

Visitors 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, businesses 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.

2. Purpose of Policy

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to Pakenham Springs Primary School.

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 that takes account of the nature and size of the school and its community, the school's Visitors to Schools Policy has been developed.

This policy outlines our school's arrangements for visitors who attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, and when the office is staffed to monitor/receive visitors at reception, including parents, contractors or any other external agencies. Outside of these times, our front office is not staffed, and this policy does not apply.

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.

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 the 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.
- Visits/visitors will be assessed in regard 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 DE 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.

For example School is not a public place. The principal has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds, and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with our *School Philosophy Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Volunteers 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
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing 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 and School Philosophy Policy.

- 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 and Wellbeing Policy are available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Working with Children Clearance and other suitability checks

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 Clearance. Additional suitability checks may also be required such as reference, proof of identity, qualification and work history involving children checks.

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 Clearance depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, Pakenham Springs 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, 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 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 using the Compass Kiosk.

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.

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. Communication

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

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in induction processes for relevant staff
- Made available in hard copy from the school office upon request

Supported by Department policies:

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)

5. Evaluation

Policy last reviewed	29 th May 2023
Consultation	7 th June, 2023 (email/website)
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	29 th May, 2025

