



VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Rationale

- DET encourages schools to increase experience of the cultural and social features of the community, ensure parents/guardians partner in their children's development and create strong partnerships with community services, other schools, businesses and the wider community.
- Visitors to schools may include, but are not limited to, prospective parents, potential employees, those who are addressing learning or developmental needs (such as parent and community volunteers), invited speakers, sessional instructors, representatives of community, business and service groups, local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments, those who are conducting business such as book sellers, official school photographers, uniform suppliers and commercial salespeople, tradespeople, talent scouts, children's services agents, police and child protection workers, WorkSafe officers.
- 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.
- 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 Seaholme Primary School complies with legislative requirements and DET policy and guidelines.

Implementation

- The Principal will:
 - implement Department 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, School Council will consider what type of visitor is permitted and/or encouraged.
- Considerations will include the safety needs of staff and students, the purpose of the visit, educational merit and consistency with curriculum objectives, appropriateness for the age group, legal requirements (privacy, photographing of students, 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.
- School Council 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 students are adequately supervised by teaching staff of the school, in order for the school's duty of care to be discharged to those students
 - the familiarisation with school routines, including the emergency management plan, required for regular visitors
 - when parents will be notified in advance about visitors to the school
 - requirements for parental permission for students 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 students' 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 students 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 students and talent scouts for activities such as children's 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 School Council will determine 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 *Police & DHHS Interviews Policy*, the *Mandatory Reporting Policy*, *Privacy Policy*, *Working with Children Checks - Volunteers* and the *Photographing & Filming Students Policy*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-February 2016).

This update was ratified by School Council on 18th April 2016

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)