

Policy Number	Ratification Date	Reviewed	Review Date
40	Oct 2016	2017	2018



# VOLUNTEER AND VISITORS POLICY

## (INCLUDING WWC) 2017

### Rationale

Elsternwick Primary School seeks to provide an open and friendly learning environment which values and encourages visitors to the school whilst upholding child safety. Typically these may include parent and community volunteers, invited speakers, sessional instructors, representatives of community business and service groups, prospective parents, service people, official school photographers and commercial sales people.

Concurrently we recognise our duty of care to provide a safe environment for the students, staff and parents of Elsternwick Primary School.

### Aim

- To provide a safe and secure environment for the students, staff, parents and resources of Elsternwick Primary School.
- To establish protocols and procedures to effectively monitor and manage volunteers and visitors, whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of Elsternwick Primary School.
- To provide a child safe environment at all times by balancing the wish to welcome all to our school but ensuring the safety of our students at all times.
- To minimise the risk of harm to students by requiring staff and volunteers to provide evidence that they have appropriate approvals to work with children in accordance with legislation and Department policy.

### Action

**It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure only suitable and eligible persons are employed in the school. EPS follows the Department's *Suitability for Employment Policy*. This policy also outlines the Department's recommendations in relation to volunteers and visitors to a school.**

### School Protocols:

- Visitors are required to report to the School Office prior if undertaking any activity within the school. Any visitor wishing to speak to a student must do so through a school staff member.
- Visitors are required to sign the 'Visitors' book and will be assigned a 'Visitors' badge which they must wear at all times within the school. Similarly, they are required to report to the School Office at the end of their visit to return their badge and to 'sign out' in the Visitors book.
- Visitors within the school who have failed to follow this process will be monitored and reminded to do so, and/or will be asked to leave the school grounds if this does not occur.
- Salespeople and those delivering goods will be directed appropriately by the School Office staff.
- Visitors providing services to the school such as tradespeople and consultants who may work independently of school personnel (service contractors), will be asked to present their Working with Children Check (WWCC) in accordance with the *Working with Children Act 2005*; observe the schools 'sign in' and 'sign out' procedures; wear a 'Visitors' badge at all times and observe the school's Occupational Health and Safety procedures while on site.

- A WWC check is required for anyone engaging in 'child related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person or not. This means that a volunteer or visitor who is supervised by a teacher must have a WWC check if they engage in 'child related work'.
- All volunteers, including parent volunteers are required to obtain a WWC to attend camps and excursions. A copy of this WWC will be stored in accordance with the school's privacy policy (see maintaining records below).
- Applications for a WWC are free for volunteering and you must nominate Elsternwick PS as your place of volunteer activity. See [working with children check website](#).

**Volunteers:**

- Volunteers who assist and support programs across the school must sign in and out in the classroom or area in which they are providing assistance (e.g. parent classroom helpers). They do not need to sign in and out at the school office.
- Volunteers are not required to wear a 'Visitor' badge if they remain within observable distance of a staff member.
- See the EPS Outdoor Education and Schools Camps Policy.

**Visitors:**

- Visitors, such as parents and community members, are actively encouraged to participate in school activities and will be invited to do so through the School Newsletter and website, notices, written invitations and personal approaches, as well as informally through conversation and opportunity.
- Visiting speakers are in attendance by invitation only. They will be well briefed about the nature of the school and its community by the Principal, Assistant Principal or Teacher in Charge (refer Incursion/Excursion policy) and should be prepared to respect the range of views held by our students and their families.
- The Principal is responsible for ensuring that parental consent is obtained for contact with students by approved organisations (e.g. instrumental music) during school hours.
- The front office is the school's major public space and parents are welcome to visit this area at any time to:
  - Organise the collection of their child/children by filling in an early release slip
  - Make appointments to see staff
  - Make enquires about school operations
  - Pay accounts or complete other tasks that require the support of our office staff or members of the leadership team.

**Risk Management:**

- Visitors and volunteers entering the school will be provided with directions, and made aware of any construction works which may impact upon their safety or comfort. School office staff, Principal, Assistant Principal or (in the case of incursions) the Teacher In Charge will provide this advice.
- The school's emergency management procedures will ensure that visitors within the school at the time of emergency or practice drill will be identified and directed appropriately. This is also identified in the EPS child safety risk framework.

**Unauthorised visitors:**

- Visitors who are not listed on school records and who wish to see a student will not be given access to them. The Principal or Assistant Principal will explain the school's policy and then request the individual to leave the school grounds.
- Under the *Summary Offence Act 1966*, the principal reserves the right, and has the authority to prohibit any potential visitor from entering or remaining within the school, and also has the authority to invite or exclude people from using or being within the school's boundaries outside school operating hours.

NB: For the purpose of this policy, visitors are defined as all people other than staff members, students, and parents/guardians involved in the task of delivering or collecting students at the start or end of the school day.

**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.

## 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.

## Management of Records

- Classroom volunteer registers will be collected at the end of each school year – at the beginning of each year volunteers including exempted categories should submit their interest to participate in classroom activities to the front office with a current copy of their WWC (where relevant) and a notation including the year and date they completed the Volunteer training.
- A register of all volunteer and visitor activity, including volunteering outside of the classroom will be kept at the office and kept in accordance with the EPS privacy policy.

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three years in line with the schools review cycle or more regularly should other legislative or policy changes be required.