



# MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND CANDIDATES VISITING SCHOOLS

## POLICY

This policy outlines school staff roles and responsibilities when Members of Parliament or political candidates visit Victorian government schools or attend school functions.

## SUMMARY

- Principals may use their discretion when deciding whether or not to host or invite Members of Parliament or political candidates to the school.
- School employees must remain politically neutral in their work — this extends to decisions to host or invite politicians or candidates to the school.
- Schools must notify their Regional Director of any proposed visit by a Member of Parliament or political candidate.

## DETAILS

State and Commonwealth Members of Parliament (MPs) are regular visitors to schools for events such as the official opening of facilities, fetes and presentations.

Principals may use their discretion when deciding whether or not to host or invite MPs to the school. Consistent with the [Visitors in Schools Policy](#), principals must consider the best interests of students, including duty of care issues and potential educational benefits to students, and the appropriateness of the proposed visit.

When issuing invitations or agreeing to host MPs, including ministers, principals are required to notify their Regional Director of the date, time and reason of the proposed visit, and whether or not the media are likely to be present. Principals must ensure this information is provided to the Regional Director as early as possible, and ideally no later than 5 working days before the date of the proposed visit.

Where more than one MP is attending an event, the principal (together with the regional office) should ensure that the respective roles of the MPs are confirmed.

### **Visits to schools during election periods — MPs and candidates**

In the lead up to state and federal elections, there will be an increase in the number of school visit requests from MPs and/or political party candidates.

At all times, school employees must maintain their impartiality and integrity, particularly with regard to party political activities, and must not use their position, access to information, or school facilities, to advocate for or against particular political parties or candidates.

During election periods, this will usually mean principals must either accept all reasonable requests for visits, or decline all requests for visits unless unusual circumstances arise. If a local MP or candidate is invited to a school event, the invitation should be extended to all local candidates.

If media is present, the usual consent requirements for photographing students apply.

For information on consent requirements for photographing students, refer to: [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students](#).

Principals must ensure that any printed or electronic material (including badges) that may be considered political in nature is not distributed, promoted or displayed at the school / during a school event, and that school resources are not used for political purposes.

### Party political activities

Party political activities are not permitted at a government school.

Formal school gatherings, including school assemblies, must not be used as a forum for political announcements.

Partisan or party political materials, including materials that promote a particular political party or candidate, must not be distributed, promoted or displayed in a school, other than for educational purposes.

For information on school staff rights and obligations relating to political activities, refer to [Political Activities](#).

### RELATED POLICIES

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Elections — Employees Contesting Parliamentary Elections](#)
- [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students](#)
- [Political Activities](#)
- [Visitors in Schools](#)

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- [Constitution Act 1975 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Ministerial Order 1038 Teaching Service](#) (Employment Conditions, Salaries, Allowances, Selection and Conduct)
- [Public Administration Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#)

### EVALUATION

This policy is taken directly from the Department of Education and Training's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) dated **January 12, 2022** and will be reviewed in line with new legislation, regulations and best practice.

### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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