



Bethanga Primary School

Visitors Policy

Bethanga Primary School is committed to the creation of a safe, just and respectful environment that supports wellness for all members of the school community. In this, there is a moral obligation and shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable members of the community.

Bethanga Primary School believes that, while protecting children and young people against sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility, schools have particular moral and legal responsibilities to ensure children and young people are safe in their care and to actively and intentionally work to eliminate all forms of abusive behaviours towards children. There are also particular moral and legal obligations for those in authority to prevent, reduce and minimise child abuse and exploitation in all forms.

All government school staff will be made aware of their legal responsibilities. As part of the government school principal contract, government school principals are required to plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of students.

Purpose of this policy:

To ensure schools effectively manage visitors to the school.

Policy:

Schools must develop school level policies and procedures to manage visitors to the school.

Principals must:

- implement Department and school level policies and procedures
- be responsible for visitors allowed into school
- ensure 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 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.

Rationale:

To increase experience of the cultural and social features of the community, the Department encourages schools to:

- ensure parents/guardians partner in their children's development
- create strong partnerships with community services, schools, businesses and the wider community.

Types of visitors

Visitors to schools may include, but are not limited to:

- prospective parents and employees
- those who are addressing a learning or developmental need, such as:
 - parent and community volunteers
 - invited speakers
 - sessional instructors
 - representatives of community, business and service groups
 - local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments
- those who are conducting business such as:
 - uniform suppliers
 - booksellers
 - official school photographers
 - commercial salespeople
- trades people
- children's services agents
- instructors providing Special Religious Instruction (SRI), see: [Special Religious Instruction](#)

Other visitors may include:

- Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection Workers, and Victoria Police, see: [Police and DHS Interviews](#)
- Persons who are authorised to enter on to the school premises, for a specific purpose (e.g. Worksafe or Environmental Health officers). In such cases school procedures should 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.

Policy and procedures:

School policy and procedures regarding visitors to the school must, as a minimum:

- require all visitors arriving and departing during school hours to use a visitor's book to record their name, signature, the date and time, and the purpose of the visit.
- include procedures for assessment and verification of the suitability of visitors to be in a location where children freely move about, learn and play. 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 support their claim to an exemption
- ensure that any programs or content delivered by visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular (apart from the provision of Special Religious Instruction)
- 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 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.

To develop local policies and procedures school councils should consult the views of school communities and address each of the following.

Considerations	School principals should consider
Safety needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ schools are not public places▪ the safety of students and staff▪ potential risks posed by visitors

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Visitors purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the requirements for paid or volunteer workers to have a Working with Children Check. ▪ categories of visitors that will be allowed into the school and on what conditions ▪ potential benefits of different types of visits ▪ whether the proposed visit is appropriate for young people (in the relevant age group) ▪ whether the proposed visit, programs or content to be delivered is consistent with the values of public education, Department policies and the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i> ▪ whether a distinction should be made between the protocols applying to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ community-based, not-for-profit groups ▪ visitors with commercial, advertising or marketing purpose ▪ the potential for a visitor or the content of their program/presentation to cause controversy within the school or broader community.
Educational merit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ whether the proposed visit is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for an educational purpose ▪ consistent with curriculum objectives ▪ the reorganisation of school programs or routines required in relation to the potential benefits to the students ▪ the appropriate use of Department resources, including teachers' time.
Legal requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ legal considerations and Department policies concerning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ privacy ▪ photographing of students ▪ mandatory reporting ▪ Children First - promoting and protecting the rights and well-being of children. ▪ delivery of Special Religious Instruction.
Working with Children Check (WWCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the suitability of visitors who will be in a location where children move freely about, learn and play ▪ whether an exemption to the Working With Children Check applies to a visitor ▪ the evidence provided by the visitor to support their exemption due to their occupation.

Considerations	School principals should consider
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Procedures

- 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 students are adequately supervised by teaching staff of the school, in order for the school's duty of care to be discharged to those students
- the familiarisation with school routines, including the emergency management plan, required for regular visitors
- when parents will be notified in advance about visitors to the school
- requirements for parental permission for students to participate in programs or related activities delivered by visitors.

Visiting speakers

Schools should:

- ensure the content of presentations and addresses contributes to the development of students' 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 students and their families.

Note: For advice concerning the selection of lectures, speeches and performances see: [Suitable Teaching and Learning Resources](#)

Related policies

- [Photographing and Filming Students](#)
- [Police and DHS Interviews](#)
- [Requests for Information about Students](#)
- [Suitable Teaching and Learning Resources](#)
- [Supervision and Access](#)
- [Volunteer Checks](#)

Department resource

- Template Policies - Visitors in Schools Template

Other resources

- [Justice & Regulation - Working with Children Check](#)

Related legislation

- *Education and Training Reform Act (Vic) 2006*

- *Ministerial Order 141*
- *Working with Children Act 2005*

Related Documentation:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies and procedures of Bethanga Primary School concerned with Child Safety and Wellbeing:

- Bethanga Primary School WWCC List
- Bethanga Primary School Duty of Care Policy
- Bethanga Primary School Child Safe Policy
- Bethanga Primary School Camps and Excursions Policy
- Bethanga Primary School On-Site Supervision Policy
- Bethanga Primary School Privacy Policy
- Bethanga Primary School Student Engagement and Well Being Policy
- VIT Legal Obligations of a Teacher
- VIT Teacher Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safety Policy
- Child Protection – Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Protection – Working With Children Checks Policy
- Child Protection – Failure to Disclose Policy
- Child Protection – Failure to Protect Policy
- Child Protection – Grooming Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last reviewed and updated as required February 2018