

# Friends of FHS

## Community Volunteers

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### **Background**

Fitzroy High School is a vibrant inner city Melbourne High school which was re-opened in 2004 with a student population of around 600.

There is a well-functioning school council which acts within the appropriate DET guidelines. There are also subcommittees including the Community Subcommittee, Masterplan Subcommittee (incorporating the Environment Subcommittee), an Education Subcommittee and a Finance Subcommittee. These subcommittees are populated by school councillors who are parents, community members and FHS staff members who have been active in organising successful school events including The Dyslexia Parent Support Group, E-smart cybersafety presentation, Teen Sex Talks Forums, and the FHS Cabaret and Theatre Productions.

These events, while successful, are predominantly organised by a small number of parents who end up doing a large amount of work. A better outcome would be sharing out tasks among more parents. When parents have volunteered in these events, their response is overwhelmingly positive.

It is thought that usually parents are less willing to be involved in school activities at High school compared to Primary School. This may be true for some parents, but there are many others who would like to feel part of the school community while their children are still at school.

It has been found that schools, parents and most importantly students benefit when there is active parent participation in the school (A report by the Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau. 2012). One way of parent participation is through an organised Parents Association.

### **Scope**

The scope of the Friends of FHS group includes any or all of the following:

- Promoting a sense of community spirit via parent/school functions and social events.
- Providing a chance for parents to meet each other and develop friendships
- Fundraising for the school for specific goals
- Providing volunteers to assist with school events
- Assisting with the organisation of school events
- Organising events that the students participate in
- Organising Working Bees at the school
- Providing a path to allow parents with useful skills to assist at school (as speakers... etc)

### **Reporting Structure**

It is important to note the Friends of FHS group does not have a role in governance of the school or any of the school curriculum decisions etc. Its role is to bring parents and carers together and provide a pathway for them to participate in the school life.

The Friends of FHS group will report to the School Council Community Subcommittee who will seek approvals and endorsement of the group's proposals and recommendations through the school executive team and school council.

### **Membership Structure**

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- 3 or 4 committed members filling the roles of a Convenor, Minute Taker and a person to manage administration of Event Proposals, Budgets and Applications and to liaise through the Community Subcommittee.
- General/ Casual Members - parents may participate in whatever they choose, as little or as much as they like
- All Parents and Carers are automatically members of the Friends of FHS group where participation is optional
- Meets at least once each term.

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<b>Author/s</b>	Lara Bickford, Kath Boyer, Community Subcommittee
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<b>References</b>	Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth for the Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau. 2012