



Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School **Parent, Visitor & Volunteers Policy**

Introduction

Our Lady of the Way Primary School (“the School”) actively values and encourages Parents, Volunteers and Visitors to visit the school and seeks to provide a safe, respectful, open and friendly learning environment for all staff and students. To achieve this, the School has developed guidelines to effectively inform, monitor and manage the way Parents, Volunteers and Visitors interact with teachers and other members of the School community that must be applied at all times.

The policy is a statement of the commitment to upholding the ethical and professional standards for use at the School and is the basis for our day-to-day and long-term activities and also behaviours that support our vision, values, objectives and strategy.

General Principles

The purpose of this policy is to set out the standards of behaviour expected of those who visit the School and to detail the necessary procedures that will help resolve issues as soon as possible so that a safe and harmonious School environment is maintained.

Scope and application

This policy applies to all Parents (including Carers and Guardians). It also applies to people performing work on behalf of the School such as volunteers, contractors, emergency teachers, visitors and other personnel (“associates”). The policy also applies to interactions with staff.

The policy is intended to apply to circumstances where Parents, Volunteers and Visitors are attending the School and communicating (i.e. speaking, phone call and emailing) with the staff both during and outside School hours. Such circumstances include but are not limited to: School masses, School-related functions, events, camps, excursions, sporting carnivals, and any circumstance where an individual is representing the School.

Policy Statement

Parents, Volunteers, Visitors, Contractors and other members of the School community will:

- behave in a manner that supports the School's values and treat people with respect, dignity and courtesy;
- behave in a professional manner; do not engage in conversations that undermine the school; do not discriminate, harass, bully (including intimidation), act or threaten to act violently towards staff, students, associates and other members of the School community;
- comply with the School's *Code of Conduct* document;
- raise grievances in an appropriate manner with the School as outlined in School newsletters; and
- comply with relevant legislation and guidelines (outlined later in this policy) issued by the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.

Before and After School

Parents, Volunteers and Visitors will:

- strive to ensure their child/children are punctual to School everyday;
- vacate the School grounds once classes commence;
- sign in for a visitor's pass from the office if assisting in class activities;
- direct their child to the play area monitored by duty teacher as students are under the supervision of staff if waiting in the School grounds until classes commence;
- monitor all pre-school children who must stay with the accompanying adult at all times;
- allow staff to supervise, investigate and manage students without interference; and
- discuss issues or concerns about the School, staff, other parents or students through the correct School procedures.

Confidential and Sensitive Information

The School supports and upholds the confidentiality of staff and students. From time to time, Parents, Volunteers and Visitors, when attending School may become privy to sensitive or confidential information through the course of their activities (such as volunteering) or otherwise.

Parents, Volunteers and Visitors are reminded that sensitive or confidential information obtained through the course of their activities is to remain strictly confidential and its dissemination to anybody, other than classroom teachers or the Principal may result in action being taken by the School.

Staff should not be approached regarding a sensitive or confidential issue with other people present so as to maintain confidentiality.

Contacting Teachers

Parents (including Carers and Guardians) are encouraged where appropriate, to meet with their child's teacher. If there are any ongoing major issues or concerns these are encouraged to be taken up with the Deputy Principal and then the Principal.

Parents (including Carers and Guardians) may periodically need to approach the School in order to:

- discuss the progress, engagement or well-being of their child;
- discuss actions of other students;
- enquire about School policies and practices;
- engage with in-School/excursion activities e.g. class/year groups.
- assist with English/Mathematics, P.E. and other curriculum areas, following an invitation/enquiry for assistance from staff;
- convey information about change of address, custody details, health issues etc.;
- express concern about actions of staff.

On such occasions, Parents (including Carers and Guardians) are requested to arrange a mutually convenient appointment to meet with staff. Please note, it may not be possible for staff to respond immediately to phone calls or emails particularly out of hours or during teaching times (8:45am–3:45pm). The classroom teacher will endeavour to return phone calls or emails as soon as possible. However, please allow up to two business days for a reply regarding matters that are important but non-urgent.

Confidential or sensitive conversations should always occur after making an appointment with the appropriate classroom teacher to discuss in person. Email discussions of such matters should be avoided. Staff should not be approached regarding an issue with other parents or students present.

Volunteer Helpers

Volunteers make an important contribution to the life of our School through assisting with classroom activities, School programs, performing arts activities, fund-raising events and sports programs and other School initiatives. Volunteers assisting with School activities do so on the understanding that:

- teachers have the ultimate responsibility for students under their care while students are at School;
- teachers are responsible for the programs operating within the classroom and/or School;
- they respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of all students i.e. student achievements;
- they accept responsibility and supervision for pre-school age children under their care for the duration of their time at School;
- their conduct and manners should at all times be acceptable and an appropriate model for all students;
- they should sign themselves in and out in the attendance folder at the School's front office when participating in School activities;
- they display a VISITOR badge as identification whilst assisting students;
- they have a current "Working with Children Check" before undertaking any volunteer/student assistance at the School; and they report safety concerns, injuries or emergencies to a member of staff.
- they are not to approach other parents' children, parents or staff in a disrespectful manner. Concerns should be taken up with the Deputy Principal and then the Principal for resolution.

Staff Safety and Wellbeing

The safety and wellbeing of staff is both a legal and ethical requirement of the School. Behaviour that compromises the safety and professional wellbeing of our staff will not be tolerated.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria issued its 'Safe and Sound Practice Guidelines' for School Principals in 2014. The Guidelines offer advice and support to school principals in both preventing and responding to incidents of aggressive, potentially violent and/or violent behaviour directed towards staff. The Guidelines recommend, as part of a policy (Code of Conduct), that:

The School places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectful working environment for our staff. We regard certain behaviours as harmful and unacceptable in so far as they compromise the safety and professional wellbeing of our staff. These behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- shouting or swearing, either in person or on the telephone;
- physical or verbal intimidation;
- aggressive hand gestures;
- writing rude, defamatory, aggressive or abusive comments to/about a staff member (emails/social media);
- conversations that undermine the school;
- racist or sexist comments; and
- damage or violation of possessions/property.

In the event that staff safety and wellbeing is compromised as per any of the above, the staff member(s) will take steps to conclude the matter and ask the Parent, Volunteer or Visitor to leave the School grounds and seek administrative support.

When a Parent, Volunteer or Visitor behaves in such unacceptable ways, the Principal or a senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation. Where the behaviour of a Parent, Volunteer or Visitor is deemed likely to cause ongoing harm, distress or danger to the staff member, student or other members of the School community, the Principal may exercise his legal right to impose a temporary or permanent ban on the Parent, Volunteer or Visitor from entering the School premises. In all cases where there is an extreme act of violence that causes physical harm to a staff member, student or other member of the school community (including damage to his or her property), the incident will be reported to the police for investigation.

Please remember that email is an effective communication tool when used effectively for positive communication. Emails deemed to be inappropriately negative will be forwarded to School leadership (i.e the Principal and Deputy Principal) and contact will be made directly with the relevant person. Emails sent too often may be deemed to be harassment. Parents, Volunteers and Visitors who use email communication to harass may lose the right to use this form of communication with the staff and also be subject to any of the actions listed above.

Procedure to be followed when attending School grounds

Parents, Volunteers and Visitors

1. With the exception of morning and afternoon assemblies and open classrooms, all Parents, Volunteers and Visitors must state their identity and purpose for entering the School before being admitted unless their identity is already known. Under the Summary Offences Act 1966, the Principal reserves the right, and has the authority to prohibit any person from entering or remaining within the School, and also has the authority to invite or exclude people from using or being within the School boundaries both during and outside of School operating hours.

2. All Parents, Volunteers and Visitors after entering the School grounds are required to report immediately to the School's Administration Office. The gate is to be closed after entering the School grounds. The Park St entrance cannot be accessed during School hours from 8:50am–3:25pm; please use Bank St during these times.

3. All Parents, Volunteers and Visitors are required to sign the School's 'Visitor's Book', stating their name, time of entry, purpose of the visit. The Visitor Book should always be located in the Administration Office. A Visitor's badge or lanyard will be assigned which must be visibly worn at all times. Similarly, at the end of the visit, Parents, Volunteers and Visitors must report back to the Administration Office where they are required to sign out with time of exit and return the Visitor's badge.

4. All Parents, Volunteers and Visitors working in classrooms, sporting events, excursions or incursions are required to read and sign the School's *Code of Conduct* document at the Administration Office.

NOTE: Couriers, sales representatives and postal service providers are not required to acknowledge their attendance via signature in the 'Visitor's Book' if the purpose of their entry is to deliver items to the Administrative Office. If they are required to deliver items or supplies beyond this point they must ensure that they sign in via the 'Visitor's Book'.

5. All Parents, Volunteers and Visitors will be briefed on the School's Emergency Response Plan upon arrival (kept at the school office) and will be instructed to follow the directions of identified Staff Members in the unlikely occurrence of an event.

6. All Parents, Volunteers and Visitors will be provided with directions and made aware of any hazards or construction works, which may impact upon their safety and comfort whilst attending the School.

NOTE: *Hot drinks, smoking and animals* are not permitted on the school grounds or in the church in the presence of students by Parents, Visitors, Volunteers or Staff.

7. Parents, Volunteers and Visitors who fail to acknowledge their attendance in the 'Visitor Book' will not be permitted access to any area of the School and will be considered an unauthorised Parents, Volunteers or Visitors as the case may be.

8. The Deputy Principal and/or the Principal must be notified immediately if there is an unauthorised Parent, Visitor and Volunteer identified on the School site.

9. The Principal, Deputy Principal or other authorised person reserve the right and have the authority to prohibit any Parents, Volunteers and Visitors from entering or remaining within the School if they have not acknowledged their attendance via the 'Visitors Book' or present a risk to the safety and welfare of staff or students.

10. Staff are expected to escort Parents, Volunteers and Visitors not identified by a visitors pass, to the School office. If the Parents, Volunteers and Visitors refuse to cooperate or the staff member feels unsafe, including risk to student safety, the staff are required to contact the office and/or the Principal immediately and the Emergency Management Plan (ie lockdown) may be enacted or in some instances the Parents, Volunteers and Visitors may be escorted from the School premises.

NOTE: All Parents, Volunteers and Visitors are required to use courteous and acceptable language in all communications with students, staff, other parents and members of the broader School community. The use of profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language or body language will not be tolerated. Parents, Volunteers and Visitors who fail to treat other members of the school community with consideration and respect will be asked to remove themselves from the School site.

11. Volunteers in classrooms, at sporting events, on excursions or incursions must have obtained a Working With Children's Check (WWCC) in accordance with the *Working with Children's Act 2005*. It is the responsibility of all Volunteers to provide a copy of their current WWCC to the School prior to engaging in any activity.

The above mentioned procedure will be regularly published in the School Newsletter.

Contractors

12. Contractors are required to report to the school's Administration Office prior to gaining entry to the School site.

13. All Contractors and their employees who have been engaged to undertake any work on behalf of the School will be provided with a copy of the School's Contractor Induction Booklet. They are required to review the contents of this booklet and acknowledge their understanding of the joint responsibility for Health and Safety via signature. Copies of all relevant documentation including WWCC, insurances and risk assessments will also be requested.

14. Contractors and their employees who are required to conduct work alone or in isolation must abide by the School's Working Alone – Isolated Works Procedures at all times.

15. Contractors are required to sign the school's 'Visitor's Book', stating their name, time of entry, purpose of the visit. A Contractor's badge or lanyard may be assigned which must be visibly worn at all times. Similarly, at the end of the attendance the Contractor must report back to the Administration Office where they are required to sign out and return their Contractor's badge.

16. All Contractors are required to read and sign the School's *Code of Conduct* document at the Administration Office.

Definitions

Volunteer: Any non-paid individual who provides support in educational, sporting or extra curricula activities at the School. Their assistance is provided under the direction and supervision of identified School representatives.

Visitor: A Visitor is any person not enrolled or employed by the School.

Contractor: Individuals and their employees who are engaged by the School to provide one off or ongoing services or materials in accordance with agreed arrangements. Contractors include but are not limited to; trades persons, maintenance personnel cleaners, after-care providers, information technology support personnel and food service providers.

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To be reviewed: 2020