

VISITORS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Endeavour Hills Specialist School on 9113 4100

PURPOSE

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to Endeavour Hills Specialist School.

SCOPE

This policy outlines our school's arrangements for visitors - including parents/carers, contractors, external service providers - who attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction between the hours of 8:45am to 3:15pm, and when the office is staffed to monitor/receive visitors between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

Outside of these times, our 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.

POLICY

Endeavour Hills Specialist School provides highly individualised programs of learning for students with disability and high needs who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder with a language disorder and/or an intellectual disability. The school welcomes students from 5 to 18 years of age.

School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with a comprehensive learning program and access to support networks. It also helps to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and active participation in their local community.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School seeks to establish an inclusive environment where parents/carers, neighbouring schools and community members are welcome to participate in the schools' activities, use the schools' facilities and develop partnerships in a safe and meaningful way.

The school's Business Manager will be responsible for ensuring all partners established with the school are aware of the schools' commitment to child safety and the policies and procedures outlined in this policy.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School 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.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School is not a public place. The Principal has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with these related policies: Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct.

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

- parents/carers and other family members
- volunteers (see our Volunteers Policy)
- prospective parents, students and employees
- invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development
- public officials (such as Members of Parliament, local councillors)
- persons conducting business (such as uniform suppliers, booksellers, official school photographers, commercial salespeople)
- tradespeople
- children's services agencies
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing staff
- Victoria Police
- persons authorised to enter school premises (such as Worksafe inspectors, health officers)
- other Department of Education and Training (Department) staff or contractors.

Sign in procedure

All visitors to Endeavour Hills Specialist School are required to report to the office on arrival (see exceptions below in relation to parents/carers). Visitors must:

- Record their name, signature, date and time of visit and purpose of visit.
- Sign in using the Victorian Government Service App (QR Code) as part of the COVID Safe plan.
- Provide proof of identification upon request.
- Produce their valid Working with Children Clearance where required by this policy (see below).
- Wear a visitor's lanyard at all times.
- Follow instructions from staff and abide by all relevant policies relating to appropriate conduct on the grounds, including Child Safety Code of Conduct, Respect for School Staff and Statement of Values and School Philosophy, as well as Department policies including Sexual Harassment Policy and Workplace Bullying Policy.
- Return to the office upon departure, sign out and return visitor's lanyard.

Endeavour Hills Specialist School will ensure that the Child Safety Code of Conduct is available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Working with Children Clearance

For Working with Children (WWC) Clearance and other suitability check requirements relating to parents/carers and other volunteers working with students please see our Volunteers Policy.

- WWC Check: the process for assessing or re-assessing whether a person may engage in child-related work
- WWC Clearance: the outcome for a person who has applied for WWC Check and has passed that check.

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

In some circumstances, visitors to Endeavour Hills Specialist School who are **not** engaged in child-related work will also be required to produce a valid WWC Clearance depending on the particular circumstances of their visit. For example, Endeavour Hills Specialist School will require a valid WWC Clearance for:

- Visitors who will be working with children during the time they are visiting, even though direct contact with children is not a central part of their normal duties.

- Visitors (such as contractors) who will 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 (such as a visiting auditor who will be located in the office with administration staff), or are accompanied by a staff member during their visit (such as 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 Clearance but may be asked to verify that they are sworn officers by providing proof of identification.

Invited speakers and presenters

On occasion, Endeavour Hills Specialist School may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops and special programs for our students. Consistent with Department requirements, Endeavour Hills Specialist School 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/carer visitors

We understand that there may occasionally be a reason why a parent/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, parents/carers are asked to call the office to make the request to speak to or see their child during school hours. We expect that parents/carers will avoid seeking to visit their child at school wherever possible, as this can cause inappropriate disruptions to the rhythm and flow of the school day.

All parents/carers who visit our school during school hours, other than for the purposes of pick-up and drop-off, or for specific school events (such as meetings with staff, assemblies, music/sports events), are required to sign in as a visitor at the school office.

Parents/carers who are prohibited from entering the school under a court order or direction of the Principal are not permitted to visit the school. We maintain a list of persons who are restricted from entering the school site which may include identifying photographs and any other information as required depending on the level of risk posed.

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.

PANDEMIC

During a pandemic, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, government schools are required to comply with the Department's School Operations Guide applicable to that specific pandemic. The Department updates the School Operations Guide as required during a pandemic based on advice from the Department of Health. The School Operations Guide covers procedures for management of visitors and volunteers on school sites.

The current School Operations Guide includes a COVID-Safe Plan for Schools that ensures schools remain safe environments. The link to the current Operations Guide is [available on the Department's intranet](#).

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- available publicly on our school's website
- included in staff induction processes
- made available in hard copy from the office upon request.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)
- [Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Workplace Bullying Policy](#)
- [DET Operations Guide](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Reporting and Responding Policy
- Child Safe Risk Assessment
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	February 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	February 2025