

Murrayville Community College Visitors Policy

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.

Aims

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.

Implementation

Types of Visitors

Visitors to the school are defined as all people entering school grounds during school hours (8:35am to 3:45pm 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.

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:
 - booksellers or other salespeople
 - official school photographers
- trades people
- children's services agents
- talent scouts
- instructors providing Special Religious Instruction (SRI).

Murrayville Community College Visitors Policy

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).

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 support their claim to an exemption.

Pandemics

- During times of pandemics and associated restrictions, visitors to school may also be restricted in line with the School Operation Guidelines and the Health and Safety advice.

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.

Murrayville Community College Visitors Policy

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.

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 may 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 schools Statement of Values.

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.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed at least annually.

Related School Based Policies

- Emergency Management Policy
- Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Child Safety Policy

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

Murrayville Community College Visitors Policy

External Resource

- Department of Justice and Regulation-Working with Children Check

Related Legislation

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

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