



Northern School for Autism

"Learning for Life"

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL POLICY

PURPOSE

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to Northern School for Autism.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any visitors who may attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction and when the office is staffed to monitor/receive visitors at reception between the hours of 8.00am to 4.30pm. Outside of these times, our front office is not staffed and the only visitors who are permitted on school grounds are parents/carers or their delegates who are dropping off or picking up students from After School Hours Care, school events such as concerts or other school activities, and community and other groups who have entered into contracts or agreements with the school to use school premises outside of school hours

DEFINITIONS

Child-related work: As defined by the *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic), child-related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional contact with children that is incidental to the work.

POLICY

NSA strives to create an open and inclusive school community, and encourages parents and carers to be actively involved in their child's development and education. We also strive to foster strong partnerships with local community services, schools and other organisations.

NSA is not a public place. The principal has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds, and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with our school's *Statement of Values & Philosophy*, *Child Safe Policy*, *Child Safe Code of Conduct*, *Volunteers in School Policy*.

From time to time, different members of the public may visit our school. Visitors may include, but are not limited to:

- Parents
- Volunteers – see our school's *Volunteers in School Policy* for more information
- Prospective parents, students and employees
- Invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development
- Public officials (eg Members of Parliament, local councillors)
- Persons conducting business eg: official school photographers, commercial salespeople
- Tradespeople
- Children's services agencies

Reservoir Campus
16-18 Gertz Avenue
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Lalor Campus
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- Department of Health and Human Services workers
- Victoria Police
- Persons authorised to enter school premises (eg Worksafe inspectors, health officers etc)
- Other Department of Education and Training staff (including allied health staff) or contractors

NSA has a Memorandum of Understanding with Peter Lalor Vocational College (PLVC) at the Lalor Campus. This is for PLVC staff and students to access their own facilities through a shared space (hallway). PLVC are responsible for the safety and supervision of their own students. PLVC are therefore, for this purpose, not classed as "Visitors to the School" and enter the shared space through the PLVC access door, not through NSA administration.

Sign in procedure

All visitors to NSA are required to report to the school office on arrival (see exceptions below in relation to parents/carers). Visitors must:

- Record their name, signature, date and time of visit and purpose of visit in the Vpass Computer Sign in system.
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request
- Produce their valid Working with Children Check where required by this policy (see below)
- Wear a visitor's name tag/sign in sticker at all times
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including NSA's Child Safety Code of Conduct and Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Return to the office upon departure, and sign out using the Vpass Computer system

NSA will ensure that our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct are available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Requirements for visitors to produce a valid Working with Children Check card

For Working with Children Check (WWC Check) and other suitability check requirements relating to parents/carers and other volunteers working with students please see our Volunteers in Schools Policy.

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) must have a valid WWC Check.

In some circumstances, visitors to NSA who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWC Check depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, NSA may require a valid WWC Check for:

- **visitors who will be working regularly with children** during the time they are visiting, even though direct contact with children is not a central part of their normal duties

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- **visitors (e.g. contractors)**, who will regularly be performing work at the school and in circumstances where they will be performing their work in an area where they will be unsupervised and around children.

Further background checks, including references, may also be requested at the discretion of the principal. Visitors who will be working in areas away from students (e.g. a visiting auditor who will be located in the front office with administration staff) or who will be supervised and accompanied by a staff member during their visit (e.g. a Member of Parliament, a journalist, a prospective parent on a school tour) will not be required to have a WWC Check.

Sworn Victoria Police officers or sworn Australian Federal Police officers are exempt from requiring a WWC Check, but may be asked to verify that they are sworn officers by providing proof of identification.

Invited speakers and presenters

On occasion, NSA may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students. Consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements, NSA will:

- ensure that the content of presentations and programs by external providers contributes to the educational development of our students and is consistent with curriculum objectives
- ensure that any proposed visit, programs or content delivered by visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular and is consistent with the values of public education, Department policies and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*. In particular, programs delivered by visitors are to be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to:
 - elected government
 - the rule of law
 - equal rights for all before the law
 - freedom of religion, speech and association
 - the values of openness and tolerance
 - respect the range of views held by students and their families.

Parent visitors

All parents or carers who visit our school during school hours, other than for the purposes of school pick ups and drop offs or for specific school events (eg parent teacher interviews, concerts, assemblies etc), are required to sign in as a visitor at the school office.

Other visitors

All business operators, tradespeople and other visitors attending the school to conduct work must report to the school office upon arrival for instruction and follow the sign in procedure outlined above.

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Please refer also to the school’s *Duty of Care Policy, Police & DHHS Interviews Policy, Media Requests & Attendance at Schools Policy, Members of Parliament & Candidates Visiting Schools Policy, Working with Children (Suitability) Checks – Volunteers & Visitors Policy*, the *Photographing, Filming & Recording Children Policy* and the Child Safe Standards.

Also see the Memorandum of Understanding between Northern School for Autism and Peter Lalor Vocational College. *Hard copy available at office upon request.*

Other references:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/visitors/policy>

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteers/policy>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/community/WWCCflowchart.pdf>

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REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-yearly review cycle or if guidelines change.

This policy was last updated in August 2021 and is scheduled for review in August 2024.

EVALUATION

A mandatory policy

The August 2021 update: School Council was consulted and recommendations, if any, were made by 9th September 2021.

August 2021 update presented to School Council for noting on 9th September 2021

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