Visitors to the School Policy

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact school office on 51271512 or moe.ps.south@education.vic.gov.au.

Purpose

This policy is concerned with people who visit the school.
There are potential risks in allowing visitors into schools, including visitors who are members of students' families or members of the local community. These risks need to be managed in a satisfactory manner. This document attempts to outline our procedures we use to minimise these risks.

2. Policy Statement

A school is a focal component of every community. It is a place of learning where students feel safe and valued. High levels of parental involvement in schools and strong communities are critical to children's development and learning. Community groups and agencies, business and philanthropic organisations also have a strong interest in improving outcomes for children and young people and helping them pursue academic excellence. It is important that schools make the most of these partnerships. We recognise a duty of care to ensure a safe environment for students and staff and recognise the responsibility to protect and preserve the school's resources against theft, vandalism, and misuse.
This visitor protocol policy describes the procedures and guidelines which are to be applied by staff and the School Council in relation to visitors entering the school site when the school is in operation.

Visitors are defined as all people other than staff members, students and parents/guardians involved in the task of delivering or collecting children at the start or end of the school day.

The school welcomes past students in returning to reconnect with their primary years. Teachers are happy to have visitors to their classes, but these visits need to be pre-planned, consistent with the school's Code of Conduct and productive for all concerned.

We aim to:

- support the strong links between students and their primary school.
- ensure that school visits occur at appropriate times.
- ensure that school visits fit well with classroom practice.
- ensure that staff have been consulted about student visits and are then prepared for the extra students in their classrooms.
- ensure the safety of all students.

3. Implementation

- All visitors to South Street Primary School must comply with COVID restrictions and Government guidelines. Visitors are to observe signage on current restrictions.

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- When the school is in operation all visitors to the school apart from permanent staff must obtain and wear a Visitor's Badge whilst on school property. (See Working with Children Check Policy)
- Signage at entry points and other key locations will direct all visitors to the office on entry to the school site. On reporting to reception, visitors must sign in, noting name, time of arrival, and reason for being in the school. Visitors will be issued with a Visitor's Badge their Working With Children's Check card will be inserted in the visitor lanyard while at the school.
- Prior to leaving the school, badges must be returned to the Office and visitors must sign out.
- Regular support staff such as music teachers, casual relief teachers, speech pathologists, guidance officers, etc. will register at the beginning of each year and be identified with a personalised Identification Badge.
- All parent helpers/ canteen helpers will sign in each time they visit and collect a visitor badge.
- All staff encountering a visitor without a badge should both direct the visitor to Reception and at the same time report the matter to the Office.
- Students who encounter a visitor without a visitor's badge are encouraged to immediately alert a member of staff.
- Visitors who have contact with children on a regular and unsupervised manner e.g. canteen volunteers, must hold a current "Working with Children Check" (See Working with Children Check Policy.)
- The potential benefit of a visitor's attendance must also be considered in light of the possible disruption to the effective functioning of the school.
- The use of DEECD resources, including teachers' time should also be considered in light of the benefits to the students.
- All legal considerations and DEECD policies concerning privacy, the photographing of students and mandatory reporting will be adhered to.
- When possible, parents will be notified in advance about visitors to the school. E.g. incursions, special speakers, etc.

School policy Past Students Visiting

- Past students wishing to visit the school need to contact the school at least one day prior to the visit.
- Past students visiting the school need to specify who is coming and the duration of their visit.
- Past students visiting the school can only organise these visits on their current school's Curriculum Days.
- Past students who have obtained permission to visit the school must sign in before proceeding to classes.
- Whilst here, past students will be expected to follow the school's Code of Conduct

School policy on Visiting Community Groups

- The school supports visits to the school by children's choirs, orchestras and drama groups, sporting associations, clubs (scouts/guides), etc but special consideration should be given to whether:
  - the activity conducted by the persons or bodies concerned would be regarded by the broader community as suitable for young people, and specifically for the age group of the target students

- student involvement will lead to experiences that enrich learning and skills development and complement their school education, and
- the individual or organisation has an appropriate record in terms of their 'duty of care' for young people.

- Visits by approved organisations should be negotiated to occur at convenient times.
- Sessions by approved organisations for interested students accompanied by their parents, using school facilities, outside of school hours will also be considered providing real benefit can be shown to students.
- Where possible information will be provided to the parents of students in the relevant year levels about opportunities so that, if desired, independent contact can be made.

Working with Children Clearance and other suitability checks

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) 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 Moe (South Street) Primary School 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, Moe (South Street) 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.

Invited speakers and presenters

On occasion, Moe (South Street) Primary School may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students.

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Consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements, Moe (South Street) Primary School 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 for the range of views held by students and their families.

Parent visitors

We understand that there may occasionally be a reason why a parent or carer may want to speak to or see their child at school, during school hours.

If there is a particular pressing or unavoidable issue that cannot wait until the end of the school day, we ask that parents or carers call the school office to make the request to speak to or see their child during school hours.

We also ask that parents avoid arranging to visit their children at school wherever possible, as this can cause inappropriate disruptions to the school day.

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.

Parents or carers who are prohibited from entering the school under a court order or direction of the Principal are not permitted to visit the school. Our school maintains and provides office staff with a list of restricted parents/carers which may include identifying photographs and any other information as required depending on the level of risk posed. This information will be displayed confidentially.

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.

4. Definitions

Visitors to the School Policy

Nil

5. References

Further information can be obtained at the following sites:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/visitorsinschool.aspx
The schools "Working with Children Check" Policy.

Contact
Community and Stakeholder Relations Branch
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au

6. Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Provided to staff at induction and included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff meetings/briefings as required
- Made available publicly on our school website
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

7. Evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed according to the School Council Calendar Policy Review

Date Implemented	6/2/2023
Approval Authority (Signature and date)	6/2/2023
Dates Reviewed	14th September 2021 3rd February 2023 15th October 2024
Responsible for Review	Policy Coordinator
Next Review Date	20/10/2026