



# TORQUAY COAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Visitors in Schools 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) 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 for the range of views held by students and their families.

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)

### **Definitions**

*Child-related work:* As defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (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 direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

### **Types Of Visitors**

Visitors to the school are defined as all people entering school grounds during school hours 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
  - allied health
- those who are conducting business such as:
  - uniform suppliers
  - booksellers
  - official school photographers
  - commercial salespeople
- trades people
- children's services agents
- talent scouts

Other visitors may include:

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing 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**

School staff have duty of care to their students. The duty requires school staff 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 eg police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to the school support their claim to an exemption.

Allied Health visitors will need to fill in the appropriate forms and provide evidence of WWCC and insurance. All allied health visits need to be approved by a PCO and placed on Compass.

## **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.

### **Working with Children Clearance and other suitability checks**

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

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** must have a valid WWC Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required such as reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

It is **at the discretion of the principal** as to whether to require a WWC Clearance for those not engaged in child-related work, noting that the Department **recommends** that visitors have a WWC Clearance if they will be **regularly present at the school and/or children can reasonably be expected to be present**.

In some circumstances, visitors to Torquay Coast Primary School who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWC Clearance depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, Torquay Coast Primary School will require a valid WWC Clearance 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
- **visitors (e.g. contractors)**, who will regularly be performing unsupervised work at the school during school hours or any other time where children are present. 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 Clearance.

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.

### **Sign in Procedure**

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 will 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.

Visitors who fail to follow directions will be directed to Administration.

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.

### **Approved**

Ratified by school council 2017

Reviewed by Principal 2024

### **Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed in 2027 as part of the school's three-year review cycle.