Guidelines for Volunteers

Everything you need to know before you start

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<td>15/12/2016</td>
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Welcome to Primary Ethics

Thank you for joining our team of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers, without whom Primary Ethics could not exist.

Each school week in NSW over 32,000 primary school students attend ethics classes due to the generosity of our volunteers and donors.

The overall aim of ethics classes is to help children develop a life-long capacity to make well-reasoned decisions on ethical issues. We hope our students will become informed and inquiring adults with the ability to recognise ethical issues and explore them with others in a considered, productive and respectful way.

In achieving this outcome, Primary Ethics recognises the significant commitment of both time and resources that our volunteering roles require.

Thank you for your contribution. We hope that your volunteering experience will be an enjoyable one.

Using these Guidelines

These are the Guidelines referred to in your Volunteer Engagement Form. They set out the policy requirements and responsibilities that volunteers need to follow to ensure the smooth running of ethics programs in schools. These Guidelines will be reviewed regularly and any updates will be communicated via the monthly Volunteer Bulletin.

Some situations simply won’t fit squarely with the policy requirements set out here. If you have questions about how these requirements apply to your circumstances please speak with your regional manager and seek the approval of a volunteering manager for any variation.

References

Throughout these Guidelines we refer to other documents or resources that provide additional information on a certain topic. You’ll see a number like this whenever that occurs. To find out where that document or resource is located, crosscheck the number in the speech bubble with the References section at the end of this document.

Contacting Primary Ethics staff

Our small team of permanent staff is here to support you. Contact our office during business hours on 02 8068 7752 to talk to any of the Primary Ethics staff, or email us using the email addresses below.

Primary Ethics’ office is located at Suite 408/24-30 Springfield Avenue Potts Point NSW 2011.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leonie Johnson</td>
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<td>Communications Manager</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana Abbott</td>
<td>Administration Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:helpdesk@primaryethics.com.au">helpdesk@primaryethics.com.au</a></td>
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1 Primary Ethics volunteering roles

Refer to Position Descriptions for detailed information on these roles and their responsibilities.

Primary Ethics relies on a dedicated team of volunteers to not only deliver ethics classes but to also manage ethics programs in schools, including establishing ethics classes, liaising with schools and recruiting and supporting volunteers.

The incredible teamwork that occurs among volunteers is a strength of the Primary Ethics program.

Primary Ethics has four key volunteer roles.

Regional managers are responsible for managing the ethics program in schools in a region, including recruiting and supporting ethics coordinators, supporting teachers at schools without an ethics coordinator, helping to establish ethics classes in new schools and supporting volunteers throughout the region. Regional managers report to one of two volunteering managers (north or south).

Ethics coordinators are responsible for coordinating the ethics program in a school, including recruiting and supporting ethics teachers, liaising with the school, ensuring all volunteers meet Department of Education requirements and providing information to the community about ethics classes and volunteering. Ethics coordinators report to a regional manager.

Ethics teachers prepare for ethics classes using approved lesson materials, attend schools weekly to deliver ethics classes, facilitate discussion in the class and manage student behaviour. Ethics teachers report to the ethics coordinator in their school.

Classroom support team members visit ethics classes to observe lessons and help ethics teachers develop strategies to assist them in their role. The classroom support team reports to the training manager.

Combined and casual roles

Volunteers are welcome to take on more than one volunteering role and can do so by contacting the regional manager or a volunteering manager to ensure the necessary recruitment measures are put in place. Experienced ethics teachers who are no longer able to deliver weekly classes are encouraged to stay on as an ethics coordinator and/or casual (relief) ethics teacher to support other volunteers.

Casual ethics teachers provide much needed support to others. Ethics teachers tell us it takes at least 6 months after training to consolidate their classroom skills. For this reason, we do have some restrictions on casual teaching, which are designed to ensure consistency for children and quality in the classroom.

- Current ethics teachers are welcome to fill in on a casual basis within their school or in other schools
- Ethics teachers with at least 12 months’ classroom experience are welcome to become casual teachers when they are no longer able to teach on a regular basis
- Ethics coordinators and regional managers are encouraged to become ethics teachers and are asked to teach weekly for two terms to consolidate their classroom skills before becoming casual ethics teachers.

Please speak with your regional manager or call the Primary Ethics office to discuss changing your role. We also ask that you let the office know if you are planning to resign or take a break from volunteering.
Volunteer conduct

As representatives of Primary Ethics, all volunteers are expected to:

- Be respectful, professional and diligent
- Work collaboratively with other volunteers, school staff and school communities
- Act honestly, avoiding situations which may give rise to a conflict of interest or the perception of such a conflict
- Undertake any necessary training and meet all compliance requirements
- Avoid any behaviour that could be perceived as harassment, intimidation, bullying, belittling or threatening, whether written or face-to-face
- Volunteers in child-facing roles (ethics teachers and classroom support team members) also need to comply with Volunteer conduct in the classroom on page 6.

2 Volunteering in schools

Parents/carers of children in NSW public primary schools have the option of selecting ethics classes for their children, as set out in section 33A of the Education Act 1990. Primary Ethics is the charity approved by the NSW Minister of Education to deliver these ethics classes. Primary Ethics provides volunteer recruitment, training and lesson materials to enable communities to deliver ethics classes to children within NSW public schools.

Child Protection

Primary Ethics is a child-safe organisation. Our policies and processes are designed to ensure the highest standards of child protection.

All volunteers undergo a criminal history check and an interview to determine suitability for the role. Volunteers in child facing roles (ethics teachers and classroom support team members) are required to:

- Hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) from NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian, or
- Hold a Working with Children declaration (note that by 2018 volunteers with a declaration will need to have transitioned to the WWCC)
- Undertake Child Protection Awareness Training annually
- Undertake behaviour management training.

Only volunteers with a current WWCC or declaration, up to date Child Protection Awareness Training and a completed online engagement form are authorised to volunteer in classrooms. Note that all volunteers, not just those in a child-facing role, will require a WWCC by 2018.

The Primary Ethics Complaints Policy is available on our website. It sets out how parents/carers, schools, volunteers or others can raise concerns. We work with school principals to ensure that complaints received from children are treated seriously and appropriately (see page 13 for more on the Complaints policy).

2 Do you still have a Working with Children declaration? These will no longer be valid in 2018. WWCCs are free for volunteers.

Apply here.
Volunteer conduct in the classroom

To ensure that ethics classes are safe learning environments, all volunteers in child facing roles (ethics teachers and classroom support team members) must:

- Be aware of the position of trust and increased obligations to model appropriate behaviour when dealing with students
- Act with honesty and integrity
- Raise any concerns about the wellbeing or welfare of a student with the child’s classroom teacher, the school principal or other appropriate school staff, as advised by the school
- Not name or otherwise identify students when sharing what was discussed in ethics classes, except as set out above
- Always know where the nearest school teacher is, should assistance be required
- Never leave a class unattended
- Always send two children together if there is a need for a child to leave the classroom
- Avoid being alone with a child in an unobserved location
- Behave appropriately at all times and employ a non-confrontational behaviour management style: never swear, yell, express anger, use actual or implied aggression, sarcasm or belittling of students or lose control
- Avoid and discourage physical contact with students
- Never attend school under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or smoke on school grounds
- Dress professionally and wear appropriate clothing (eg no adult concepts or advertising of alcohol, tobacco, gambling)
- Not use the role to develop relationships with students outside school
- Deliver classes as set out in the approved curriculum and lesson materials without addition or omission
- Not offer students any inducements for participating in ethics classes such as food, gifts or other items (eg stickers, lollies, rewards) unless the school requires this as part of participation in a behaviour management system.
Department of Education requirements

The NSW Department of Education provides information for schools on the management of ethics classes at https://education.nsw.gov.au/religion-and-ethics or see References for a list of links. This section summarises the NSW Department of Education’s requirements for Primary Ethics volunteers in schools.

Volunteers should be aware of the obligations of both schools and Primary Ethics volunteers as set out in these documents and summarised here.

Volunteer obligations

1. All volunteers must sign in and out of the school office
2. While on school grounds, all volunteers must wear a Primary Ethics name badge (if a visitor badge is also provided by the school then both must be worn)
3. Volunteers must carry photo identification while on school grounds and present it to school staff when requested
4. The school must be provided with a list of the names, contact details and dates of birth of the ethics teachers and the ethics coordinator who are authorised to volunteer at that school. The Department may use this information to check its register of people not to be employed in schools.

School obligations

- Schools must brief volunteers on safety and operational procedures relevant to their roles
- Schools must provide a list of names of the students who are approved to be in ethics classes and include any information necessary to managing health or behaviour.

Schools and volunteers should meet in Term 4 to discuss organisation for the following year and to negotiate any changes.

Primary Ethics’ obligations

- Primary Ethics must submit an annual assurance to the Department of Education stating that all ethics teachers hold appropriate child protection checks and undergo regular child protection and classroom management training and use approved lesson materials.

Primary Ethics volunteering managers Maria McCarthy and Rob Harden can assist in liaising with schools.

Primary Ethics volunteers are required to comply with the conduct requirements set out in this document (above and on page 5). These requirements are based on the NSW Department of Education Code of Conduct which applies to Department employees. Volunteers may wish to familiarise themselves with the Department requirements.

Mary McGee
Ethics Coordinator

Download your name badge template Learning Centre> About Primary Ethics
3 Ethics classes

Student numbers and stages
The Primary Ethics curriculum is based on a community of inquiry learning model. Classes are discussion-based and depend on peer-to-peer interactions. For this reason, ethics classes need to contain a minimum of 8 students and no more than 22 students from the same educational stage.

The NSW Department of Education reviews Primary Ethics’ lesson materials for age appropriateness, according to educational stage. The Ethics Teacher Handbook provides more detailed information about the learning model used in ethics classes.

Using lesson materials
Ethics teachers must use Primary Ethics’ approved lesson materials in class as instructed.

Primary Ethics’ lesson materials are protected by copyright. Volunteer ethics teachers are free to access, download and print lesson materials solely for the purpose of running an ethics class in a public primary school for students who have been opted out of scripture. The materials cannot be used in any other context without permission from the Primary Ethics Board.

Volunteers are not permitted to share lesson materials with anyone who is not authorised to use them. School teachers, principals and parents are permitted to view the materials but not to keep a copy.

Primary Ethics’ systems are set up to prevent anyone who does not have an up-to-date Working with Children Check or declaration from accessing lesson materials. Please do not download or print lesson materials for a volunteer who is unable to access the materials. This is an important child protection measure. If you are having trouble accessing the lesson materials please contact the Primary Ethics office for assistance.

Inquiries from schools, parents or the community about the lesson materials should be directed to the Primary Ethics office.

Behaviour management
Ethics students tell us that the thing they like least about ethics classes is when other students are behaving badly. Poor student behaviour, if allowed to continue, can result in a stressful volunteering experience and, potentially, safety concerns.

Ethics teachers receive training in approaches and strategies for managing the behaviour of students in ethics class. It is essential that ethics teachers make every effort to effectively manage student behaviour, whether or not a Department of Education classroom teacher is present. Behaviour management approaches are set out in the Ethics Teacher Handbook.

Ethics teachers can seek support by:

- Calling the Primary Ethics office to speak to the training manager
- Working with their ethics coordinator to request assistance from the school
- Arranging a visit from a volunteer member of the Primary Ethics classroom support team.

School principals have a duty of care towards both students and volunteers. It is important that the school provides volunteers with enough support to ensure an effective ethics class. This could include providing:

- Information on how to manage particular behavioural issues that might arise within a class
- Advice on how the school expects volunteers to manage behaviour and escalate any issues, including whether any aspect of the school’s behaviour management program is available for use by volunteers
• A more suitable classroom space (for example, closer to where Department of Education teachers are located)
• A Department teacher in, or close to, the classroom
• A teacher to speak to students about expected behaviours in ethics classes.

Please note that volunteers cannot communicate directly with students’ families about behavioural issues. These communications need to be managed by the school.

Refer to the Ethics Teacher Handbook for more information on managing behaviour, including escalated responses.

Class and waiting list data

Primary Ethics relies on ethics teachers and ethics coordinators to assist in keeping up to date records of ethics classes and waitlists. This helps Primary Ethics to:

• Understand the impact of our program
• Match new volunteer availability to schools with suitable class times
• Direct volunteers who do not specify a school to schools with waiting lists.

Ethics teachers have access to the class database on the Learning Centre. Each year, when a new class commences (even if it is the same class as last year) we ask ethics teachers to input their class details as well as any significant changes through the year.

Ethics coordinators have access to the school waiting list database. For schools where information on waiting lists is available, we ask coordinators to put the waiting list data in at the start of each year and keep it up to date if there are significant changes (such as a new class reducing the waiting list).

Visitors to ethics classes

Department of Education teachers are always welcome in classrooms during ethics classes. Their presence can be very helpful in managing class behaviour, however, school teachers should not involve themselves in the ethics class discussion. The School Teachers’ Guide to Ethics Classes fact sheet, available on our website and in the Learning Centre, provides information to assist school teachers to understand the peer-to-peer learning model used in ethics classes.

Primary Ethics volunteers, classroom support team members or donors may wish to visit an ethics class. This can only occur with the permission of the school principal and should be arranged through the ethics coordinator for the school.

End of year

There is an optional end of year lesson designed for the last teaching week of ethics classes.

For insurance reasons Primary Ethics cannot support volunteers to hold end of year parties. There can also be difficulties when one ethics class has a party and another doesn’t, putting pressure on ethics teachers who do not wish to hold a party.

We do understand that some volunteers feel strongly about having an end of year celebration of some kind. Talk to your school principal about events that the school is willing to support that you can participate in as a school volunteer.

Providing certificates to recognise that students attended ethics classes is optional. If ethics teachers wish to provide certificates to students it is important to:

• Seek permission from the school to hand out certificates to students
• Check with the ethics coordinator to see what other ethics teachers in the school are planning (to prevent some classes receiving certificates and others missing out)
• Give certificates to all students, not just a few
• Use the certificate template in the Learning Centre
• Hand out the certificates in class, unless the school has indicated that the entire school will be receiving SRE/SEE certificates at assembly.

4 Primary Ethics’ policies

Promoting Primary Ethics

Guidelines for Promoting Primary Ethics and a range of resources are available in the Promoting Primary Ethics module in the Learning Centre.

We welcome your support in sharing information about Primary Ethics in your communities. Our collective aim in Promoting Primary Ethics is to:

1. Ensure that every parent and carer of a child in NSW primary schools is aware that ethics education is an option for their child
2. Highlight the unique volunteering experiences on offer and invite people to be involved
3. Involve businesses and organisations to show support for ethics education through
   • Workplace volunteering
   • Workplace giving
   • Donations or donation-matching
   • In kind support.

Promotion of Primary Ethics falls largely in the scope of the ethics coordinator (at school level) and regional manager (across a region), but other Primary Ethics volunteers are welcome to consult their local volunteer ethics team or the Primary Ethics office if they’d like to be involved.

Primary Ethics volunteers may wish to promote Primary Ethics within their school, community and workplace. In Promoting Primary Ethics you’ll find a range of resources to help with this. If you can’t find what you need, speak with our communications manager.

Primary Ethics is careful not to promote ethics classes to children. We also don’t make any statements about ethics classes being superior to scripture. Parents and carers are best placed to make these decisions for themselves.

We do, however, promote the benefits of volunteering to parents and the wider community and let parents know about our program as an option for their child/ren.

Media

Speak with our communications manager if you’d like to arrange a media opportunity. We can provide you with background information, key messaging or associated material such as high resolution photographs.

Volunteers are welcome to speak to the media about their volunteering experience or experience as a parent of a child in ethics. Volunteers are not to speak on behalf of Primary Ethics, however, so please direct any media enquiries seeking comment from Primary Ethics to the communications manager to be addressed by the CEO. Media releases must be approved by Primary Ethics if they are being sent out as an official release.

Please let us know if you have anything published or broadcast so we can publicise it and include it in our media archives.
Social media

Primary Ethics’ three key social media channels are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Volunteers are encouraged to connect with us on these channels for updates, networking and to add their experiences and ideas. We hope sharing this collaboratively created content will broaden the awareness of ethics education in the community.

Please remember not to publish photos or names of children, and that professionalism and the behaviour set out in the Volunteer Conduct section also applies to online interactions.

Some regional managers use Facebook Groups to create online communities for volunteers in their area. Please email us to list your group or enquire about groups that may already exist so we can ensure new volunteers are aware of groups relevant to them.

Social media is one channel to communicate with other members of your ethics team, but it’s important to ensure there are other ways for those who choose not to use it.

Communications

The Volunteer Bulletin is the monthly email that all our volunteers receive. View past issues at bit.ly/volunteerbulletins. You’re also automatically subscribed to our general supporter email and primaryethics@home, our email for parents and carers. Non-volunteers can sign up to our mailing list at bit.ly/primaryethicssubscribe.

We also encourage you to click Follow on the website homepage to get notified when a news item is published and follow the Primary Ethics social media channels.

Fundraising for Primary Ethics

Primary Ethics receives no government funding and relies on the generosity of donors to fund the costs of recruiting and training volunteers and developing lesson materials.

Primary Ethics uses an online fundraising platform to manage donations. Please encourage friends, family and colleagues to support Primary Ethics by directing them to the Donate page on our public website.

You might also consider talking to your employer or organisations you are affiliated with about:

- **Donation matching**: where companies can agree to donate a specified amount by matching donations received by Primary Ethics through our online fundraising platform.
- **Setting up a workplace giving program**: enabling your colleagues to donate regularly to Primary Ethics from their pre-tax salaries
- **Corporate sponsorship** or in kind support

You might like to share our online fundraising platform with your networks or set up your own fundraising page.

Other fundraising activities require an authority to fundraise from Primary Ethics. We’d welcome your fundraising ideas - please call the office to discuss.

Any questions or suggestions about communications, promoting Primary Ethics or social media can be made to our communications manager.
Recruitment

All Primary Ethics’ volunteer roles are skilled roles. As a child-safe organisation operating in schools we need to ensure volunteer suitability. The position descriptions on our website detail the requirements for each role. In general we ask that:

- All volunteers undertake a criminal history check to demonstrate they do not have a history of violence, drug offences, sexual assault, indecency or fraud
- Ethics teachers and classroom support team members have a current Working with Children Check (or declaration up until March 2018)
- Applicants demonstrate through the application and interview process that they have the ability to undertake the role.

To ensure consistency of our program for both schools and children we do require our volunteers to commit to volunteer for us for a year. We do understand this cannot always be the case in practice but we ask volunteers to have this intention or to work with their ethics coordinator or regional manager to accommodate any planned breaks. New ethics teachers need regular weekly teaching to consolidate their classroom skills and build trust with the class. For this reason we do not recruit casual ethics teachers. Experienced ethics teachers and existing volunteers are encouraged to take on casual teaching roles as set out in the Combined and Casual Roles section on page 4.

The recruitment module in the Learning Centre contains a number of resources to support volunteer recruitment. Please use these resources to ensure that volunteer recruitment meets the necessary requirements.

Health and safety

The recruitment module in the Learning Centre contains a number of resources to support volunteer recruitment. Please use these resources to ensure that volunteer recruitment meets the necessary requirements.

To help make your volunteering experience at Primary Ethics both enjoyable and safe it is important to understand how to minimise risks to health and safety. Primary Ethics’ Work Health and Safety Policy is available on our public website.

There are some important safety requirements relating to volunteers:

- Staff, trainers and volunteers need to consider their own and others’ safety at any Primary Ethics event or workplace
- When volunteering at a school, you must sign in and out of the school office
- While on school grounds comply with the school’s safety requirements
- While teaching, ensure your own safety and the safety of students in ethics class by
  - understanding the school’s safety procedures
  - talking to school staff about any issues requiring particular management
  - reporting any safety concerns you have to school staff
- Keep up to date with the school safety requirements, including attending an annual safety briefing by the school
- If there is a safety incident or near miss report it to Primary Ethics using the incident report form attached and, if the incident or near miss occurred on school grounds, use the school’s reporting system as directed by the school
- Don’t attempt to supervise babies or young children while conducting an ethics class.

Volunteering for Primary Ethics is a generally low risk activity. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the potential risks and take steps to ensure your safety. For example:

- **Strain** due to moving chairs and small tables to set up class – ethics teachers and coordinators should work together with
school staff to identify a way to set up the classroom without causing injury

- **Harassment** or bullying – contact the Primary Ethics office so we can support you should any incidents of harassment or bullying occur
- **Stress** due to the management of a class of children – volunteer ethics teacher training provides information on classroom management, see also the Behaviour management section of these Guidelines and the Ethics Teacher Handbook to ensure behaviour issues are addressed early and support is provided.

Call or email your ethics coordinator, regional manager or the Primary Ethics office for support or if you have any questions or concerns about safety.

Complaints

Primary Ethics’ Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure, sets out how a complaint should be made and how it will be managed. The Learning Centre contains a Guidelines for Use of the policy, providing further information for volunteers on how to make a complaint, seek support when making a complaint within the school and what will happen when complaints are made.

People wishing to make a complaint are encouraged to do so in writing directly to Primary Ethics as set out in the policy. Volunteers are not expected to either receive or manage complaints and should direct complainants to the policy on the website or to complaints@primaryethics.com.au.

Parents and school teachers are best placed to assist any child who wishes to make a complaint.

Privacy

The Primary Ethics Privacy Policy is located on the public website.

Volunteers need to ensure that the personal information that is obtained for recruitment purposes is kept confidential and is only used for the purposes of informing a recruitment decision. Volunteer contact information can only be used for the purpose of delivering the ethics program and can only be shared with other volunteers with permission. This includes taking necessary measures to ensure the security of passwords used to log into our online systems.

In relation to child privacy, please do not identify students when talking to others about what was discussed in your ethics class. Simply say "one of the students said ..." rather than "Mia said..." The exception is when a child's comments give you cause to be concerned about their welfare in which case you should discuss this with the class teacher or school principal.

Thank you

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Primary Ethics, the parents of the children you will teach and the large number of people in the broader community who support ethics education, thank you so much for volunteering. We hope your time with Primary Ethics is fulfilling and enriching.
## References

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<tr>
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<td>Guidelines for use of Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Ethics Teachers Handbook &amp; Name badge template</td>
<td>Learning Centre&gt;Document Library</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Certificates of Student Participation</td>
<td>Learning Centre&gt;Document Library</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Promoting Primary Ethics Guidelines &amp; Resources</td>
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<td>Recruitment resources</td>
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Attachment 1: Record of behaviour management issues

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<th>Date</th>
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## Attachment 2: Incident Report Form

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of person completing this form:</td>
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<td>Date:</td>
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**Incident**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Name/s of person/s involved in the incident:</td>
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<td>Description of incident:</td>
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**Witnesses (include contact details):**

**Reporting of the incident to Primary Ethics**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Date:</th>
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<td>How (this form, in person, email, phone):</td>
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**Follow Up Action**

| Description of actions to be taken: |