DIOCESE OF BALLARAT CATHOLIC EDUCATION LIMITED

St Joseph's School, Hopetoun

School Visitor Policy and Procedure

Document Number: 00038

St Joseph's School, Hopetoun operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and is operated and governed by the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL).

Policy Statement

St Joseph's School, Hopetoun 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. St Joseph's School also strives to foster strong partnerships with local community services, schools, and other organisations.

The safety and well-being of all children and young people in the care of St Joseph's School is paramount. As St Joseph's School is private property, the principal has the authority to permit or deny entry to school grounds and encourages all visitors to familiarise themselves with the school's *Statement of Values and School Philosophy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Safeguarding Children & Young People Code of Conduct, School Volunteer Policy & Procedure, Supervision of Students Policy,* and *Duty of Care Policy*.

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

- Parents
- DOBCEL Board, Consultative Committee members and staff
- Volunteers – see our school's Volunteers Policy for more information.
- Prospective parents, students, and employees
- Invited speakers, sessional instructors and others addressing learning and development.
- Public officials (e.g., members of parliament, local councilors)
- Persons conducting business (e.g., uniform suppliers, booksellers, official school photographers, commercial salespeople)
- Clergy and religious members
- Tradespeople
- Children's services agencies
- Personnel from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Victoria Police
- Persons authorised to enter school premises (e.g., Work safe inspectors, health officers)
- Other Department of Education (including allied health staff) or contractors
- NDIS therapists or other allied health or health practitioners

Context

To provide a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and staff by establishing processes to monitor and manage visitors to St Joseph's School.

Scope

This policy and procedure outlines the school's arrangements for visitors who attend school grounds when the school is open for instruction between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, including parents, contractors, and volunteers.

Legislative Context

- VRQA Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 1359
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Child-related Work	Is work in any of the occupational fields (referred to in the Education and Training Reform Act as services, bodies, places, or activities), which usually involves direct contact with a child. Further details and a table of services or workplaces that require working with children checks can be found at: https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/about-the-check

Procedure

Visitor Sign In

All visitors to St Joseph's School are required to report to the school 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 in the school's visitor register.
- Provide proof of identification to office staff upon request.
- Produce evidence of their valid Working with Children Clearance where required by this policy (see below).
- Wear their organisation's name tag.
- Follow instructions from school staff and abide by all the relevant school policies that relate to appropriate conduct on school grounds, including the Emergency Evacuation procedures, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Respect for School Staff, Statement of Values and School Philosophy as well DOBCEL policies and procedures.
- Return to the office upon departure and sign out.

St Joseph's School will ensure that the school's *Safeguarding Children & Young Code of Conduct* is available and visible to visitors when they sign in.

Working With Children Check / Clearance

For Working with Children Check (WWCC) and other suitability check requirements relating to parents/carers and other volunteers working with students, please see the school's Volunteer Policy.

All visitors who are engaged in **child-related work** must have a valid WWC Clearance.

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

- Visitors who will be working when children are present 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 be performing unsupervised work at the school during school hours or any other time when 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 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 newspaper photographer, 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 occasions, St Joseph's School may invite external speakers or providers to deliver incursions, presentations, workshops, and special programs for the students. Consistent with DOBCEL requirements, St Joseph's School will ensure that the content of presentations and programs by external providers contributes to the educational development of the students and is consistent with curriculum objectives.

Parent Visitors

It is understood 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, parents or carers are required to call the school office to make the request to speak to or see their child.

Parents are requested to 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 the school during school hours, other than for the purposes of school pick-ups and drop-offs or for specific school events (e.g., parent–teacher interviews, concerts, assemblies), 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 the direction of the principal are not permitted to visit the school under any circumstances. The following procedures apply:

- The Business Manager and teachers are emailed regarding the restrictions of the person/s not permitted entry as per advice from the Principal.
- A record is kept on the student's file.
- If there is a Family Violence Order in place, which prevents a parent from attending at the school or being in the vicinity of the child, a breach of such an order is a criminal offence. Accordingly, school staff will contact the local police.
- If there is a 'Parenting' order which specifies which parent should be collecting on a given occasion, it will be considered appropriate for the police to be called if there is any breach of the peace or the potential for a situation between parties to escalate.

DOBCEL Staff

Occasionally DOBCEL staff may visit St Joseph's School, Hopetoun. As all DOBCEL staff have received WWCC clearance and formally agreed to the *Safeguarding Children & Young Code of Conduct* during their employment process, they will not be required to show a valid WWCC Clearance, nor re-sign the St Joseph's *Safeguarding Children & Young Code of Conduct* when signing in.

DOBCEL Board Directors

Occasionally DOBCEL Board Directors may visit St Joseph's School, Hopetoun. As all DOBCEL Board directors have received WWCC clearance and formally agreed to the *Safeguarding Children & Young Code of Conduct* during their induction process, they will not be required to show a valid WWCC Clearance, nor re-sign the St Joseph's *Safeguarding Children & Young Code of Conduct* when signing in.

Other Visitors

All business operators, tradespeople, and other visitors attending the school to conduct work must on arrival, report to the school office for instruction and follow the signing-in procedure outlined above.

Supporting Documentation

- Safeguarding Children & Young Code of Conduct
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Volunteers Policy
- Working with Children Check Procedures

DOBCEL Principles of Governance

All DOBCEL policies are founded on and reflect the Principles of Governance stated in the Document: **DOBCEL Principles of Governance**.

Policy Category	Child Safety
Responsible Directorate member	Deputy Director: Stewardship
Policy Owner	Manager: Safeguarding & Standards
Assigned Board Committee	Wellbeing and Safeguarding Consultative Committee
Ratification Date	June 2023
Review Date	May 2026