Mount Colah Public School (MCPS) is blessed with large playing fields and some remnant bushland. It is one of the reasons why parents choose our school over others in the area. Whilst the school has a part-time (3 days / week) maintenance person their time is spread amongst general maintenance activities such as fixing broken infrastructure as well as maintaining the large grounds. Therefore the P&C organises and promotes the Ground Maintenance (GM) program specifically to assist in the upkeep of school grounds. MCPS has a wonderful natural environment and a little bit of effort by a lot of people goes a long way to ensuring it is maintained in a state we can all be proud of.

History

This program has been active at MCPS since the creation of the school in the 1950s. In those days parents used to bring along their own motor mowers to cut the grass! Things have progressed since then and we no longer expect parents to provide their own mowers. The P&C Maintenance shed is well stocked with the tools required for this activity. Over the years thousands of people have given up their time to ensure that MCPS is kept looking beautiful and we all are beneficiaries of this work.

What types of jobs are done at Ground Maintenance?

The following is a short list of some of the common jobs done on a Ground Maintenance morning:

- Trimming edges
- Weeding and picking rubbish out of the bush / garden beds
- Spreading mulch
- Blowing paths
- A small amount of mowing

Who does Ground Maintenance?

Kindergarten parents are responsible for GM and this has been the case since the late 1990s. The reason is that new parents to the school get an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the grounds where their children play during the week. Additionally it gives parents an opportunity to meet others and form some friendships that hopefully endure for the next 7 years and longer. GM starts for the new Kindy parents in Term 2 and completes at the end of Term 1 the following year. All participants in GM are covered by the P&C’s public liability insurance policy.
When is Ground Maintenance?

GM is from 9 am to 11 am Sunday mornings. In one calendar year there will be 12 - 14 Ground Maintenance activities. A detailed schedule on when you are rostered on will be provided in Term 1. If you cannot make a particular day then you can still contribute by attending a subsequent GM. On the GM day please meet up in front of the P&C Maintenance shed (see map at the bottom of this sheet for location).

How is Ground Maintenance organised?

In any given year we have approximately 60 - 70 new students commence at the school. Kindergarten parents are divided into 6-7 team groups of ~ 10 families with the groups being based on the class that your child is in. Therefore you will be doing this activity with the parents of children from the same class. Each group only does Ground Maintenance twice. That is a total of 4 hours of service to your child’s school in one calendar year. Once the roster is completed in Term 1 it will be posted on the MCPS website’s P&C page. Everybody will be advised of their group via email and the newsletter. Each group will have a team leader. They may be an existing team leader or come from within each group where an experienced person volunteers to do the role.

The yearly GM roster is posted in the maintenance shed and each attendee initials against their name when they do Ground Maintenance. That way it is clear to all who has attended (and who hasn’t).

Are children welcome at Ground Maintenance?

Absolutely! We encourage our students to be good citizens and take responsibility for helping out at their school. There are jobs such as picking up rubbish or weeding which children can participate in. Every student who attends with their parents gets 2 mini merits! Parents should fill out the children’s attendance sheet in the maintenance shed on GM day so their children receive this recognition. Children can then visit the office on the following Tuesday to receive their mini merits from the office ladies or the school principal.

Role of the Team Leader

In the past we have had both male and female team leaders. All it takes is a bit of enthusiasm and community spirit. The team leader is responsible for collecting keys from the school’s front office prior to GM and returning them afterwards. Team leaders that volunteer for 2 or more GMs in one year will be issued with their own set of keys. On the day the team leader will open and close the Telopea St gate and the P&C maintenance shed. They will ensure everyone signs on and advise the other members of the group on jobs to undertake on the day. A list of generic jobs is posted in the maintenance shed to help guide the team leader. Also the school’s part-time maintenance person will post any priority jobs on the white board in the maintenance shed. If any equipment is damaged then the team leader should report this to the GM coordinator who will arrange for it to be repaired. The team leader collects the children’s attendance sheet and arranges for its return, along with the keys, to the school’s office on Monday morning.
We are always looking for more volunteers to be team leaders. So if you are interested in helping out as a leader just talk to your existing team leader or send an email to the P&C executive: exec@mcpspandc.asn.au

**Role of the Ground Maintenance Coordinator**

This is a one year role normally fulfilled by somebody that has been a team leader though anyone can do it. The main purpose of the role is to:

- Assist the school office staff put together the roster in Term 1
- Assist in recruiting the team leaders from each group
- Liaise with the school's maintenance person to ensure broken tools are fixed
- Identify any priority jobs that require attention at GM
- Liaise with team leaders and assist them with any problems that arise
- Prepare a one paragraph report and send to the P&C secretary for the monthly P&C meeting

**General Dates for Ground Maintenance**

This varies from year to year depending on school holidays, public holidays and other significant events. We like to focus our attention to the warmer months when the grass is growing quicker. So typically there are 2 GMs per warmer months and 1 each in the cooler months. GM is only held during the school term and we roster to avoid conflicts with long weekends and other major P&C events.

**What is the Garden Party?**

It is an annual event held in May where parents from all years, students and interested members of the public lend a hand to complete some of the bigger jobs around the school grounds. Every year the tasks undertaken are different however in past years we have completed jobs such as building some new infrastructure, pruning trees and shrubs in the gardens, washing the outside of buildings and giving the canteen a thorough top to bottom cleaning.

On the day the P&C provides a free morning tea, refreshments and BBQ sausage sizzle for lunch.

The Garden Party has a dedicated organiser separate from the Ground Maintenance crew. Any inquiries on this event or any suggestions on jobs that should be attempted on the day can be sent to gardenparty@mcpsPandC.asn.au.

This is a great social day where we always see the best of our school community spirit in full swing.
Entry to GM is through the Telopea St entrance only.