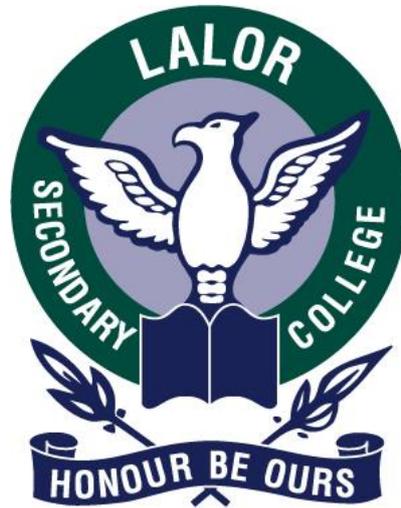


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LALOR SECONDARY COLLEGE

Visitors' Policy

2016-2018

AIM

To ensure schools effectively manage visitors so that students safety is maintained whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of our school

RATIONALE

Schools are educational institutions and are not public places. However, Lalor Secondary College recognises that the involvement of parents/carers and others from the community can play an important role in children's development and learning. It is also acknowledged by Lalor Secondary College that there are potential risks in allowing visitors into schools, including those who are members of students' families or members of the local community.

This policy seeks to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and actively encourages visitors to our school, whilst recognising our duty of care to ensure a safe environment for our students and staff, and our responsibility to protect and preserve our resources against theft, vandalism and misuse.

Programs delivered by visitors must be delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to the following, as outlined in section 1.2.1 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic):

- elected government
- the rule of law
- equal rights for all before the law
- freedom of religion
- freedom of speech and association
- the values of openness and tolerance

DEFINITION

Visitors to the school are defined as all people entering school grounds during school hours between 8.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday other than staff members, students and parents/guardians acting in their capacity as parents/guardians delivering or collecting children at the start or the end of the school day.

Visitors to schools may include, but are not limited to:

- prospective parents 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 photographers
 - commercial salespeople
- trades people
- children's services agents
- talent scouts
- instructors providing Special Religious Instruction (SRI), see: [Special Religious Instruction](#)

Other visitors may include:

- Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection Workers, and Victoria Police, see: [Police and DHS Interviews](#)
- Persons who are authorised to enter on to the school premises, for a specific purpose (e.g. Worksafe or Environmental Health officers). Lalor Secondary College will ensure,
 - the process for checking the identification and authorisation of such persons
 - the process for recording their attendance
 - who should facilitate their entry on to the school premises in a manner consistent with the authorisation.

Guest Speakers / Presenters - Guidelines

Lalor Secondary College will:

- ensure the content of presentations and addresses contributes to the development of students' knowledge and understanding
- 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 or beliefs, particularly if speaking on a controversial matter
- brief presenters about the nature of the school and its community
- ensure that visitors do not present information or programs that may conflict with the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, policies of the Department and the school
- respect the range of views held by students and their families
- ensure that any programs or content delivered by visitors complies with the requirement that education in Victorian government schools is secular (apart from the provision of Special Religious Instruction)
- ensure that any programs delivered by visitors are delivered in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy including a commitment to 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.

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 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.

Where necessary, the school will assess and verify the suitability of visitors 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 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 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

General Requirements for Visitors to Schools:

1. A visitor is defined as any person listed in the definition section.
2. Under the *Working with Children Act 2005*, volunteers or paid workers in the school are required to have a Working with Children 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 support their claim to an exemption.
3. Staff should inform reception of expected visitors so that they can be directed to the correct staff member for immediate collection.
4. All visitors shall report to the general office when arriving or leaving the school premises. Visitors are required to sign the log in book when both arriving and leaving, including printing their name, signing, and recording the date and times and purpose of the visit.
5. On arrival, all visitors shall be requested to wear an appropriate form of identification when on school premises. This must be returned when exiting the school and the visitor must sign out on return.
6. Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorization from the principal in advance. At the discretion of the Principal, such prior authorization may be required.
7. If conflicts occur because of the number of visitor requests or other circumstances, parents of currently enrolled students will generally be given preference.
8. All school visitors must comply at all times with DET policies, administrative rules and school regulations.
9. Access to particular classrooms or other instructional areas of the school may be restricted upon the recommendation of the teacher in charge or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Principal.
10. Because classrooms and other instructional areas are the most vulnerable to disruption, specific conditions may be imposed upon visitors, by the Principal or their representative including but not limited to:
 - remaining in a designated place
 - refraining from speaking to students while the class or activity is in session
 - refraining from entering or leaving the area while an activity is underway
 - requiring that the dress and grooming of the visitor be consistent with the dress code for the students and employees within the building
 - requiring that the visitor be chaperoned, when necessary
 - limiting the duration of the visit to particular times or length of time
 - particular routes of travel in the building or upon the school grounds
11. Visitors wishing to conference with teachers or administrators during the course of the school day must make arrangements in advance.
12. Parents/carers wanting to visit the uniform shop must sign in at the uniform shop.

Special Situations

1. Both custodial and non-custodial parents of a Lalor Secondary College student have rights to visit the child's school unless a court order exists restricting such contact. In the event that a non-custodial parent seeks permission to visit, the school shall make a good faith effort to notify the custodial parent in advance of the visit.
2. The school Principal has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.

Related Documents.

- *Working with Children Act 2005.*
- *Lalor Secondary College CCTV policy.*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*

This policy should also be read in conjunction with:

School Policy and Advisory Guide

- [*Duty of Care*](#)
- [*Special Religious Instruction*](#)
- [*Visitors in schools*](#)
- [*Volunteer Checks*](#)
- [*Volunteer Workers*](#)
- [*Creating Respectful and Safe School Communities*](#)