \* The HR & Business Manager will help volunteers as much as possible to acquire the relevant documentation. Certificate of good behaviour (VOG)

## Confidential person (vertrouwenspersoon)

Optimist International School has a confidential person. This person is an independent contact person. You can contact him /her with a question or a confidential subject. Whenever a complaint is made, the complainant can call upon the support of a contact person. He/she listens to the complainant and provides information about possible follow-up steps and offers advice. The contact person is not a mediator, but an advisor to the complainant.

Our confidential person is Ms Katie Zalewska. Contact should be made preferably via email: [katarzyna.zalewska@floreer.nl](mailto:katarzyna.zalewska@floreer.nl) but in urgent cases you can also call her via our school phone number.

For all other questions, please contact either of the school Directors; Anne Marie van Holst: [Annemarie.vanholst@floreer.nl](mailto:Annemarie.vanholst@floreer.nl) or Cheryl Embleton: [Cheryl.embleton@floreer.nl](mailto:Cheryl.embleton@floreer.nl)