Milpera SHS

Volunteer Handbook

General Information

Milpera State High School is an intensive English language preparation and settlement school for newly-arrived students of migrant and refugee background. All students enrolled at Milpera are young people, aged 11 to 18, who speak languages other than English and who need to access an intensive English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) program in preparation for further education in mainstream schools or the TAFE sector.

ESTABLISHED:	January 1984
ADDRESS:	2 Parker Street, Chelmer, Qld 4068
PHONE:	(07) 3270 3222
E-MAIL:	the.principal@milperashs.eq.edu.au
WEBSITE:	www.milperashs.qld.edu.au

The school logo was designed by a Thai student during the school's opening year. It is a symbol of peace and of flight to new horizons. The word "Milpera" is an Aboriginal word for *meeting place of brothers and sisters* so the two doves flying together echo the fact that Milpera is a place where students from all over the world make new friends as they grow and develop in a new community.



Milpera's Mission Statement

Milpera State High School is committed to maximizing the full human potential of every student within a socially just and culturally inclusive environment. We achieve this by delivering a quality educational and settlement service that is needs based in order to gain the best learning and settlement outcomes for our learners and their families.

Values and Beliefs

The school is a community of students, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, friends and the wider ethnic community. It needs the full cooperation and participation of all those who are part of it. The Milpera local school community also includes members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Our school supports reconciliation with the indigenous people of this country.

The values and beliefs stated below require the support of all members of the Milpera school community.

- We value each person's cultural identity.
- Every individual has the right to equal access and opportunity.
- Language learning should be reflective of students' needs and relevant to their immediate requirements and future goals.
- The students' role is one of developing as independent learners and as active participants in the school community.
- The school values parents' participation in the education of their children. We value the community's involvement in the school.
- We value the professional integrity of the whole school staff.
- We value a shared sense of purpose.
- We value a school climate that promotes staff and student participation.

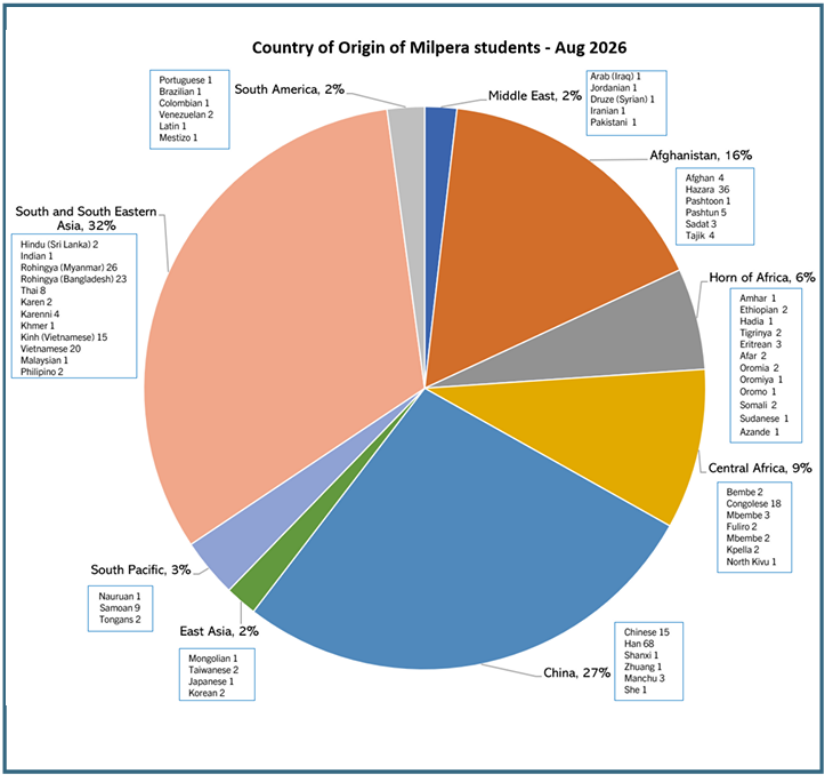
Milpera Students

Our students come to Milpera from many countries bringing with them a rich diversity of language and culture. The students are predominantly permanent residents and are here under refugee and humanitarian programs, as well as business and skills visas. They come from many different parts of the world and with a range of pre-migration experiences.

As Milpera is the only school in Brisbane providing an intensive program, students travel from all over the metropolitan area to attend. At any one-time students may come from 35 different countries and speak over 60 different languages.

Country of Origin of Milpera students – August 2026

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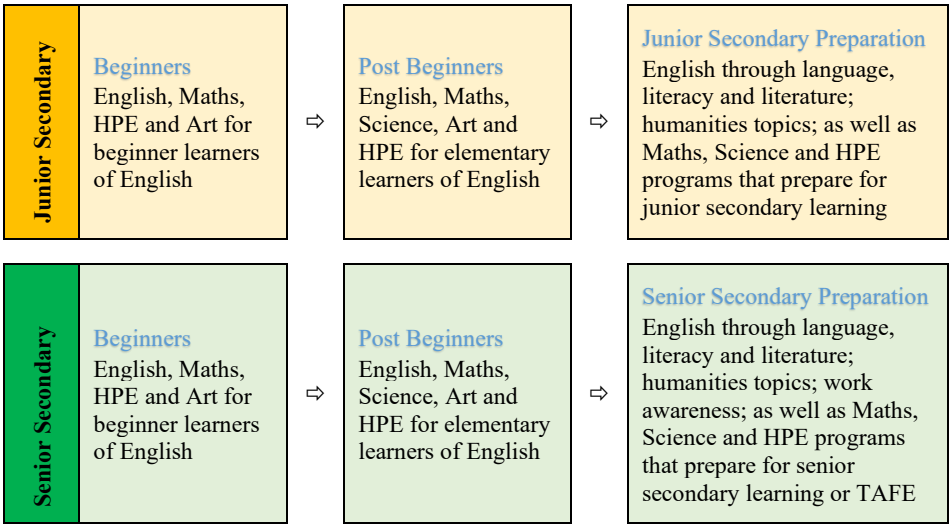
Staff

The school personnel include Principal, Deputy Principal, four Heads of Curriculum, a Guidance Officer, a HOD Student Services, Art and Music Therapists, a GP and a School Based Community Nurse.

Approximately 60 full/part time EAL/D teachers deliver the program. This includes Maths, Science and Health & Physical Education. They are supported by Teacher Aides, many of whom are bilingual, who operate in a variety of roles.

Class Organisation

Milpera programs provide a quality initial assessment, placement and or referral service. Students can access a range of classes from Beginners through to Year Level 2. Milpera enrolls students every week and classes exit to high school / TAFE every 10 weeks (called a cycle). When classes exit to high school, timetables and class groupings change. This means that volunteers will also experience change at this time.



Depending on their pre-migration education and experience, the length of time a student stays at Milpera varies between six and twelve months.

Volunteer Roles

As a volunteer you can choose to work in different areas, depending on your interest, skills and availability. The following areas are available:

Classroom Support

Support is required across a range of classes and in a variety of ways. Within each class there are students who require additional support to complete specific tasks. Volunteers can assist by:

- Working one to one with a student
- Working with a small group of students to complete a task
- Assisting any student in the class who may have difficulty completing the activity.

This will vary according to the needs of each class.

S.A.R. (Support-A-Reader)

Support a Reader is a program that operates every day from 8.55 until 10.40. It gives support and reading practice to individual students every day in a five-week or ten-week cycle. Volunteers receive training from the SAR coordinator who monitors the program and provides ongoing support.

H.O.W. (Help-Our-Writing) Program

The H.O.W. program is designed to develop and consolidate the writing skills of low literacy students. Each week a student has 3 to 4 half hour sessions with a tutor following a designated program. The H.O.W. coordinator provides initial training and ongoing assistance to each tutor, as well as monitoring student progress.

Art Classes

Volunteers can assist the Art teacher with Class Art lessons. Volunteers with artistic experience are particularly welcome. Due to the confidential nature of Art Therapy programs, volunteers are not able to participate in these programs.

Computer

Volunteers with Information Technology expertise can be of assistance in computer lessons.

Reading Groups

Three to four volunteers move between selected classes at a nominated reading time for one or two periods. Each volunteer reads with a small group.

Area of Support	Day /Time
Computer	Any time
Reading Groups	Any time any day
Classroom	Any time any day
Support a Reader	Every day 8.55-10.40
H.O.W.	Everyday 8.55-12.50
Maths Support	Every day 8.55-2.45
I.C.T	Any time any day
Art	Selected days

Whatever your interest and however much time you have to spare, we can accommodate your needs.

We do require from you a minimum commitment of ten weeks and the following qualities:

- Confidentiality
- Flexibility
- Patience
- Adaptability
- Good listening and Communication Skills
- Reliability

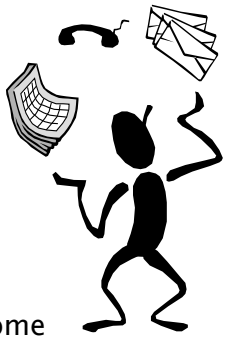
Student Supervision and Interaction

Volunteers please refer any student wanting to leave the classroom to the supervising teacher or coordinator. If you are working alone with a student always leave the door open.

Confidentiality

When you are assisting teachers and students at Milpera, you may become aware of information or events which should be kept confidential within the school. Please do not initiate conversation about students' personal history. Privacy of students and staff should be respected at all times, and you are asked not to speak of these matters with people outside of the school. If you are concerned about something which comes to your attention, and you are not sure if the school is aware, or how you should handle it, please speak with the Volunteer Coordinator, and she will refer you on to the appropriate staff member if necessary.

Flexibility and Adaptability



This will help you to cope with the daily changes that take place in the busy school environment. It will also help you to adapt to the different teaching styles and expectations.

Patience

There are many factors that influence the way some of our students behave at times. Some have not had much experience of schooling in their own country. Some have grown up with many moves, all of which occurred in traumatic and unsafe situations. Many have experienced the violent death of one or both parents and /or siblings. All are adolescent and are sometimes just being themselves. Patience will help you accept them for who they are.

Listening and Communication Skills



Good listening skills are required to understand teacher expectations as well as to assist students. This will also help you respond to students who might choose to share some of their stories with you. However, please do not question the student on personal matters. Let them be in charge of what they share with you.

Reliability

The smooth running of the volunteer program depends upon the reliability of volunteers. If you are unable to meet your commitment we would appreciate a phone call or an email.

Steps to becoming a Volunteer

All volunteers at Milpera need a current blue card or an E card. By law you cannot work in the school until your card is issued. The Blue Card Services administer the "Blue Card" system.

Step 1

Contact the school to register your interest. You can contact the volunteer coordinator directly on 3270 3231 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday morning.

Step 2

If you require a blue card /E card you can speak to the coordinator and then fill out the application online. The coordinator will link you to Milpera. Once this is done, you can complete the application online.

Step 3

You need to supply a written reference with the person's full name, phone number and email. They need to state that they have known you for 2 years or longer and the capacity in which they have known you. They also need to provide 2 to 3 sentences about your suitability to work with children.

Step 4

Participate in orientation to volunteering provided by the volunteer coordinator and discuss your areas of interest and availability.

Step 5

When your application has gone through, contact the coordinator who will confirm your starting date. If you already have a current blue card/E card, the volunteer coordinator will let you know once your card has been linked to Milpera and will confirm your room allocation and an appropriate starting time.

Communication

Milpera is a fast, ever-changing and challenging environment and, as such, communication is very important. We try to keep volunteers informed at all times.

There are sometimes special events, excursions, camps, visits to and from other schools etc that can alter our regular programs. If, for any reason, you are unsure of your program for the day please ask the volunteer coordinator.

Important sources of information are newsletters, morning teas, feedback sessions and information at the point of sign-in and in the Volunteer room.

Communication with Students

Introduce yourself and indicate your name badge to reinforce your name and role.

Use encouraging body language. Smile and make eye contact as you greet the student/s you are working with. Always let the student be in charge of the personal information they disclose.

Be aware that some students, as well as learning English, have had minimal education. Progress will vary. These students will need

plenty of repetition and consolidation along with understanding, encouragement and the celebration of each small step.

Behaviour Management

Students at Milpera may have pre-migration experiences of war and trauma, feelings of homesickness and isolation and differences in cultural perception. Often what is appropriate in one culture, is not appropriate in another. Teachers at Milpera are responsible for the management of student behaviour. Staff at Milpera receive specialist training in trauma informed and culturally safe ways of working. In the event that a fight occurs in a classroom, do not intervene. Call for help from the nearest staff member and send another student to alert the office. **We do not expect volunteers to deal with confrontation in the classroom or the playground.**

Contact Information for Volunteers

Milpera State High School: 3270 3222

Principal: Julie Peel

Deputy Principal: Sam Dilly

Volunteer Coordinator: Margie McLoughlin

Phone: 3270-3231

Email: mmclo5@eq.edu.au

H.O.W. & S.A.R. Coordinator

Helena McNamara Email: kmcna134@eq.edu.au

Phone: 3270-3203

Volunteer Practicalities

If you are unable to come on your nominated day, we would appreciate a call or email to the coordinator so that we can plan accordingly.

Your timetable is posted in the volunteer room. Please check regularly for changes.

The volunteer room is available at morning tea and lunch for you to have a break and meet other volunteers.

Once a term, Milpera provides morning tea for all volunteers and staff. This is an opportunity to meet the Principal and/or Deputy Principal and to hear them speak on current news and information in the Milpera community.

Milpera staff welcome volunteers into the school and classrooms. They appreciate the support, skills and experiences you bring. As a professional, the teacher is ultimately responsible for all decisions regarding students, curriculum and classroom management. We ask you to respect this.

For legal and liability requirements, please ensure that you sign in and wear your name badge at all times.

Classroom Volunteers should liaise with your classroom teacher so that you are aware of your role and expectations for the lesson. It is also important to provide feedback on any difficulties e.g. participation of a student you may have been working with. If you have any concerns or questions, please discuss with the class teacher.

Please ensure that mobile phones are switched off when working in the classrooms.

Workplace Health and Safety

Child Safety

In today's climate, physical contact with students is not appropriate. Please be aware of this in your interactions with students.

Volunteers make contact with students under the auspices of Milpera State High School. Consequently, the Principal needs to approve any request to extend contact out of school hours or involve other members of the student's family.

Your Health and Safety

Please discuss your physical needs with the volunteer coordinator when you are negotiating your volunteer role and the places within the school where you will be working.

If you have an accident and/or are injured during your rostered voluntary work at Milpera, you need to complete an Incident Form, and give it to the Business Services Manager at the office.

As a participant in this workplace, you have the right to be free from harassment and bullying, and have a right to complain to the following people if you experience these things.

- Sexual Harassment Referral Officer – Sanet Hood

For other bullying or harassment, discuss the matter with the Volunteer Coordinator, or speak with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Lock-Down Procedure

This is an organized and controlled initial procedure in response to a potentially dangerous situation. Milpera will hold a lock-down drill once a semester.

Volunteers will need to be familiar with the lock-down procedure.

- ***You are not expected to put your own safety in danger.***
- Follow the direction of the teacher, if in a classroom.
- If in the library, Volunteer room, S.A.R. or H.O.W. spaces, stay in those rooms.
- If you are outside, go to the nearest safe point.
- A signal will be given to indicate the end of the lockdown procedure.

Fire Drill procedures

Maps and written instructions are placed in prominent positions in every room of the school, including the volunteer room. Please familiarise yourself with these instructions. Again, you are not expected to put your own safety in danger.

Please follow the direction of the teacher if in a classroom.

School Timetable

TIME		MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
8.45 - 8.55	Roll & notices					
8.55 - 9.30	**1**					
9.30 - 10.05	**2**					
10.05 - 10.40	**3**					
	M Tea					
11.10 - 11.45	**4**					
11.45 - 12.20	**5**					
12.20 - 12.55	**6**					
	Lunch					
1.35 - 2.10	**7**					
2.10 - 2.45	**8**					

School Map (Fire evacuation plan route)

