

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Rationale

Schools are educational institutions and are not public places. However, Whittlesea Secondary College (WSC) recognises that the involvement of parents/carers and others from the community can play an important role in children's development and learning.

Therefore, this policy seeks to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages visitors to our school. Whittlesea Secondary College recognises our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff, and our responsibility to protect and preserve our resources against theft, vandalism and misuse.

Whittlesea Secondary College has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to meeting the requirements of *Ministerial Order 870* and the [Child Safe Standards](#). The Child Safe Standards and the Whittlesea Secondary College Code of Conduct apply to all staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work with students of Whittlesea Secondary College.

Aims

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

- provide a safe and secure environment for all of our students, staff and resources and to establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors, whilst not compromising the open, inclusive and inviting nature of our school.

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

Child Safety

- As a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Victorian Government introduced a range of measures to better protect children. These measures include:
 - The Child Safe Standards
 - Reportable Conduct Scheme
 - Organisational Duty of Care
- Whittlesea Secondary College (WSC) uphold our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety (refer to the WSC Child Safe Environment Policy, Appendix A).

- All staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work will be informed about, and expected to adhere to, the Whittlesea Secondary College Child Safety Code of Conduct (refer to the WSC Child Safe Environment Policy, Appendix B).
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work without payment or reward. This is a broad definition including those who participate in school community activities such as:

- fundraising
- assisting with excursions
- carrying out the functions of a school council
- any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the Principal or school council
- providing any assistance in the work of any school
- attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation, which receives government financial support.

General Requirements for Visitors to Schools

Volunteer workers are to conduct themselves in a manner that will not cause harm or injury to themselves or others.

All visitors are required to treat our students, parents and staff with dignity and respect at all times. Volunteers and Visitors may be at Whittlesea Secondary College for a number of reasons including and not limited to:

- prospective parents and employees
- parent information
- those who are addressing a learning or developmental need
- parent and community volunteers
- invited speakers
- sessional instructors
- representatives of community, business and service groups
- local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments
- working bees
- working in the classroom
- sporting events
- other curricular related activities
- conducting business such as:
 - uniform suppliers
 - booksellers
 - official school photographers
 - commercial salespeople
 - trades people
 - children's services agents
 - Victoria Police
 - Worksafe officers.

Visitors to Classrooms or Other Instructional Areas

Declare Arrival

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.

- All visitors shall report to the school office when arriving or leaving the school premises. Visitors are required to sign in when both arriving and leaving, including their full name, signing, and recording the date and times and purpose of the visit.

- On arrival, all visitors shall be requested to wear a visitor's badge when on school premises. This must be returned when exiting the school.
- Under the *Working with Children Act 2005*, volunteers or paid workers in the school are required to have a current Working with Children Card (WWC Check).
 - All Visitors working in the school must present their WWC Check and photocopied by Administration staff and kept on record.
 - A staff member must accompany all visitors who do not have a WWC Check at all times.
 - However if a visitor's occupation exempts them from the requirement to have a WWCC e.g. police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to an exemption
- All school visitors must comply at all times with Department of Education and Training (DET) policies, administrative rules and school regulations.
- Any person entering the school during school hours who is not willing to comply with the above-mentioned visitors process will be asked to leave school grounds.
- Staff should inform reception of expected visitors so that they can be directed to the correct staff member.

Visitor Access

- Access to particular classrooms or other instructional areas of the school may be restricted upon the recommendation of the teacher in charge or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Principal.
- Because classrooms and other instructional areas are the most vulnerable to disruption, specific conditions may be imposed upon visitors, including but not limited to:
 - remaining in a designated place or seat
 - refraining from speaking to students while the class or activity is in session
 - refraining from entering or leaving the area while an activity is underway
 - limiting the duration of the visit to particular times or length of time
 - limiting the activities of the visitor to a particular purpose(s)
 - designating particular routes of travel in the building or upon the school grounds for safety reasons.
- Visitors wishing to conference with teachers or administrators during the course of the school day are encouraged to make arrangements in advance.

Special Situations

- Both custodial and non-custodial parents of Whittlesea Secondary College students have rights to visit the child's school unless a court order exists restricting such contact.
 - In the event that a non-custodial parent seeks permission to visit, the school shall make a good faith effort to notify the custodial parent in advance of the visit.
- The school Principal has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program.
 - Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.

Guest Speakers / Presenters – Guidelines

- Staff should inform the Principal, office and other relevant staff of any visitors they are having come to the school, including the name, date, approximate time of the visit and a brief outline of the visit. This should then be recorded in the school diary and Compass.

Purposes of Visitors and Volunteers

When inviting speakers and presenters into the school the following must be considered:

- does their visit serve an educational purpose consistent with curriculum objectives?
- is the presentation appropriate for the age of the audience?
- parental permission may be necessary for some presentations including those that:
 - are religious in nature
 - include explicit sexual content (e.g. Family Life).

Criteria for Determining the Need for Visitors and Volunteers

To determine the need for a particular visitor or guest speaker to attend the school, staff should consider:

- the visit serves an educational purpose and is consistent with curriculum objectives, school policies, DET policies
- the content is appropriate for children or young people in the relevant age group
- the incursion/presentation is consistent with the values of public education
- the visit has potential benefit to the school community
- is there the potential for a visitor to cause controversy within the school or broader community?
- weigh the level of disruption to the functioning of the school in relation to the potential benefits to the students
- does the visit represent appropriate use of DET resources, including teachers' time
- ensure the safety of students, staff and visitors in the event of an emergency at school.

Exemptions to the Visitor Process

- Parents/guardians/relatives coming to collect students early (before 3:05 p.m.) will be required to report to the front office to sign the student out.
- Parents/guardians/relatives coming to collect students for normal pick-up at home time entering the school grounds between 2:50 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. to wait for the home time bell will not need to follow the sign in process.
- Emergency services people attending the school as a result of a current emergency e.g. school fire; injured student requiring an ambulance will be exempt from following the policy as the first priority is dealing with the emergency call out.
- Trades people working before or after the school hours will not be expected to use the sign in process. They will, however, have to report to the Administration Office to let the Principal, Assistant Principal or Business Manager know of their presence in the school.
- Cleaners who are contracted by the school for the regular/daily cleaning service will be exempt from the sign in/sign out process.

Compensation

- Personal injury: Volunteer school workers are covered by the Department's Workers Compensation policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.
- Property damage: If a volunteer school worker suffers damage to his or her property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister may authorise such compensation as the Minister thinks reasonable in the circumstances.

Related Legislation and Policies

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 - sections 5.6.2, 5.6.3*
- *Workers Compensation Act 1958*
- *Wrongs Act 1958 – section 37(1)*
- *Working with Children Act 2005*
- [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)
- [DET Child Safety Policy](#)
- [DET Volunteer Workers](#)
- [DET School Policy Advisory Guide](#)
- [DHS Child Safe Standards](#)
- WSC Child Safe Environment Policy
- WSC Working with Children Checks Policy
- WSC Code of Conduct

Appendices

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This Policy was last ratified by School Council in: 2017