

Visitors to School Policy

1. *Rationale-*

At Pakenham Springs we recognise that 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.

Pakenham Springs aims to ensure that parents and families are valued partners in their children's development and learning, and that a strong partnership is created between community services, schools, the broader community and business.

At Pakenham Springs we recognise that interaction between schools and their communities inevitably leads to the presence of a range of visitors in schools. These may typically include parent and community volunteers; invited speakers; sessional instructors; representatives of community, business and service groups; prospective parents and employees; and local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments.

Others, including employees of relevant children's services agencies, trades people, talent scouts for sporting and arts organisations, official school photographers, commercial salespeople such as booksellers and uniform suppliers may also be present in schools from time to time over the school year.

2. *Purpose of Policy-*

It is acknowledged that there are potential risks in allowing visitors into schools, including visitors who are members of students' families or members of the local community. To ensure these risks are managed in a manner which takes account of the nature and size of the school and its community, the school's Visitors to Schools Policy has been developed.

This document outlines the School Council policy and agreed procedures in relation to visitors to Pakenham Springs. This policy applies to any visitors who may attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction, and when the office is staffed to receive visitors at reception between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm. Outside of these hours, our front office is not staffed and the only visitors who are permitted on school grounds are parents/carers or their delegates who are dropping off or picking up students from OSHclub, school events, interviews, sport activities and community or other groups that have entered into agreements with the school to use school premises outside of school hours.

DEFINITIONS:

Child-related work: As defined by the *Working with Children Act 2005* (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 contact with children that is incidental to the work.

The following principles have been taken into account in developing Pakenham Springs' Visitor's to School Policy:

- Pakenham Springs is an educational institution, and is not a public place.
- The safety and privacy of Pakenham Springs students will be given the highest priority.
- Any potential risks posed to students by visitors will be minimised.
- Visitors attending Pakenham Springs will attend for a variety of reasons, but as far as possible, visitors will serve an educational purpose and the visit will be consistent with school's curriculum objectives.
- Visitors will be appropriate for children and be consistent with the values of public education.
- The allowing of visitors on the school premises will be consistent with the requirements of the Working with Children Act 2005 in relation to paid or volunteer workers (as explained in the school's Working With Children Check procedures and *Volunteers Policy*).
- A priority will be given to community-based, not-for-profit groups as compared to visitors who have a wholly or partly commercial, advertising or marketing purpose.
- Each visitor will be assessed in regards to the potential to cause controversy within the school or broader community.
- Visits/visitors will be assessed in regards to the level of disruption to the functioning of the school in relation to the potential benefits to students.
- Visits/visitors will only be permitted when it is deemed an appropriate use of DET resources, including teachers' time
- The safety of students, staff and visitors in the event of an emergency situation at the school will be considered when approving visits.
- Department and school level policies concerning privacy, the photographing of students, mandatory reporting and so on will also be considered when approving visits.

Within the parameters of the law and Departmental advice, the Principal is responsible for the implementation of the Visitors to School policy. The Principal has operational responsibility in relation to the visitors who are allowed into schools, for what purpose and on what conditions. If in doubt, the Principal will consult with the Regional Office and seek advice from the Legal Services Branch.

3. Implementation Guidelines-

Pakenham Springs Primary School strives to create an open and inclusive school community, and encourages parents and carers to be actively involved in their child's development and education. We also strive to foster strong partnerships with local community services, schools and other organisations.

The following guidelines will be followed in the implementation of the Pakenham Springs' Visitors to School Policy.

From time to time, different members of the public may visit our school. Visitors may include, but are not limited to:

- Parents
- Volunteers – see our school's *Volunteers Policy* for more information
- Prospective parents, students and employees
- Invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development
- Public officials (eg Members of Parliament, local councillors)
- Persons conducting business eg: uniform suppliers, booksellers, official school photographers, commercial salespeople
- Tradespeople

- Children's services agencies
- Talent scouts
- Department of Health and Human Services workers
- Victoria Police
- Persons authorised to enter school premises (eg Worksafe inspectors, health officers etc)
- Other Department of Education and Training staff (including allied health staff) or contractors
- NDIS therapists or other allied health or health practitioners

Sign in procedure

All visitors to Pakenham Springs Primary School are required to report to the school office on arrival (see exceptions below in relation to parents/carers). Visitors must:

- Record their name and person they are visiting using the Compass Kiosk at the office
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request
- Produce their valid Working with Children Check where required by this policy (see below)
- Wear a visitor's lanyard with Compass pass at all times
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including Child Safety Code of Conduct, School Philosophy Policy and Statement of Values
- Return to the office upon departure, sign out and return visitor's lanyard.

Pakenham Springs Primary School will ensure that our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Statement of Commitment are available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Requirements for visitors to produce a valid Working with Children Check card

For Working with Children Check (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** (see definition above) must have a valid WWC Check.

In some circumstances, visitors to Pakenham Springs Primary School who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWC Check depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, Pakenham Springs Primary School will require a valid WWC Check 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 work at the school and in circumstances where they will be performing their work in an area where they will be unsupervised and around children.

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 Check.

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, Pakenham Springs Primary School may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students. Consistent with Department of Education and Training requirements, Pakenham Springs 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 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 using the Compass Kiosk.

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.

This policy is supported by the following school level policies and procedures:

- Working with Children Check Procedure
- Trespassers in Schools Policy
- Contractor Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Excursion and Incursion Policy

4. Evaluation-

This policy was last updated on 20/05/2019 and is scheduled for review in May 2022.