



## EXTERNAL PROVIDER AND VISITORS POLICY

### 1. RATIONALE

To provide a safe and secure environment for students and staff.

To establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors without compromising the open and inclusive nature of the school.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

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 (apart from the provision of Special Religious Instruction, delivered in accordance with legislative and Department requirements).

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

### 3. TYPES OF VISITORS

Visitors to the school are defined as all people entering school grounds during school hours 8.00am to 4pm Monday to Friday other than staff members, students and parents/guardians acting in their capacity as parents/guardians delivering or collecting children at the start or the end of the school day. All visitors including Parent/guardians are to report to front office. Visitors not collecting students, must sign the visitors register and collect a pass. They will either be met by a staff member and accompanied or directed to the relevant area.

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

- prospective parents and prospective employees
- past students visiting teachers
  
- 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).

#### **4. DUTY OF CARE**

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.

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.

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 to support their claim to an exemption.

#### **Guidelines for Working with External Providers**

***The following guidelines and checklists are to be considered by all staff when utilising external providers.***

The following checklists and guidelines are provided to help schools get maximum benefit from the input of external providers.

**Support agencies approved/accepted by the College must:**

- be qualified or trained
- evaluate their programs or presentations
- be cost effective
- enhance the role of the teacher not replace it
- align with current practice, principles and research
- consider socioeconomic, cultural and/or religious issues

**Teacher checklist:**

- Can people within the College provide a similar service?
- Do you have the support of the Principal, the staff and the relevant committees including school council?
- Have the age and developmental level of the students, the content and the resources been considered?
- Has the organising teacher seen this presentation before, or spoken to those who have, to assess the suitability of the presentation for the target audience?
- Has a planning session with the presenter been conducted?
- What feedback will be given to the presenter?
- What are the costs?

It is a requirement for a teacher to be present with students at all times.

**Qualified or Trained External Providers:**

- have formal qualifications or relevant experience
- provide a range of support options
- use performance indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs
- have a good knowledge of appropriate resources
- are adept in working with/through relevant College committees

**External Providers who have an understanding of current practice, approaches and research:**

- avoid using testimonials
- avoid using scare tactics
- avoid using an 'information only' approach
- understand what constitutes an effective program
- link learning with educational outcomes as outlined in the College program
- provide ongoing support rather than the one-off session
- engage in planning with the teacher
- enhance the central role of the teacher
- have well-established and acceptable positions on particular issues which are consistent with the values promoted by the College

## 5. APPROVALS

On the basis that schools are not public places, but are public educational institutions, the Principal has ultimate discretion to approve or not approve a potential visitor. The Principal also has the authority to exclude people from being on school grounds outside of school operating hours.

When deciding to approve a visitor, the Principal will consider the visitor's suitability, purpose and the benefit provided to the students and staff from the visit, specifically:

- the educational merit and potential benefits of the visit;
- the level of disruption to the functioning of the school programs and routines in relation to the potential benefits to students;
- whether the proposed visit is consistent with the values of public education including the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular (apart from Special Religious Instruction, delivered in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), Ministerial Direction 141 and policy);
- whether the proposed visitors will be delivering content that is appropriate having regard to school policies, Department policies and the principles and practice of Australian democracy including the elected government, the rule of law, equal rights for all before the law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance;
- the potential for the visitor to cause controversy within the school or broader community.

The Principal should consider the suitability of visitors to be in a location where children freely move about, learn and play and whether a Working with Children Check is required or exemptions apply.

## **6. IMPLEMENTATION**

Visitors who are attending the school to deliver incursions, presentations, seminars or other activities and programs to students need to seek the prior approval of the school Principal (or their nominee) prior to attending the school. Where appropriate, the school will first obtain parental consent for students to participate in specific programs delivered by visitors.

All visitors are required to report to the administration office:

- prior to undertaking any activity within the school. They are required to sign a Visitors Book and will be assigned a "Visitor" badge which they must wear at all times within the school.
- at the end of their visit, to return their badge and sign out in the Visitors Book.

This process will be published in school communications and will be displayed at all school entrances.

All visitors are required to comply with the CESC Statement of Values. (see policy)

Visitors who fail to follow directions will be directed to the Administration Office.

The school's emergency management procedures will ensure that visitors within the school at the time of any emergency or practice drill will be recognised and be appropriately catered for.

## 7. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed at least annually.

## 8. RELATED SCHOOL BASED POLICIES

- [Emergency Management Policy](#)
- Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- [Working with Children Policy](#)

## 9. OTHER LINKS AND REFERENCES

Department resources:

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

School Policy and Advisory Guide

- [Duty of Care](#)
- [Special Religious Instruction](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)
- [Volunteer Checks](#)
- [Volunteer Workers](#)

[Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities](#)

External Resource

- [Department of Justice and Regulation-Working with Children Check](#)

Related Legislation

- *Working with Children Act 2005*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*