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Volunteer Manual

ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

HISTORY

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Association Inc was established in response to a public meeting called by the Pine Rivers Shire Council in 1987. Concerned citizens of Pine Rivers recognised the growing need within the shire for a service that could provide practical support for local families facing temporary distress and needing support and encouragement to fully participate in community life.

These visionary community leaders recognised that the success of a community cannot be simply measured by economic indicators.

Our founders know that priority should be given to the well being of its community particularly children and families trying to cope with life and all that it brings – good and bad.

Since its establishment 22 years ago, the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre has led the way in assisting members of hundreds of local families set positive new directions for their lives through our mission statement of 'enabling and encouraging individuals and families to take informed control over their own lives, and together enriching our community'.

The thrust of our programs is to help individuals who are not in a position to support themselves. This is achieved by providing an opportunity for interaction and interdependence, through access to resources.

MISSION STATEMENT

"Enable and encourage individuals and families to take informed control of their own lives, and together enrich our community."

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Neighbourhood Centre is managed by the membership and Committee of the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Association Inc. The Association has legal responsibilities outlined under our Rules of Association called the "Constitution".

The Constitution also states the objects of the Association, and these are to operate for the benefit of the Pine Rivers community or where appropriate other persons or communities, targeting the most disadvantaged by:

Fostering co-operation between persons, groups and organizations in relation to community wellbeing.

Promoting and assisting the development and implementation of community services engaged in the relief of poverty, homelessness, distress or disadvantage.

Co-ordinating and support community development activities and advocate to Governments and the community for adequate resources.

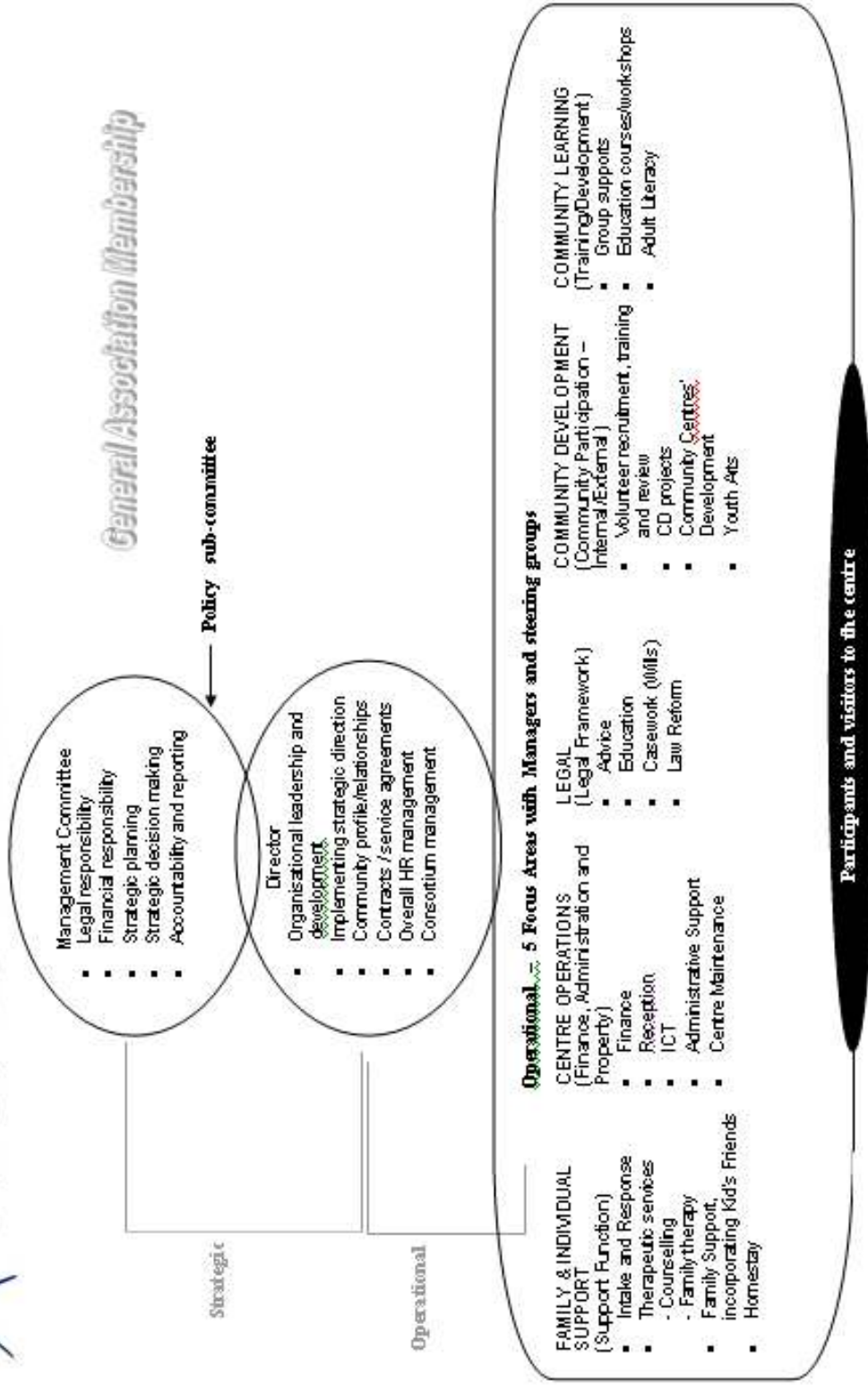
Facilitating and participate in public forums and seminars on community issues.

Encouraging community involvement and participation in meeting the objectives of the association

Undertaking such other activities and functions which are incidental to the attainment of the objectives of the association.

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STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE



OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

The Centre provides a range of activities and services for individuals and families within five focus areas, each headed by a Team Manager.

Centre Operations

Provides reception functions and administrative support to the centre.

Reception – provides a welcoming environment to all who access the centre.

Centre Administration – provides effective administrative and data management systems.

Information and Referral - responding to requests for information about available services in the community, such as government departments, social clubs, educational courses, welfare agencies, and legal and health services.

Tax Help - from June to October providing assistance with tax returns.

Community Development

Supports the community to engage in planning, research, service delivery and development projects that respond to community issues and needs.

Networking – participates in and further developing community networks.

Engaging – with community, government, business and industry to develop a strategic focus that raises awareness of, and responds to, current and future social issues and local trends.

Community Hall bookings – the Centre manages the booking system for the hiring of its own community meeting rooms, as well as for the council owned halls.

Volunteers Development – coordinating and developing the roles of volunteers at the Centre.

Ripple Youth Arts - for youth and young adults ages 12-25. This is a program where youth are able to explore and express their concerns and issues using various mediums and materials. These include paint, textiles and digital art.

Community Learning

The Community Learning Focus Area aims to strengthen and connect the local community by providing relevant and purposeful learning opportunities to children, young people, families and individuals.

We focus on offering a wide variety of courses, workshops and groups with skilled facilitators, to increase participants' skills, knowledge and relationships. Courses are run throughout the whole year and many are free or low cost. This includes courses for Self-Esteem, Grief and Loss, personal development, parenting, Multicultural groups and literacy and numeracy tutoring for adults, including English speaking.

Family and Individual Support

Provides a range of supports that strengthen the overall functioning and wellbeing of families and individuals.

Family Support- for families with children from birth to 16 years, with in-home visits. Aims to develop trusting relationships that support and strengthen families. Assists families experiencing increased stress or disruption to family life due to physical or mental health issues, loneliness, isolation or a breakdown in family relationships cope with the demands of children, parenting and managing home and family life. This includes a Kid's Friends Mentoring Program for kids aged 6-16. Links volunteer friends/mentors with kids who for various reasons lack a special adult companion to share problems, interests and some good times.

Counselling (Generalist & Family):- Qualified and experienced counsellors provide a counselling service available by appointment to individuals, children, couples and families who want help to explore personal and/or relationship issues.

Homelessness Early Intervention Service (HEIS): - Supports those who are at risk of homelessness. The HEIS worker is a qualified professional who will assist clients to sustain current tenancy or link into public housing or private rentals.

Intake & Response (I&R): - People presenting at the Centre requesting support services undertake a confidential 'interview' (conversation) to help workers understand the whole story of the current situation. This can help the workers and the client figure out the best strategy in response to their situation. This might include referral to Emergency Relief services, advocacy around bill payments, homelessness support services, counselling services, family support services, Homelessness Early Intervention Services (HEIS), legal advice services, courses, groups etc.

Community Legal Service

This service is a full time, free and confidential general legal service provided within the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre for the benefit of socially and financially disadvantaged members of the Pine Rivers community.

Day time appointments: Qualified solicitors offer advice on all general aspects of the law; assistance with information (including printed materials); how to proceed with a legal problem; referral to solicitors who specialise in various areas of the law; and help with applications and consent orders. Appointments are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm.

Thursday Night: A walk-in service is offered each Thursday night. This service is offered by solicitors who volunteer their time to assist you. No appointment is necessary, and the doors are open from 5.45pm to 7.30pm.

Legal Outreach:

Albany Creek: Solicitors consult with clients by appointment, at Albany Creek Library every fortnight on a Tuesday. Appointments are made at the Pine Rived Neighbourhood Centre reception.

Bribie Island: Solicitors consult with clients by appointment at Bribie Island once a month on a Thursday.

Family Relationship Centres

Strathpine and Chermside: The Legal Service provides fortnightly legal information sessions on family law, at both the Strathpine and the Chermside Family Relationship Centres. Individual legal advice sessions are also held at the Family Relationship Centres twice a week where advice is provided on family matters.

The Legal Service does not offer telephone advice or court representation, nor do we do ongoing casework.

Volunteering at the Centre

Since the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre began in 1987, volunteers have been an important part of the services which the Centre provides to the community. Many of our programs would not be able to run without the ongoing commitment and support of our volunteer team.

Principles of Volunteering

Volunteering:

- ✚ Is of benefit to the community and the volunteer.
- ✚ Is always a matter of choice.
- ✚ Is an activity that is unpaid.
- ✚ Is a legitimate way for citizens to participate in the activities of their community.
- ✚ Is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.
- ✚ Is an activity which takes place through not for profit organisations and projects.
- ✚ Is not a substitute for paid work.
- ✚ Does not threaten the livelihood of paid workers.
- ✚ Respects the rights, dignity and culture of others.
- ✚ Promotes human rights and equality.

Volunteers – Rights

Volunteers have the right to:

- Be treated with respect, consideration and courtesy at all times.
- Receive adequate induction and orientation to assigned tasks, including appropriate job training (pre-service, in-service).
- Protection, insurance and personal safety when carrying out assigned tasks (Refer – Workplace Health and Safety policy & Volunteer Insurance Cover).
- Have concerns, complaints and grievances heard (Refer – Grievance Policy).
- Be reimbursed for prescribed out of pocket expenses incurred during approved activities (Refer - Volunteer Expenses policy).
- Say ‘no’. Not to be coerced into participating in activities or taking responsibilities against your wishes.
- Confidentiality of personal information (Refer – Confidentiality Policy).
- Suitable work tasks with consideration for personal preferences, life experiences and employment background.
- Some guidance and direction to be supported in work duties and to receive appropriate feedback regarding their performance.
- Be treated as a team member and to be heard; able to contribute ideas, skills and knowledge.
- Have a holiday.
- Withdraw support and resign from position.



Volunteers – Responsibilities

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- Work within the philosophies and policies and procedures of the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre.
- Be loyal and committed to the Neighbourhood Centre and maintain confidentiality.
- Accept direction and supervision.
- Identify and report any potential health and safety hazards.
- Speak up regarding important issues and concerns.
- Be willing to learn new things and undertake training.
- Work the agreed hours and be dependable and reliable.
- Recognise personal and external limitations.
- Be accountable and accept evaluation and feedback.
- Carry out the specific tasks defined in your job description
- Let us know as soon as possible, if you intend to stop volunteering
- Value and support other team members
- Let us know as soon as possible if you are going to be absent

Benefits of Volunteering at the Centre

Depending on the volunteer's interests and needs, volunteering at the Centre is a way of:

- developing work experience
- increasing social interaction and meeting people
- experiencing something new
- learning new skills or improving existing skills
- sharing knowledge and experiences
- gaining a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging
- becoming better acquainted with the community
- giving back to the community
- being useful and helpful
- getting back into the workforce



Hot tips for Volunteers

- Be sure you really enjoy the area you are in and if not ask for a change.
- Be aware of the Neighbourhood Centres policies, procedures and philosophy, there are useful reasons for them.
- Believe in the value and benefit of what you do.
- Be dependable; don't be late or keep missing days rostered to work.
- Be a team member, cooperative, enthusiastic and helpful.
- Be aware of health and safety issues for you and clients.
- Be happy to learn; informal and formal training is essential.
- Be assertive and speak up if you do not understand or are not happy about something.
- Most importantly have fun and "BE HAPPY".

Important Policies and Procedures

The Neighbourhood Centre has a comprehensive Policy and Procedure Manual and you are encouraged to spend some time reading through and understanding them. The Manual is kept in the office of the Director and is available to all volunteers. The Policy and Procedure can also be found on the intranet.

The following policies and procedures are essential for you to read and understand in order for you to fulfill your role as a volunteer.

- Operating Principles Policy
- Insurance Policy
- Volunteer Support and Supervision Procedure
- Promotion, Publicity and Representation Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Human Resource Management Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- Facilities and Assets Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Abuse and Neglect Notification Policy

Operating Principles

The Centre regards the following principles as vital for the development of a just society and a secure, vibrant community and we look for volunteers who align themselves with these principles:

Social Justice –

no one will be discriminated against on the basis of education, religion, abilities, marital status, sexual orientation, health status or socio-economic status.

Respect –

in all our interactions we will honour human dignity and rights, value people's potential, diversity and uniqueness, and validate their experience and perspective.

Self Determination –

we will not assume that we know what a perfect world is for others, but will assist individuals and families to take informed control of their lives.

Partnership –

we will work in collaboration with clients and the community, recognising their skills, strengths, resources, motivation, knowledge and qualities.

Transparency –

we are committed to: decision-making processes that are based on consultation and collaboration with all stakeholders; the right of access to information about decisions; and the right of appeal for those affected by a decision, while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Professionalism –

we will work efficiently, effectively and appropriately, in accordance with professional and organisational standards.

Integrity –

workers and management will uphold the mission and vision of the Centre, declare any conflicts of interest, and ensure that personal values and relationships do not impinge on the way they perform their duties.

Community Development –

in all our services and programs, we will employ a developmental approach that builds on strengths and capacities, pursues equity and values diversity, encourages innovation and collaborates with partners.

The Strengths-Based Approach

At the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre, the strength based approach is the basis of all interaction with the community; and as a volunteer it is important to be familiar with this approach. Training will be provided on the approach, but a brief summary of important points follows:

What is a Strengths Based Approach?

- As the term suggests this simply means an approach to people, based on strengths.
- “Strengths can be defined as people’s intellectual, physical and interpersonal skills, capacities, interests and motivations.” Mallucio 1981

Key Beliefs of a Strengths Based Approach

- All people have strengths and capabilities
- People have the capacity to change
- People are the experts on their own situation
- The problem is the problem, the person is not the problem
- People are generally doing the best they can at any point in time
- Problems can blind people from noticing and appreciating their strengths and their capacity to find solutions

Key Principles of a Strengths Based Approach

- Social justice
- Transparency
- “Power with” not “power over”
- Respect
- Self determination/client driven practice
- Focus on strengths and capabilities
- Partnership and collaboration

Reminders for strength based everyday contact with others:

- All people are important
- There are more similarities between people than there are differences
- People have strengths and resources, sometimes undiscovered
- People need resources to reach their potential
- We can all get trapped by thinking and behaviour that prevents change
- We can all do things that aren’t good for us
- We can all have difficulties changing habits
- Our picture of ourselves influences what we say and do
- Blaming makes things worse
- Each individual is unique
- Respect is contagious

Healthy Community

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre is a community in itself part of, but separate from the community it serves. For the Centre to serve the community successfully, it needs to be a healthy community in itself.

As a healthy working community we encourage among our staff and volunteers:

- connectedness,
- interdependence,
- belonging,
- mutual support,
- respect,
- sharing,
- acceptance of others and their differences,
- a sense of pride and identity,

Volunteers are an essential part of the services offered by the Centre, and as a member of the Centre's community, the way in which you interact with others requires an approach of co-operation, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

Communication

A good communicator: has good **verbal** and **non-verbal** skills and is an **active listener**.

An active listener: someone who can observe the person with whom he or she is communicating, and pay attention to the way the speaker is feeling.

Effective Communication: It is very important to:

- **speak clearly,**
- **listen carefully,** and
- let others know that you **understand** them.
- Ask questions so as to ensure that you understand what is being communicated.

Most people think that they listen to others and clearly express their own views, but in reality, few people are really effective communicators and all of us could learn to do it a little bit better.

Communication is relatively easy with someone of a similar background and with similar views to your own. The challenge is when you are trying to communicate with someone with very different views; and the problem is made worse when we presume, based on first impressions from a person's look or personality, that they have the same views as ourselves

Non Verbal Communication:

A great deal of the "message" that you send to a listener is non verbal. People "hear" with their ears and eyes. Body language shows how you feel, for example, the look on your face or the signs you make with your hands or arms. Non-verbal communication can be positive or negative. Be aware of the non verbal signs that you are communicating and try to keep them positive by:

- Facing the person you are speaking to
- Using culturally appropriate eye contact
- Smiling
- Having a good posture
- Staying at an acceptable distance from the person you are speaking to

- Listening carefully to what they are saying
- Being aware of how you sound over the telephone

Emotions such as frustration/anger/fear prevent people from listening as well as they could, or from saying what they mean to say. So as both a listener and a talker, being aware of our emotions and how they are affecting how we communicate can be helpful.

Using the Telephone

As you are often the first contact, it is important to give a good impression by being polite and helpful. It is useful to:

- Be ready with a pen and paper
- Note the contact details and check them

Assertive Communication

Communicating with others when emotions are running high can be problematic or difficult. Being able to communicate assertively will help. Being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. Aim to be assertive. It takes practice to develop assertiveness skills.

Main Characteristics of Assertive Communication:

- **eye contact:** this demonstrates your interest and shows that you are sincere.
- **mutual respect:** this is the foundation of assertive communication.
- **body posture:** match your body language to your message. This will improve the significance of what you are saying.
- **gestures:** appropriate gestures help to add emphasis
- **voice:** a level, well modulated tone is more convincing and acceptable, and is not intimidating
- **timing:** use your judgement to assess when is a good time to say what!
- **content:** how, where and when you choose to comment is probably more important than WHAT you say

“I”

Being assertive means that you have the ability to express your needs and feelings appropriately. You can accomplish this by using "I" statements. Start what you are saying, by using the word, “I”. This not meant to sound selfish and self centred, but helps to assert your opinion in a way which indicates that you accept ownership of what you are saying. E.g. I feel.....I am.....I do not like it when.....

Top Tips

- ❖ Give the person you are talking to space, time and permission to speak;
- ❖ Adopt a listening posture; think about your body language and non verbal communication.
- ❖ Empathize
- ❖ Be patient
- ❖ Watch your emotions
- ❖ Ask questions to clarify what you have heard
- ❖ Repeat what you have heard

Volunteer Orientation is just the beginning of your training at the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre. You will be offered training periodically to further enhance your skills and to learn more about PRNC. Please ask the Volunteer Development Coordinator if you have any questions.

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION CHECK LIST

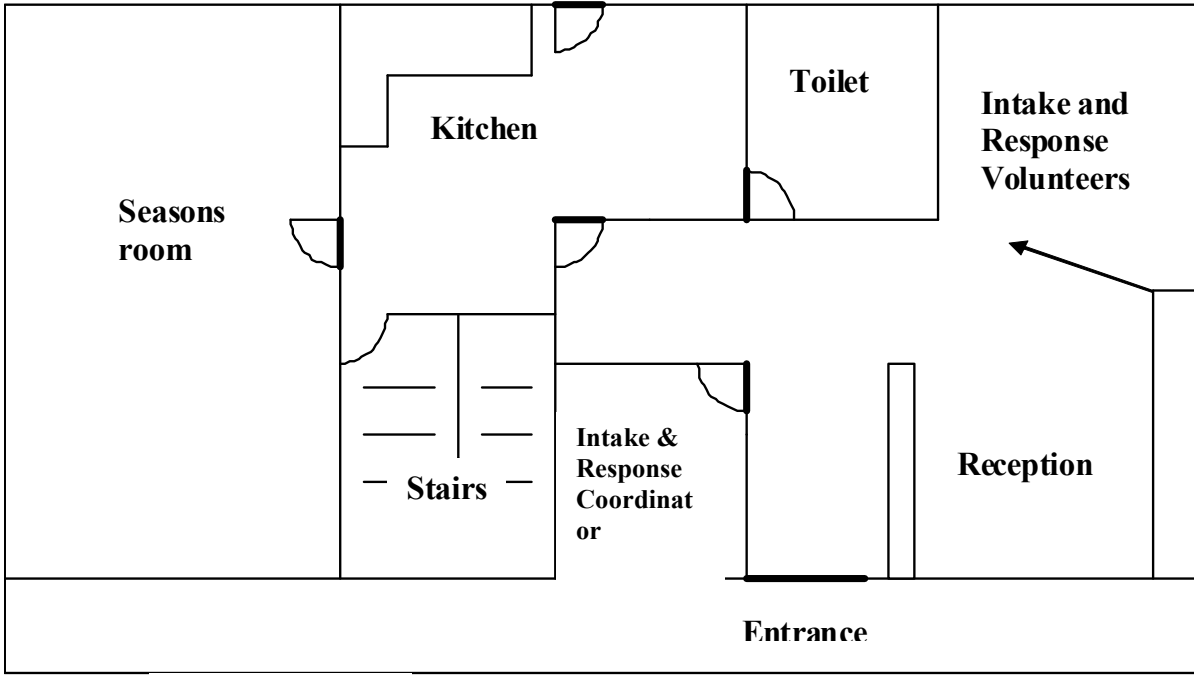
_____ has been provided with information relating to the following:
(insert volunteer name)

- Centre Policy and Procedures
- Current Annual Report
- Brochure for Neighbourhood Centre programs
- Building Tour including sites for fire extinguishers and first aid kits.
- Introduction to Supervisor
- Location of Incident/Accident Forms
- Housekeeping matters ie. Lunch time, valuables
- Introduction to all
- Communications systems
- Focus Area Orientation Material
- Location of Procedures Manuals for each Focus Area and Focus Area Orientation Material.

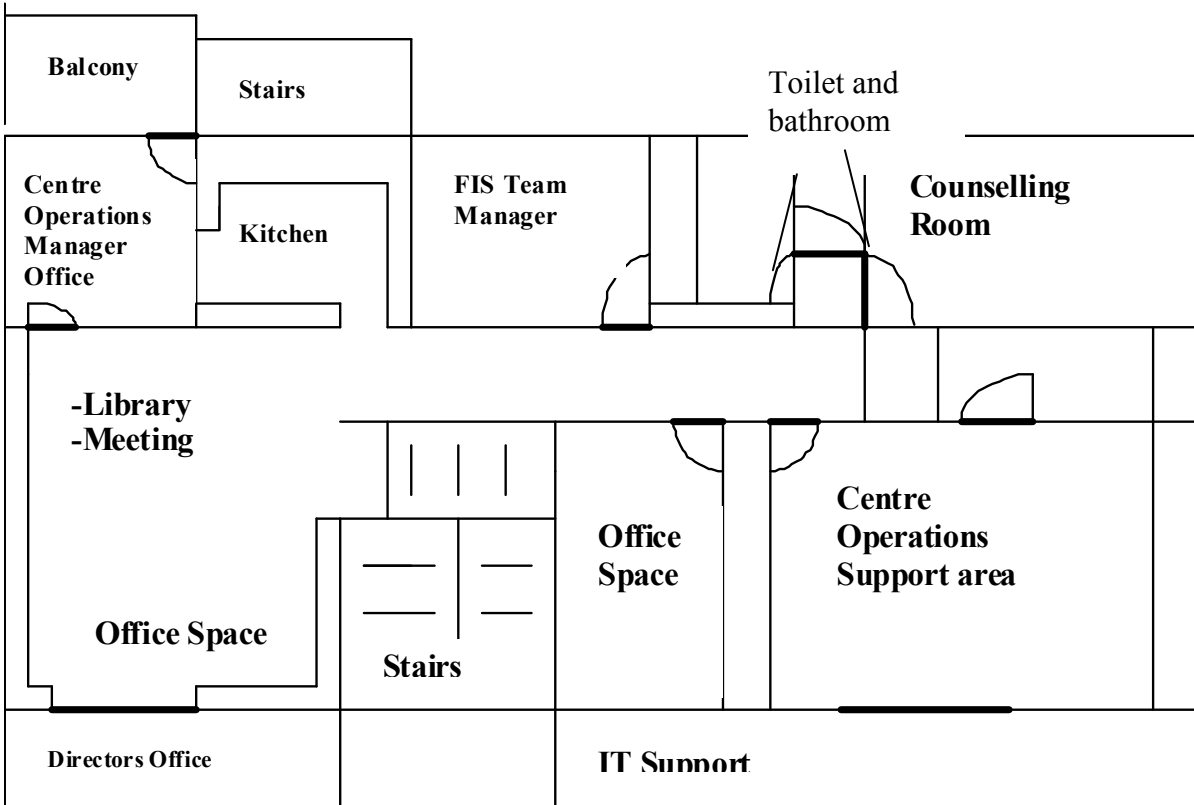
Volunteer	Date	Coordinator	Date
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Neighbourhood Centre Floor Plan

Ground Floor

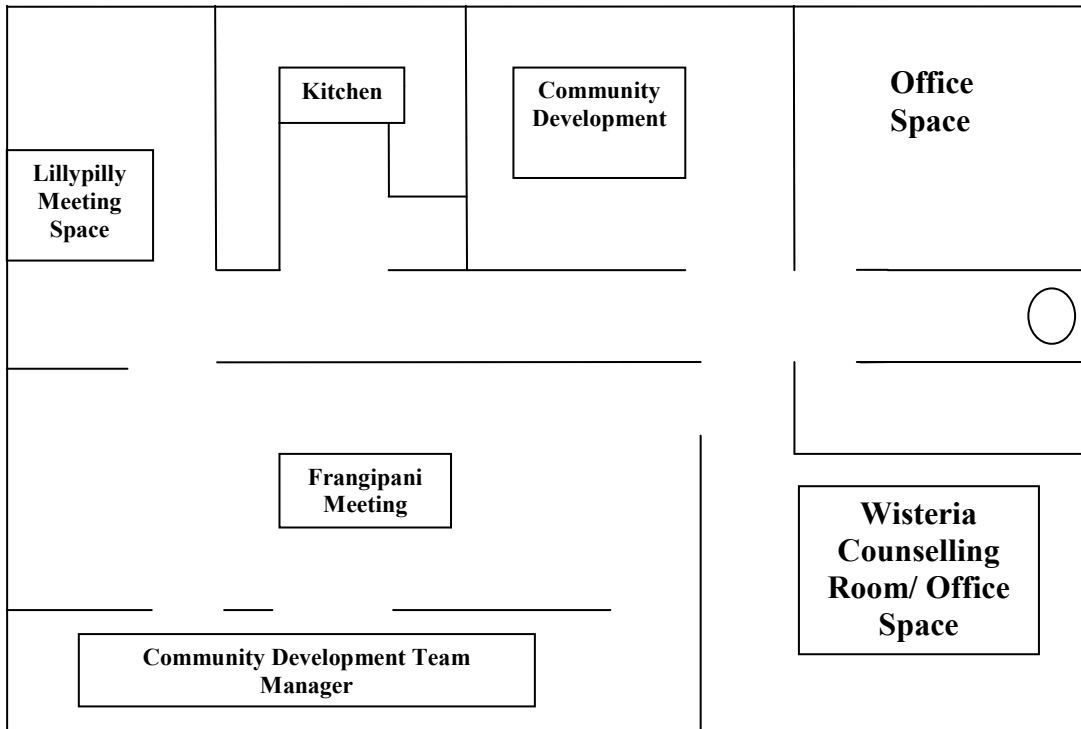


First Floor

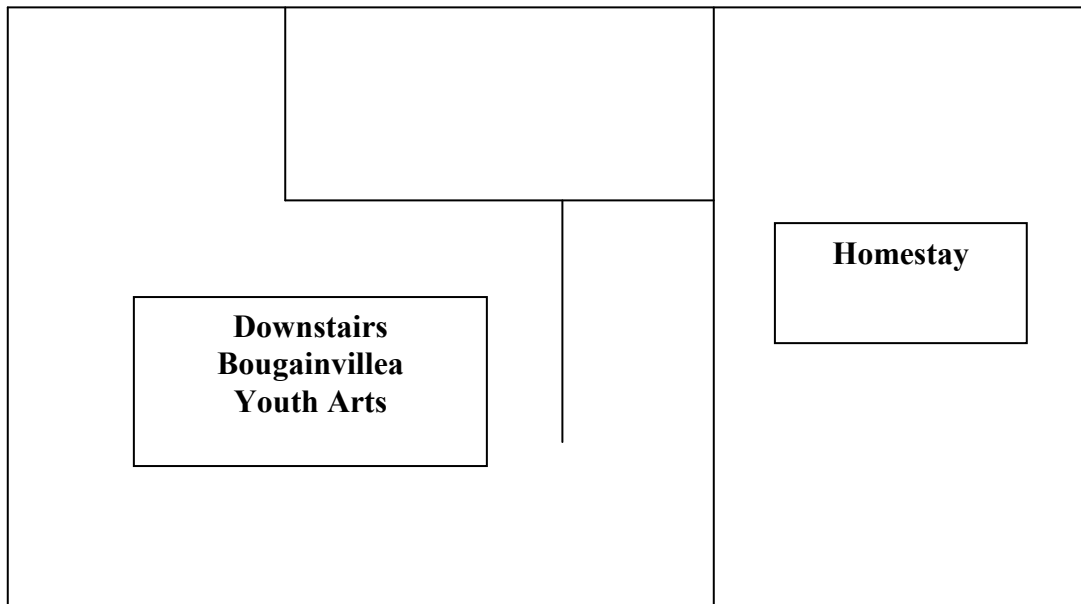


(outside through the kitchen door on the ground floor)

FRANCIS COTTAGE FLOOR PLAN



Downstairs



Declaration of Confidentiality

This Declaration relates to Personal and Confidential Information of the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Association Inc. and its clients, volunteers, members, staff, contractors, users and stakeholders.

I,

1. Have read and agree to abide by the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988, including the Information Privacy Principles ([Information Sheet \(Private Sector\) 1A: National Privacy Principles](#)) set out in that Act, in respect of both Personal Information and confidential information.
2. Have read and agree to abide by the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Association Inc's Confidentiality Policy and Procedure.
3. Acknowledge that failure by me to comply with this declaration may be considered a Breach of the Code of Conduct and may result in procedures detailed the Code of Conduct Procedure being carried out.
4. Acknowledge and agree that this declaration survives the termination or expiry of my employment as a staff member/volunteer with the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre.

Signed:
.....

Signature of Witness:
.....

Name:
.....

Name of Witness:
.....

Position:
.....

Date:

CODE OF CONDUCT/AGREEMENT WORKING WITH ADULTS, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

In line with the Operating Principles Policy and the Child Protection Policy of the organisation, the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Association Inc. is committed to establishing and maintaining a safe, friendly environment for adults, children and young people. This code of conduct applies to all staff and volunteers.

AS A VOLUNTEER AT PINE RIVERS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE I WILL:

1. remember at all times that I am a role model;
2. use language and topics of conversation appropriate to the situation;
3. respect the diverse and special needs of people;
4. refrain from any physical contact with a person unless it is strictly necessary - for example, where the person is injured;
5. always work in an open environment, avoiding unobserved situations;
6. use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children and young people;
7. not engage in social relationships with clients outside of my assigned role;
8. not make sexually suggestive, sexist or racist comments to, or in the presence of, adults, children and young people;
9. not use obscene language in communication with, or in the presence of adults, children and young people;
10. not smoke or use tobacco in the presence of children and young people;
11. not use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing my role;
12. report any suspected abuse of children and young people to my supervisor/Team Leader immediately;
13. neither accept expensive gifts from adults, children/young people nor give expensive gifts to them;
14. not use any form of physical discipline or any other discipline that frightens or humiliates children and young people;
15. not invite children/young people for overnight stays under any circumstances;
16. not do for children and young people anything of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.

Having read and understood the above I agree to uphold the Code of Conduct and all Policies and Procedures of the PRNA Inc. in relation to working with adults, children and young people and understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct may result in termination of my employment and/or referral to police.

_____ Printed Name _____ Date

_____ Signature

_____ Witnessed by