

The Dish of St John's Wahroonga



Volunteer & Coordinator Handbook

Welcome to The Dish

Thank you for volunteering with The Dish. Your time, compassion, and commitment help us provide practical support, meals, and connection to members of our community. Every volunteer plays an important role in creating a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all.

Our Mission

To provide food, care, and community support to people experiencing hardship while treating every person with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Volunteer and Coordinator Roles

Volunteers

Volunteers support the delivery of meals, food distribution, setup and pack-up, hospitality, and general assistance.

Volunteer responsibilities include:

- Following all procedures and instructions provided
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Treating clients, volunteers, and staff respectfully
- Following food safety and WHS requirements
- Reporting hazards, incidents, or concerns
- Working within their abilities and asking for help when needed

Coordinators

Coordinators oversee service operations and volunteer teams.

Coordinator responsibilities include:

- Supporting and supervising volunteers
- Ensuring procedures are followed
- Managing incidents and concerns
- Providing guidance and support
- Ensuring a safe and welcoming environment
- Completing required reports and documentation

Volunteer Age Requirements

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all volunteers and people attending The Dish:

- Volunteers working onsite must be 16 years of age or older.
- Volunteers under 16 years of age may only attend onsite when they are under the direct supervision of their parent or legal guardian.
- Volunteers under 16 years of age must not enter or work in the kitchen.
- Younger volunteers must only undertake age-appropriate activities approved by the Coordinator.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for supervising their child while onsite and must follow all The Dish policies, procedures, WHS and child-safe requirements.
- The Coordinator may restrict or stop a volunteer activity if they believe it is unsafe or inappropriate for the volunteer's age or abilities.

Food Safety Guidelines

To maintain food safety standards:

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food
- Wear gloves where required
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold
- Avoid cross-contamination between foods
- Do not prepare food if unwell
- Use clean utensils and equipment
- Clean spills immediately
- Report any food safety concerns

Child Safe Expectations

The Dish is committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people.

Volunteers and coordinators must:

- Treat all children with dignity and respect
- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Avoid being alone with a child where possible
- Report any concerns immediately
- Follow child protection requirements

Manual Handling Guidelines

To avoid injury:

- Wear enclosed shoes and suitable clothing
- Bend knees when lifting, not your back
- Avoid twisting while carrying items
- Ask for assistance with heavy items – team lift
- Use trolleys or equipment where available
- Never lift more than you can safely manage

Work Health and Safety

The health and safety of all volunteers is important.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- Consider the safety of others
- Follow procedures and instructions
- Report hazards, incidents, injuries, and near misses
- Keep work areas clean and free from hazards

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency:

Call 000 immediately

Fire Extinguisher Location:

Located on the wall outside the kitchen.

Emergency Evacuation:

1. Remain calm
2. Follow instructions from the Coordinator
3. Exit using the nearest safe exit
4. Move to the designated assembly area
5. Do not re-enter until advised

Aggressive Client Procedure

In the unlikely event of aggressive behaviour:

- Remain calm
- Do not argue or escalate the situation
- Remove yourself if safe to do so
- Notify the Coordinator immediately
- Contact police if required

Hornsby Police: 9476 9799

Incident Reporting

All injuries, incidents, hazards, and near misses must be reported.

Please report:

- Volunteer injuries
- Client incidents
- Hazards
- Aggressive behaviour

- Property damage
- Near misses

Complete the Incident Report Form and provide it to the Coordinator.

First Aid

First Aid Kit Location:

Hall cupboard labelled "The Dish"

Notify a Coordinator immediately if first aid is required.

Driving (if applicable)

When driving the van:

- Drive safely and follow all road rules
- Ensure seatbelts are worn
- Do not exceed passenger limits
- Secure all loose items
- Report any vehicle concerns immediately

Housekeeping

At the end of each shift:

- Leave all areas clean and tidy
- Dispose of rubbish appropriately in red bins
- Ensure storage areas are left clean
- Check for food spills and hazards
- Boxes not left in hallway/kitchen

Key Contacts

Operations Coordinator:

Leisa Liddelow

Emergency: 000

Hornsby Police: 9476 9799

Remember

Your actions affect the safety and wellbeing of yourself, fellow volunteers, and the people we support.

When in doubt, ask your Team Leader or Operations Coordinator.