



## VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL POLICY

Latest DET Update: 07/07/2017

First Developed in This Format: March 2018

### Rationale

- We seek to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages visitors to the school. At the same time, we recognise our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff.
- We also recognise our obligation to ensure that any program or content delivered by visitors is consistent with the values of public education and the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular.
- Programs delivered by visitors must be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to the following, as outlined in s 1.2.1 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic):
  - elected government
  - the rule of law
  - equal rights for all before the law
  - freedom of religion
  - freedom of speech and association
  - the values of openness and tolerance.
- DET encourages schools to increase experience of the cultural and social features of the community, ensure parents/carers partner in their children's development and create strong partnerships with community services, other schools, businesses and the wider community.
- Schools are not public places and the safety of students and staff, the potential risks posed by visitors and the purpose and potential benefits must be major considerations.
- Legal considerations include DET policies concerning privacy, photographing students, mandatory reporting and Children First which promotes and protects the rights and wellbeing of children.
- Principals and teachers have duty of care to their students. The duty requires principals and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, including the provision of suitable and safe premises and the provision of an adequate system of supervision. The duty is *non-delegable*, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.
- The School Council must develop and approve written policies and procedures to manage visitors to the school.

### Purpose

- To ensure the school effectively manages visitors to school premises.
- To ensure Alphington Primary School complies with legislative requirements and DET policy and guidelines.
- To provide a safe and secure environment for our children, staff and resources.
- To establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitors and manages visitors, whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of our school.
- To ensure the school has in place strategies to enhance compliance with the Child Safe Standards 1, 2 and 4.
- To ensure the school discharges its duty of care towards children.

### Definition

Visitors to the school are defined as all people entering school grounds during school hours 8.45 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday other than staff members, students and parents/carers acting in their capacity as parents/carers delivering or collecting children at the start or the end of the school day.

Visitors can include (but are not limited to) the following:

- prospective parents and prospective employees
- those who are addressing a learning or developmental need, such as:

- parent and community volunteers
- invited speakers e.g. incursion presenters
- sessional instructors
- representatives of community, business and service groups
- local members of parliament
- those who are conducting business such as:
  - uniform suppliers
  - booksellers
  - official school photographers
  - commercial salespeople
- trades people
- children's services agents
- talent scouts
- instructors providing Special Religious Instruction (SRI).

Other visitors may include:

- Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection Workers
- Victoria Police
- Persons who are authorised to enter a school premises for a specific purpose (e.g. WorkSafe or Environmental Health officers).

### **Implementation**

- The safety and wellbeing of every child at the school is our highest priority.
- The Principal will:
  - implement DET and school level policies and procedures
  - be responsible for visitors allowed into school
  - ensure that as a minimum a record of all visitors to the school is kept in the event of a school emergency or any future investigation
  - ensure that visitors where required have the appropriate approvals to work with children
  - ensure that any programs or content delivered by visitors (other than Special Religious Instruction) complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular
  - ensure that any programs delivered by visitors are delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to the following, as outlined in s 1.2.1 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*:
    - elected government
    - the rule of law
    - equal rights for all before the law
    - freedom of religion
    - freedom of speech and association
    - the values of openness and tolerance
- In consultation with the community, the School Council will consider what type of visitor is permitted and/or encouraged.
- Considerations will include the safety needs of staff and children, the purpose of the visit, educational merit and consistency with curriculum objectives, appropriateness for the age group, legal requirements (privacy, photographing of children, mandatory reporting) legal requirements and procedures to be implemented.
- Consideration will also be given to making a distinction between community-based, not-for-profit groups and visitors with commercial, advertising or marketing purposes.
- Visitors working with children or who will be in an area where children move freely about, learn or play will be required to have a current Working with Children Check.
- Where necessary, the school will assess and verify the suitability of visitors who will work with children. The evidence required is generally a Working with Children Check (WWC Check).

However, if a visitor's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWC check e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to the school support their claim to an exemption.

- Visitors who are attending the school to deliver incursions, presentations, seminars or other activities and programs to students will be fully supervised by school staff at all times.
- School Council, on the recommendation of the Principal, may determine that an exemption to this applies on a case-by-case basis.
- The Principal will determine:
  - how to communicate policies and procedures to staff, visitors and community
  - how to impose conditions on visitors, if required
  - how to manage and maintain a written record of all visitors
  - whether visitors will be required to wear a distinguishing badge
  - circumstances for visitors to be accompanied by a member of staff
  - that visitors delivering programs directly to children are adequately supervised by teaching staff of the school, in order for the school's duty of care to be discharged to those children
  - the familiarisation with school routines, including the emergency management plan, required for regular visitors
  - when parents/carers will be notified in advance about visitors to the school
  - requirements for parental permission for children to participate in programs or related activities delivered by visitors.
- As a minimum the school will require all visitors arriving and departing during school hours to use a visitors' book to record their name, their signature, the date, time and purpose of the visit.
- The Principal will:
  - ensure the content of presentations and addresses contributes to the development of children's knowledge and understanding
  - extend the invitation to external speakers to support its educational program, rather than allowing groups to use the school as a forum to advance their causes or beliefs, particularly if speaking on a controversial matter
  - brief presenters about the nature of the school and its community
  - ensure that visitors do not present information or programs that may conflict with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, policies of the Department and the school
  - respect the range of views held by children and their families.
- Talent scouts require special consideration including the enrichment value of the proposed activity.
- The school will need to determine whether the school community prefers independent contact out of school hours or supports the school facilitating contact between children and talent scouts for activities such as choirs, orchestras, drama groups, sporting associations, film companies or modelling agencies.
- Out-of-school-hours contact on school property may be desirable. In such circumstances the School Council will determine how the safety of children can be assured and if a fee is payable.
- For persons who are authorised to enter on to the school premises, for a specific purpose (e.g. WorkSafe or Environmental Health Officers), school procedures will set out:
  - the process for checking the identification and authorisation of such persons
  - the process for recording their attendance
  - who should facilitate their entry on to the school premises in a manner consistent with the authorisation
- The school may refer to the DET resource [Template Policies – Visitors in Schools Template](#) (site locked).
- Please refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy*, *Police & DHHS Interviews Policy*, the *Mandatory Reporting Policy*, *Information Privacy Policy*, *Working with Children Checks – Volunteers*, the *Photographing & Filming Students Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

## **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update early July 2017).

This policy was ratified by School Council in March 2018

Reference:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/visitors in schools.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/visitors%20in%20schools.aspx)