

VISITORS / VOLUNTEERS /

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK POLICY

Essex Heights Primary School values and encourages the partnership between the school and families in their children's development and learning. It also seeks to create strong partnerships between community services, schools, business and the broader community who have an interest in improving educational outcomes for students.

Interaction between the school and the community inevitably leads to the presence of a range of visitors in the school. 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 State and Commonwealth Parliaments. Others, including external therapists, employees of relevant children's services agencies, emergency services, instructor of religion, 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.

All personnel who are not regular employees of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development or of Essex Heights Primary School will be regarded as visitors.

Visitors include volunteers to the school. A volunteer school worker is a person who without payment or reward voluntarily engages in:

- School Council functions
- activities at the request of the Principal or School Council
- classroom and curriculum support.

Essex Heights Primary School acknowledges that there are potential risks in allowing visitors into the school, including visitors who are members of students' families or members of the local community. The Principal is responsible for ensuring the safety and privacy of students at all times.

This policy will support the school in the effective management of visitors at the school premises and to ensure they meet legal requirements.

GUIDELINES

1.0 All visitors during class hours (9.00am – 3.30pm) will be required to register their arrival at and departure from the school in the Essex Heights Primary School visitor's book. This includes printing their name, recording the date and time of entry to and departure from the school, purpose of the visit, where in the school they will be located, and whether they have a *Working with Children Check* (WWCC).

- 1.1 Where it is impractical for visitors to sign in, *e.g.* school assemblies, music concerts, sports events and so on, it is expected that the Principal or their nominee approves their presence and the purpose of their visit.
- 2.0 All registered visitors will be issued with a visitor pass which must be visible at all times.
- 3.0 Regular visitors to the school will be informed about school routines and processes including Emergency Management and Occupational Health and Safety. Visitors are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Essex Heights Primary School *Values and Behaviours and Expectations*.
- 4.0 The school will provide training sessions and information for volunteers. Volunteers are encouraged to access this information.
- 5.0 The School requires that all school visitors and volunteers in direct contact with children in the school or on excursions hold a valid WWCC Card. Direct contact with children includes verbal, written or electronic communication as well as face to face and physical contact. The WWCC is a minimum checking standard set by the Working with Children Act 2005 for those who work with children, either on a paid or voluntary basis. Volunteers can commence work in a school when they provide a receipt as proof they have applied for a WWCC with the Department of Justice.
 - 5.1 The Principal or nominee will ensure a copy of the WWCC Card will be retained in the school office.
 - 5.2 If a volunteer's occupation exempts them from the requirement to also have a WWCC *e.g.* police officers, teachers, they must provide evidence to support their claim to exemption.
 - 5.3 A WWC Check is now required for anyone engaging in 'child-related work' regardless of whether contact with a child is supervised by another person (teacher) or not.
 - 5.4 A school may also consider it necessary that a criminal record check is conducted through the Department of Justice. This may occur when possible offences are relevant to the duties of a volunteer, for example dishonesty offences, which are not part of the WWCC. The school covers the cost of the criminal record check.
- 6.0 No visitors will be allowed to photograph children without parental permission in accordance with the *Privacy Act*. This does not preclude parents photographing their own children at school events such as concerts, assemblies and sporting events.
- 7.0 The admission of any visitor to the school is at the discretion of the Principal.
 - 7.1 The Principal shall determine the level of disruption to the function of the school in relation to the potential benefits to the school.
 - 7.2 The Principal is responsible for visitors allowed into the school.

- 7.3 The Principal shall have the right to refuse access to the school to any visitor who has the potential to cause controversy within the school or broader community.

8.0 References:

- Working with Children Act 2005 and Amendments, October 2014
- Australian Privacy Principles, 12 March 2014
- Information Privacy Act 2000
- Working with Children Check Organisations Obligations:
<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/what+the+check+means+for+you/organisations/organisations>

EVALUATION

The Visitor / Volunteers / Working with Children Check Policy will be reviewed every three (3) years in accordance with the Essex Heights Primary School Evaluation Schedule or as needed due to changes in legislation or DET directives.

George Perini

Kristen Steer

Principal

School Council President