



CAN Community Support

Volunteer Handbook

Your Guide to Volunteering in the
Family Learning Program





01

Welcome

Our Mission

CAN Community Support works alongside our neighbours in the Carlton public housing high rise towers and surrounds, to offer hospitality, support and welcome to those in our local neighbourhood. CAN Community Support works towards social justice, dignity, and inclusion for those it supports.

About Us



Our Vision

CAN Community Support empowers local communities by working alongside local people to foster strong connections, learning, community building, and food security to ensure that high-rise public housing residents and those experiencing disadvantage have opportunities and support for a better future.

Our Values

Hospitality – “breaking bread together”; the ancient practice across faith traditions of welcoming the stranger through the sharing of food and life.

Inclusion – embracing diversity, and safe and welcoming participation of people regardless of socio-demographic status.

Dignity – valuing and respecting the inherent worth and individuality of each human and working towards mutuality by seeking opportunity for any contributions they are able to make.

Social Justice – recognising and advocating for the basic human rights of those in our neighbourhood.

Our History

CAN Community Support is part of the Church of All Nations in Carlton, a Parish Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Church of All Nations has been part of the fabric of Carlton for over 150 years, offering support to vulnerable people, speaking out for justice, and celebrating the gifts of all cultures to our societies. CAN Community Support was started by the Church community over 30 years ago and has continued to grow and change in response to the needs of the people it serves.

Inclusivity

We are dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive space for all and providing a welcoming environment that embraces all backgrounds, cultures, sexualities, genders and abilities.

In line with the Uniting Church of Australia Victoria and Tasmania's Safe Church commitment, CAN Community Support is a child-safe organisation.



Acknowledgement of Country

At CAN Community Support we pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the land, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and all elders past, present and emerging. We will respect the land, animals and waterways from the roots of the earth to the tops of the trees. We will try our best to protect it. We understand that if we look after the country then the country will look after us.

The Family Learning Program



The Family Learning Program (FLP) at CAN Community Support provides tailored educational assistance to children and families from the Carlton public housing estate and surrounds, primarily from recently arrived migrant and refugee backgrounds. The program strengthens English, literacy, and numeracy while fostering social connection, wellbeing, and confidence through trusted mentoring relationships.

In 2025 the CAN Community Support Family Learning Program supported 98 children and 42 families. These local children and families were guided by 80 trained volunteers. The program worked in partnership with with the Church of All Nations, the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, local schools, the Kathleen Syme Library, and trusted partners such as Readings Bookshop.

Across five Homework Club sessions each week at three local venues, the FLP provides a continuous learning pathway from primary to tertiary level — addressing deep educational inequities and building long-term community resilience.

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How We Communicate



Our Team

Janet - Family Learning Program Manager

Phone: 0451758109

Email: janet.ray@cancarlton.org.au

Yirgalem – Family Support Worker

Phone: 0450843492

Email: yirgalem.frezghi@cancarlton.org.au

Nora - Lead Tutor

Alfia- Lead Tutor

Mayar – Lead Tutor

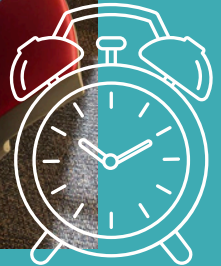


Communication Three Ways

How	When	Example
WhatsApp	Targeted group information	School has a student free day. We will cancel our session in this instance. Special events or celebrations.
Email	General information and updates	Semester newsletter or upcoming training opportunities. We will alert you via Whatsapp when important emails are sent out.
SMS or Phone	Direct contact with Janet or Yirgalem. Make sure you have our phone numbers in your contact lists.	Individual tutors who are unable to attend due to illness Individual tutors needing clarification or debriefing after a session.

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Program Sessions



Session Times

Carlton Primary School Homework Club -Grade Prep-4 (Tuesday and Wednesday 3:00-4:30pm)

Carlton Primary School Senior Study Group – Grade 5-6
(Wednesday 3:00-4:30pm)

Kathleen Symes Centre Family Learning Program – Grade Prep-12
(Monday/ Tuesday 3:45-5:30pm)

The Study Lounge – University High School – Grade 7-12 (Thursday 3:00-4:30pm)

Session Schedule

Carlton Primary School	Kathleen Syme Library	Activities
3pm	3:45pm	Tutors arrive and sign in. Assist with cutting up fruit and any other set up needed, such as stationary, tables, workbooks put out. Briefing for session and allocation of team members begins
3:15	4:00pm	Students and families arrive. This time is for settling in, having some fruit, and having a short relax before starting work. Could do some free drawing or play a relaxed group game. Senior students at KSL may want to get to work straight away and so we can play this by ear. This time is good for us to gauge how the students are feeling and plan for what they need to have a successful study support session.
3:30pm	4:15pm	Commence study. This can be homework that is set by the school. Work in the students folder set by CAN. Educational game – ie: phonics or maths game It is expected that if students do not have set homework, they will do at least one literacy task, one maths task and some reading. After these worksheets have been completed, please place them in their folders named and dated.
4:15pm	5:15pm	Fun time. This can include group games of Uno or other card/ board games, educational games on the library computers, outside play, drawing or other art work.
4:30pm	5:30pm	Students leave the session with their Carer or Parent. Final clean up and pack up of space. Check in with Janet or Yirgalem if there is any issues of concern. Sign out sheet completed with the name of student you worked with.

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Child Safety at CAN



This page provides a summary of our Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct. Before starting, you'll need to read and sign the full versions of both documents, confirming you understand and commit to your responsibilities under them. Follow this link to complete: [Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct](#)

Child Safety

CAN Community Support is a child-safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse. Every child who participates in our programs has the right to feel safe, respected, and protected from harm.

Creating a safe environment

In everything you do, aim to treat students with dignity, fairness, and respect. Encourage them to share their ideas and speak up. Be a positive role model in your behaviour, language, and attitude, and always work in visible, open spaces- avoid private or unsupervised settings with students. Be mindful of physical boundaries and never initiate unnecessary physical contact.

Respect the privacy of students and their families. Photos or videos may only be taken with consent from both the Program Coordinator and the child's parent/guardian and must never be posted publicly or on social media without that same consent.

Cultural safety

Our students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and we're committed to making sure every child feels included and valued. Please be mindful of cultural differences and act in ways that affirm each student's identity and experience.

If something concerns you

If a student says or does something that worries you, or if you suspect a child may be at risk, please report it to the Program Coordinator as soon as possible- don't wait, and don't try to handle it alone. All concerns are treated confidentially.

Your obligations

Before starting, you'll provide a Working with Children Check and complete mandatory child safety training with Learning Beyond the Bell: [The LBB Hub - Centre for Multicultural Youth](#)

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Volunteer Registration





How to register as a volunteer tutor

Complete the Online Registration Form – [Volunteer Registration Form](#)

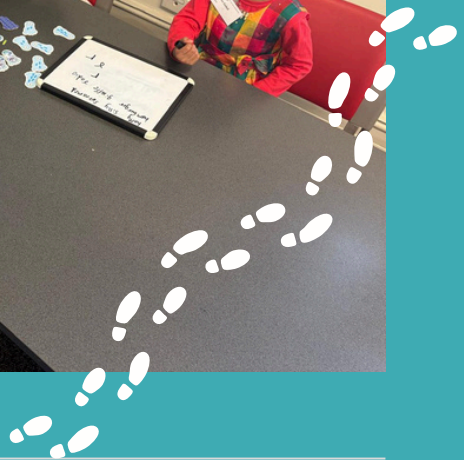
Provide Working With Children Check – Number and expiry date. Present card to Janet or Yirgalem at your first session.

Read and sign the Child Safe Policy – [Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct](#)

Complete online Child Safe Training – Part 1 with the Centre for Multi Cultural Youth. [The LBB Hub - Centre for Multicultural Youth](#) – It takes under an hour to complete. Once you have done this and informed Janet, you are ready to begin.

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Your Role as a Tutor



Your Role as a Tutor with CAN Community Support

Volunteers are at the heart of the Family Learning Program, and everything you bring to the role (your time, enthusiasm, and support!) makes a real difference to the students and families we work with.

As a homework tutor, you're someone who genuinely enjoys connecting with people and finds satisfaction in helping others grow. You're patient and encouraging, comfortable sharing what you know while staying curious and open to learning yourself. Beyond simply explaining content, you take on a mentorship role- guiding students to develop good study habits and a sense of ownership over their learning.



You know how to build trust, communicate well, and strike the right balance between being warm and maintaining appropriate boundaries. Most of all, you believe in helping students find their own confidence, not just giving them answers but empowering them to get there themselves.

Your role with students is within the bounds of Homework Club. Please do not encourage families to be engaging in contact with you outside of Homework Club hours, and please do not share your mobile number with families. If necessary, families can connect with you through the Homework Club co-ordinators, Janet and Yirgalem.

Keeping the role in perspective

Tutoring is about guiding, not doing. The most valuable thing you can offer is encouragement and a steady presence. Keep your support focused on homework tasks, foster independence over reliance, and remember that you're not responsible for a student's performance. You don't need to be an expert on everything, and you're not expected to be. Please do maintain confidentiality around student and family information and bring any concerns to staff/lead tutors rather than navigating it alone.

What we ask of You



Complete your induction and training

Before you begin, you'll need your Working with Children Check and to complete the Level 1 Child Safe module from Learning Beyond the Bell: The LBB Hub - Centre for Multicultural Youth



Show up and be present

Punctuality and reliability matter enormously to the students counting on you. Students work best with tutors they are familiar with and look forward to seeing them each week. If something comes up, please let the FLP team know as soon as you can.



Work within your role

Follow the guidance of FLP staff and only carry out tasks you've been authorised to do. If you're ever unsure, just ask.



Be honest and open

If something doesn't feel right, or if an accident or incident happens please let a staff member know



Present yourself well

A warm, respectful, and professional presence helps students feel safe and supported. Please wear clothing with covered shoulders and avoid short skirts/shorts that restrict your movement



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Tutoring EAL Learners- Tips and Resources



Tips and resources for tutors working with EAL students

Many of our students have come to Australia with interrupted or difficult learning histories and are navigating school in a language that is still new to them. Your patience, warmth, and consistency can make an enormous difference.

Meet them where they are

It can take students two to three years to become conversationally fluent in English, and up to eight years to fully catch up in academic contexts- so you shouldn't be discouraged by slow progress, and neither should they. Celebrate effort and small wins and focus on what each student does well. Be consistent, calm, and clear, and help students set achievable short-term goals alongside bigger ones.

Communicate thoughtfully

Take care to pronounce students' names correctly- it matters. Speak at a measured pace, repeat key instructions, and avoid idioms or confusing phrases. Use visual cues and written instructions where you can. Give students plenty of thinking time before expecting a response: they may be translating the question, forming an answer, and translating back. Active listening, inclusive body language, and genuine curiosity about their interests all go a long way.



Respect their privacy and autonomy

Students come with stories they may or may not wish to share. Follow their lead, acknowledge their feelings, and never pressure them to disclose. Giving students some choice in how they approach tasks helps build confidence and ownership of their learning.



You don't need all the answers

It's fine not to know everything. If a student is stuck, work through it together. Encouraging independence and problem-solving is more valuable than providing solutions. When in doubt, check in with your coordinator/lead tutor- that's what they're there for.

Further Resources

The Learning Beyond the Bell hub and Centre for Multicultural Youth has fantastic resources including tips and tricks for tutors, and further learning materials about working with EAL students:

[CMY Learning Support Program Resources](#)



Thank You

We value the work of our volunteer tutors. Without you, the Family Learning Program wouldn't be possible!

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your contributions and enthusiasm in being part of the Family Learning Program.

Contact Information

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