

VISITORS to the SCHOOL POLICY

Rationale

- 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.
- We 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.
- 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.

Aims

- To ensure the school effectively screens, manages and supervises visitors to school premises.
- To ensure the Northern School for Autism complies with legislative requirements and DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure the school complies with Child Safe Standards 1 & 2.

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).
- Department staff including allied health practitioners (regional and central offices)
- public officials (e.g. Ministers, Members of Parliament, Mayor)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Therapists and other allied health or health practitioners that are not employees of the Department or School Council.

Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of children is this school's highest priority.
- 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 policies and procedures are in place to meet the Child Safe Standards including identifying and responding to child abuse.
 - ensure that emergency exits and emergency management plans and procedures are available/visible to visitors
 - 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 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 the need for a Working with Children (Suitability) Check.
- 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 (Suitability) Check.

Page 2 of 4

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Avenue
RESERVOIR VIC 3072
Phone: (03) 9462 5990
Fax: (03) 9460 8058

Lalor Campus
2-4 Lyndon Street
LALOR VIC 3075
Phone: (03) 9464 3480
Fax: (03) 9464 4713

northern.sch.autism@edumail.vic.gov.au
<http://www.northernautism.vic.edu.au/web/>

- School Council may determine that an exemption to this applies on a case-by-case basis.
- The Principal and School Council 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/carer 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 and will include procedures for assessment and verification of the suitability of visitors to be in a location where children freely move about, learn and play.
- In regard to visiting speakers, 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 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 *Duty of Care Policy*, *Police & DHHS Interviews Policy*, the *Mandatory Reporting (Child Protection) Policy*, *Privacy Policy*, *Working with Children (Suitability) Checks – Volunteers & Visitors*, the *Photographing & Filming Children Policy*, *Conducting Research 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 late July 2018).

Reference

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/visitors_in_schools.aspx

This policy was first ratified by NSA School Council on 26th March 2015

The first update was ratified February 2016

This update was ratified on 6 December 2018