



# ELECTIONS – SCHOOLS AS POLLING PLACES

## POLICY

This policy outlines school obligations relating to requests to use school premises as polling places for state and federal elections.

## SUMMARY

- The Victorian Electoral Commission and the Australian Electoral Commission may use Victorian government schools as polling places.
- Further information on [political activities](#) and other related matters, both during and outside of an election period is available in the following policies:
  - [Political Activities](#): for information on the rights and obligations of Victorian government school employees when participating in [political activities](#)
  - [Elections — Employees Contesting Parliamentary Elections](#): for information on Victorian government school employees standing as a candidate in a state or federal election
  - [Members of Parliament and Candidates Visiting Schools](#): for information on Members of Parliament and political candidates visiting schools.

## DETAILS

### Schools as polling places

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) are empowered by the [Electoral Act 2002 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 \(Cth\)](#) respectively to use schools as polling places during a state election.

If there is a conflict of demand with respect to the use of school premises on election day, the premises must be made available to the VEC or AEC for use as a polling place.

Schools are encouraged to be as accommodating as possible to assist the VEC and AEC.

If the VEC intends to use your school as a polling place, you will be contacted by the VEC at least seven days before the election and they will confirm the arrangements in writing. This may include delivery of furniture some days or weeks before the election, which will then be set up the Friday evening prior to election day and collected within two weeks after the election.

The VEC is not required to pay a fee to use a school as a polling place, however, the VEC must pay reasonable costs for lighting, air conditioning and cleaning of the premises.

If the AEC intends to use your school as a polling place, you will be contacted by them and the arrangements are to be recorded in a licence (refer to details below).

### Working with Children Check

The general position in regard to the [Working with Children Check](#) is that they are not required where VEC or AEC staff will not be engaged in child-related work or working directly with children.

The VEC or AEC will conduct inspections and set up polling stations out of school hours when no children will be present.

A member of the school staff will need to escort the VEC or AEC while on the premises for the following reasons:

- an advance visit to see the space where polling will be set up
- access to set up polling stations the day before the election.

On election day (weekend), members of the VEC or AEC will be on the premises, along with voting members of the public.

### Licensing

For federal elections, schools must enter a polling place licence with the AEC. A [licence template](#) (staff login required) is available. The licence sets out the arrangements that will be in place prior to and on election day, including when the AEC can access the school and the licence fee payable.

For state elections, schools are not required to enter a polling place licence.

For advice on licensing, contact the Legal Division at [legal.services@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:legal.services@education.vic.gov.au) or 03 9637 3146.

### Cleaning – federal election

The AEC has confirmed the following arrangements for cleaning of polling places.

During the event, if there is a pandemic that is subject to any Victorian Public Health Orders:

- AEC hygiene officers will be stationed at every polling place to regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces
- AEC will provide hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol for the entry and exit of the building
- AEC will encourage voters to BYO pen or pencil, and pencils provided at polling place will be cleaned and disinfected by AEC staff after each use.

The school must ensure that the venue is cleaned:

- prior to the event (i.e. standard clean at the end of the prior day)
- following the event, prior to the next school day.

Pre- and post-event cleaning should be in line with relevant DET routine cleaning guidelines active at the time of the election, for example, as at February 2022, this is business-as-usual cleaning.

Schools should arrange the relevant cleaning with their cleaning services provider, then invoice the AEC for reimbursement of the cost of post-event cleaning. This is consistent with the standard licence agreement.

### Cleaning – state election

Arrangements for cleaning of polling places for the state election will be confirmed with the VEC in due course.

### RELATED POLICIES

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Community Use of Schools — Hiring, Licensing and Shared Use of School Facilities](#)
- [Elections — Employees Contesting Parliamentary Elections](#)
- [Members of Parliament and Candidates Visiting Schools](#)
- [Political Activities](#)

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- [Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act \(Cth\)](#)
- [Constitution Act 1975 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Electoral Act 2002 \(Vic\)](#)

### EVALUATION

This policy is taken directly from the Department of Education and Training's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) dated **February 15, 2022** and will be reviewed and updated from time to time in accordance with COVID-19 related health advice.

### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2022
Consultation	PPPS Staff/Leadership School Council
Approved	March 2022
Next scheduled review date	March 2025