



VISITORS in SCHOOL POLICY and PROCEDURES

Background

Bell Primary School is committed to providing a safe and secure school environment whilst enhancing the teaching, learning, cultural and social programs of its students. The school recognizes that parents/carers have an important role to play in their child's development and welcomes their input into their education. The school also aims to create strong partnerships with community services, schools, businesses and the wider community.

Purpose

To ensure Bell Primary School:

- Welcomes appropriate visitors into the school community
- Effectively screens, manages and supervises visitors to the school.
- Keeps a record of all visitors to the school in the event of a school emergency or any future investigation
- Complies with the Child Safe Standards
- Complies with Department of Education and Training (DET) policies in regard to managing visitors in the school and the *Working with Children Act 2005*.

Scope

This policy applies to any visitors who may be present in the school grounds when the school is open for educational purposes between the hours of 8:15am to 4:30pm when the office is staffed to monitor/receive visitors at reception. Outside these times, the front office is not staffed and the only visitors who are permitted into the buildings are:

- Parents/carers or their delegates who are dropping off or picking up students from Outside School Hours Care
- Parents/carers or their delegates attending school events such as parent teacher interviews, concerts, sport or other school activities
- School Council and related groups including all sub-committees and working groups under the Bell PS governance structure
- Community and other groups who have entered into contracts or agreements with the school to use school premises outside of school hours will have access if approved by School Council.

Families that use the outside areas for leisure activities after hours, including the oval, basketball/netball courts and play equipment, need to show respect towards staff and not act in ways that would damage school grounds or facilities.

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.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

A visitor is defined as a member of the public who has a legitimate reason to visit the school for a short period of time.

Implementation

The Principal will have the overall responsibility of overseeing the implementation of this policy and will delegate responsibilities to suitably qualified staff.

The Principal (or delegate) has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds, and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with our school's Values, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Child Safety Principles.

Visitors must disclose the purpose of their visit with staff at the front office when signing in. If there is a concern or query about the purpose, a member of the leadership team (principal, Assistant Principal or Leading Teacher/Learning Specialist) should be consulted before access is authorised.

All planned visitors should be related to teaching/learning in the school. Other considerations include:

- **Safety-** of students and staff, the potential risks posed by visitors
- **Purpose-** potential benefits to students and whether it builds on their content and knowledge, whether it is relevant for the age group, is consistent with the values of public education, the potential for a visitor to cause controversy and whether a distinction should be made between the protocols applying to community-based, not-for-profit groups and visitors with commercial, advertising or marketing purpose.
- **Educational Merit-** whether it is consistent with curriculum objectives, the level of disruption to the functioning of the school in relation to the potential benefit for students and the appropriate use of DET resources including teacher time.
- **Legal Requirements-** DET policies relating to privacy, photographing of students, mandatory reporting, child safety, notification to parents and whether parental permission is needed.
- **Child Safe Standards-** all visitors must comply with these standards, including the Code of Conduct.
- **School Culture-** to 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, the ability to brief presenters about the nature of the school and its community and respect the range of views held by students and their families.

All planned visits will also be included on the school calendar or daily bulletin where practical.

Typical visitors to schools may include, but are not limited to:

- Parents, carers and other relatives visiting for school related purposes other than drop offs or pick-ups.
- Prospective parents/carers 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 photographer, commercial salespeople, trades people, children's services agents, talent scouts
- Other visitors may include Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection Workers, and Victoria Police, persons who are authorised to enter on to the school premises, for a specific purpose (e.g. Worksafe or Environmental Health officers).
- Past students who are visiting previous teachers and classmates during pupil free days. In these situations:
 - ✓ The visit must be pre-arranged with the former teacher
 - ✓ Usual sign-in procedures are followed
 - ✓ They must remain under supervision of a staff member at all times
 - ✓ No past students will be allowed outside during play times unsupervised.
- A range of talent scouts may be approved by the Principal to visit the school if it is consistent with DET and school values. This could include children's choirs, orchestras, drama groups, sporting associations. The Principal will determine:
 - ✓ The relevant year level/s being targeted
 - ✓ How to provide information to parents/carers about such visits
 - ✓ If agencies are to contact parents/carers privately or works in conjunction with the school to communicate to parents/carers
 - ✓ Use of facilities during school hours.

Sign-in Procedures & Record Keeping

All visitors to Bell PS are required to report to the school office on arrival and must adhere to the following procedures:

- Record their name, date and time of visit and purpose of visit in visitors folder/Compass kiosk
- 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 tag at all times
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including the School's Values, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Child Safety Principles, OHS procedures and Working With Children Check policy when involved in child related work.
- Return to the office upon departure, sign out and return the visitors tag

Bell PS will ensure that our school's Child Safety Statement of Commitment and Child Safety Principles are available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

As part of the Victorian Qualifications and Registration Authority (VRQA) the school will also keep a detailed list of Parent Helpers with copies of their Working with Children Check.

Requirements for Working with Children Check Cards

All visitors who are directly engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) must have a valid WWC Check. In some circumstances, visitors to Bell PS 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:

- **visitors who will be connecting regularly with children** during the time they are visiting, even though direct contact with children is not a central part of their normal duties (**Volunteers such as a fundraising team**)
- **visitors 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 (**contractors**),
- The Principal (or delegate) will use the DET flowchart to assist them when making decisions about suitability check (see Appendix A)
- 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, Bell PS 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. The school will consider the following before authorising external speakers:

- 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).

- Ensure 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.
- Ensure relevant background checks including Working with Children Checks are compliant (see requirements for WWCC above)
- Ensure no speaker is left with students unsupervised at any time.

Related Policies and Resources

- Volunteers Policy - Bell PS
- Child Safe Policy - Bell PS
- DET Working with Children Check Flowchart - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/community/WWCCflowchart.pdf>.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's 3-year cycle or as needed to comply with DET policy changes.

Document Status

Reviewed	School Council Ratification	Next Review
September 2019	19-09-2019	September 2022

Suitability Check Flowchart for Schools

