



VISITOR AND VOLUNTEER POLICY

PURPOSE

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to Mount Waverley Secondary College.

SCOPE

This policy outlines our school's arrangements for visitors who attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction between the hours of 8.15 am and 4 pm including parents, volunteers and contractors. 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.

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Closely related family member: parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

Volunteer worker: A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work: School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents' club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (ie indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.



DUTY OF CARE

Principals and teachers have duty of care to their students. The duty requires principals and teachers to take all reasonable steps to reduce risk, including the provision of suitable and safe premises and the provision of an adequate system of supervision. The duty is *non-delegable*, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party.

Visitors and volunteers who are attending the school to deliver incursions, presentations, seminars or other activities and programs to students will be fully supervised by school staff at all times. The school will assess and verify the suitability of visitors and volunteers who will work with children. 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 the school support their claim to an exemption.

APPROVALS

On the basis that schools are not public places, but are public educational institutions, the Principal has ultimate discretion to approve or not approve a potential visitor. The Principal also has the authority to exclude people from being on school grounds outside of school operating hours.

When deciding to approve a visitor, the Principal will consider the visitor's suitability, purpose and the benefit provided to the students and staff from the visit, **specifically**:

- the educational merit and potential benefits of the visit;
- the level of disruption to the functioning of the school programs and routines in relation to the potential benefits to students;
- whether the proposed visit is consistent with the values of public education including the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular (apart from Special Religious Instruction, delivered in accordance with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), Ministerial Direction 141 and policy);
- whether the proposed visitors and volunteers will be delivering content that is appropriate having regard to school policies, Department policies and the principles and practice of Australian democracy including 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;
- the potential for the visitor to cause controversy within the school or broader community.

The Principal should consider the suitability of visitors and volunteers to be in a location where children freely move about, learn and play and whether a Working with Children Check is required or exemptions apply.



POLICY

Mount Waverley Secondary College 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.

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

- Parents
- Volunteers
- Prospective parents, students and employees
- Invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development
- Public officials (e.g. Members of Parliament, local councillors)
- Persons conducting business (e.g.: uniform suppliers, booksellers, official school photographers, commercial salespeople)
- Tradespeople
- Exam supervisors
- Children's services agencies
- Department of Health and Human Services workers
- Victoria Police
- Persons authorised to enter school premises (e.g. 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 Mount Waverley Secondary College are required to report to the General Office on arrival. Visitors must:

- Sign in through Compass which will record; their name, date and time of visit, who is being met and purpose of visit
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request (if required)
- Produce evidence of their valid Working with Children Clearance where required by this policy
- Wear a visitor's name tag at all times when required
- Follow instruction from school staff and abide by all relevant school policies relating to appropriate conduct on school grounds including eg: Child Safety Code of Conduct, Communication Policy, Statement of Values as well as Department policies such as the [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and [Workplace Bullying Policy](#)
- Return to the office upon departure, sign out and return visitor's name tag and sign out through Compass.

Working with Children Clearance

For Working with Children (WWC) Check and other suitability check requirements relating to parents/ carers and other volunteers working with students please see the information below.



All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** (see definition above) must have a valid WWC Clearance.

In some circumstances, visitors to Mount Waverley Secondary College who are **not** engaged in child-related work may also be required to produce a valid WWC Clearance depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. The college will, for example, 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, Mount Waverley Secondary College 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, Mount Waverley Secondary College 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 pickups 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.

Becoming a volunteer

Members of our school community who would like to volunteer are encouraged to be involved in activities such as 'Parents of Mount' activities and working with students in Languages classes when applicable.

Suitability checks including Working with Children Clearances

Working with students

To ensure that we are meeting our legal obligations under the *Worker Screening Act* and the Child Safe Standards, Mount Waverley Secondary College is required to undertake suitability checks which in most cases will involve asking for evidence of a Working With Children (WWC) Clearance and may also involve undertaking reference, proof of identity and work history involving children checks.

Considering our legal obligations, and our commitment to ensuring that Mount Waverley Secondary College is a child safe environment, we will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Clearance and produce their valid card to the General Office for verification in the following circumstances:

- **Volunteers who are not parent/family members** of any student at the school if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- **Parent/family volunteers** who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is **not** participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity
- Parent/family volunteers who assist with excursions, camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- Parent/community School Council members sitting on School Council with student School Council members, regardless of whether their own child is a student member or not



In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, our college may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Non-child-related work

On some occasions, parents and other members of the school community may volunteer to do work that is not child-related. For example, working bees, Friends at Mount, participation in sub committees and groups that meet in the evening during which children will not be, or would not reasonably be expected to be, present.

Volunteers for this type of work are not required to have WWC Clearances or other suitability checks as they are not engaged in child-related work and children are not generally present during these activities. However, the college reserves the right to undertake suitability checks, including requiring proof of identity and WWC Clearance, at its discretion if considered necessary for any particular activities or circumstances.

Management and supervision

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our Child Safety Policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and Communication Policy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

The principal has the discretion to decide about the ongoing suitability of a volunteer worker and may determine at any time whether or not a person is suitable to volunteer at Mount Waverley Secondary College.

Mount Waverley Secondary College will provide any appropriate induction and/or training for all volunteer workers. The principal (or their nominee) will determine what induction and/or training is necessary depending on what type of work the volunteer will be engaged in and will ensure a record is kept of the induction undertaken.

All volunteers will be provided induction in relation to Mount Waverley Secondary College's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures.

The principal (or their nominee) will determine what supervision, if any, of volunteers is required for the type of work being performed.

Compensation

Personal injury

Volunteer workers are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Workers' Compensation Policy if they suffer personal injury in the course of engaging in school work.



Property damage

If a volunteer worker suffers damage to their property in the course of carrying out school work, the Minister (or delegate) may authorise such compensation as they consider reasonable in the circumstances. Claims of this nature should be directed to the principal who will direct them to the Department's Legal Division.

Public liability insurance

The Department of Education and Training's public liability insurance policy applies when a volunteer worker engaged in school work is legally liable for:

- a claim for bodily injury to a third party
- damage to or the destruction of a third party's property.

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.

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
- Included in our staff handbook/manual
- Made available in hard copy upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Department policies:

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)
- *Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination*
- *Sexual Harassment*
- *Volunteers in Schools*
- *Volunteer OHS Management*
- *Working with Children and Other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors*
- *Workplace Bullying*

OTHER LINKS AND REFERENCES

[Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

[Suitable Teaching and Learning Resources](#)

[Photographing and Filming Students](#)



[Police and DHS Interviews](#)

[Requests for Information about Students](#)

[Suitable Teaching and Learning Resources](#)

[Supervision and Access](#)

[Department of Justice and Regulation-Working with Children Check](#)

RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- Ministerial Order 870
- *Working with Children Act 2005*

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy reviewed in August 2021 and will be reviewed in August 2024.