



Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts

SCHOOLS PROCEDURES

VISITORS IN SCHOOLS

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1. Purpose

1.1 This document details the MEHA's procedures on Visitors to Schools.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Co-curricular Activities are activities, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what Students are learning in School. Co-curricular activities may include educational field trips, academic clubs, academic competitions, School productions, and academic exchange programs. Any designation of an activity as either co-curricular or extra-curricular should consider the context.
- 2.2 Contractor or Contracting Organisation is a person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide materials or labour to perform a service or do a job. In this policy the worker of a Contracting Organisation is included in the definition of Contractor.
- 2.3 Dignitary is a representative of the Fiji Government or government representative of another country, a Village head or representative of an Established Religion.
- 2.4 Donor is one that gives, donates, or presents something. Donors may be foreign governments, government bodies, statutory authorities, businesses or individuals.
- 2.5 Established Religion is an organisation for which a memorial of the names of the trustees is registered under the *Religious Bodies Registration Act 1881* and recorded in the office of the Registrar of Titles.
- 2.6 Extracurricular Activities are those that fall outside the realm of the normal curriculum. They may be offered or coordinated by a School, but may not be explicitly connected to academic learning. Examples of Extracurricular Activities currently include Scouts, sports, athletics, gym, aerobics, self-defence, swimming, community service, cadets, volunteering, sightseeing and picnics. Any designation of an activity as either co-curricular or extra-curricular should consider the context.
- 2.7 FEG is the Free Education Grant.
- 2.8 FESA is the Fiji Education Staffing Appointments system.
- 2.9 FTRA is the Fiji Teachers Registration Authority.
- 2.10 Guardian includes a person who has been granted (whether alone or jointly with another person or other persons) guardianship of a Student under the law, or by the Student's Parents.
- 2.11 International School Visit is a visit of International Students and International Teachers to a School. Such a visit may include a sister school visit or an international exchange.

- 2.12 International Student is a student attending a school outside Fiji visiting a School as part of an activity organised by their school. *Students visiting Fiji in another capacity are covered by the Tourists in Schools Policy.*
- 2.13 International Teacher is a person employed as a Teacher in a school outside Fiji.
- 2.14 Medical Assessment is an assessment of an individual's medical condition in the form of Annex A of the *Medical Assessment Policy*, by a Registered Medical Practitioner.
- 2.15 MEHA is the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts.
- 2.16 MEHA staff includes any personnel paid by the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts.
- 2.17 Non-Government Organisation or NGO is a non-profit organisation that operates independently of any government to address a social or political issue.
- 2.18 NSAAC is the National Substance Abuse Advisory Council.
- 2.19 Parent is the natural or adoptive mother or father of a Student.
- 2.20 Police Check is an Application for Police Clearance (Fiji)¹ or similar screening check by a police force.
- 2.21 Program is an activity, course, class or information offered to Students or MEHA Staff by an NGO or Donor.
- 2.22 Registered Medical Practitioner means a Medical Practitioner registered under the *Medical and Dental Practitioners Act 1971*.
- 2.23 School is a facility registered as a School with the MEHA.
- 2.24 School-to-School Visit is a visit by Students and Teachers of one School in Fiji to another.
- 2.25 School Management Committee is the controlling authority of a School as required by section 12 of the *Education Act 1966*.
- 2.26 School Post Holder means a person appointed as a Principal, School Head, Head of Campus, a Vice Principal, Assistant School Head, Assistant Head Teacher or Head of Department.
- 2.27 Student means a person of any age for whom education is provided in a School.
- 2.28 Teacher is any person employed as a Teacher in a School.

¹ <http://www.police.gov.fj/index.php/forms/police-clearance-form>

- 2.29 Tourist is a person visiting Fiji for recreation, under a tourist visa.
- 2.30 Tour Operator is an individual, group of individuals or organisation which organises, facilitates or manages tourism activities. For the purpose of this policy it includes any hotel, motel, hostel, bed and breakfast, homestay, Airbnb or other facility where Tourists stay.
- 2.31 Visitors means anyone other than a Student or staff member of the School who are invited to the School or there on official Government or School-related business. Visitors may include, but are not limited to:
- 2.31.1 Parents or Guardians of prospective Students
 - 2.31.2 prospective employees
 - 2.31.3 those addressing a learning or development need, such as invited speakers, representatives of community, business or service groups,
 - 2.31.4 employees of the MEHA or other Ministries on official business, eg: FTRA staff checking registration of Volunteers and Teachers
 - 2.31.5 International Students and International Teachers participating in an International School Visit.
 - 2.31.6 those conducting business such as booksellers, official School photographers and uniform suppliers, Contractors and members of the media.
 - 2.31.7 For the purpose of this policy, the term Visitor excludes:
 - 2.31.7.1 Tourists - Tourists are covered by MEHA Circular 79 of 2018², and
 - 2.31.7.2 Volunteers - Volunteers are covered by the Interim Volunteer Procedures.
- 2.32 Volunteer means any person not formally employed by the MEHA who wishes to provide support to the work of a School or MEHA Unit, either funded by a Volunteer Organisation or without any salary, wages, allowances or remuneration. The following are excluded from the definition: work experience or internships, Tourists , professionals delivering expertise to MEHA units eg: a member of the Australian Department of Education working in a MEHA unit, and Non-Government Organisations delivering work programs approved by the MEHA.
- 2.33 Ward is the Student a Guardian has charge of.

² <https://urlzs.com/2kio5>

3. Procedures

- 3.1 Parents, Guardians and relatives of Students: make an appointment with a Teacher or have a legitimate reason for being on the School premises. Unscheduled visits unrelated to an agreed activity are avoided during School hours.
- 3.2 All other Visitors: Visitors contact the Divisional Education Office with their request. The request includes:
- 3.2.1 Name and title of Visitors
 - 3.2.2 Purpose of the visit
 - 3.2.3 Duration and timing of the visit
 - 3.2.4 how the visit will be funded and whether any Ministry funds will be used for the visit
 - 3.2.5 a list of all proposed donations
 - 3.2.6 a scope of work for any proposed repair, building or maintenance work.
 - 3.2.7 details of any correspondence with the relevant School Head or School Management Committee.
- 3.3 NGOs or Donors seeking to provide a program in a School must provide the program for approval. Details of the personnel to deliver the program must also be provided ie: CV, qualifications, professional registration. Political affiliations and remuneration arrangements for delivering the program must be explained ie: will the NGO/Donor receive a bonus for the number of school the program is delivered? Will a commission be received for products taken up by schools after the program is offered?
- 3.4 The Divisional Education Officer works with the relevant School Head and Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary to prepare a submission either supporting or not supporting the request.
- 3.5 The submission must be signed by the Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary. Director, Asset Management Unit must sign where any building, repair or maintenance work is involved, or any donations of furniture, fixtures or fittings are proposed. Director Libraries signs where books are donated, and Director, Finance signs where any IT items are donated. Director, Curriculum is consulted where any curriculum-related matters are involved.

3.6 All Visits

- 3.6.1 The School Management Committee ensures that appropriate health and safety procedures are in place prior to Visitors being permitted entry to the School.
- 3.6.2 Prior to the visit, the School Head ensures that:

- 3.6.2.1 Occupational Health and Safety procedures are in place, and
- 3.6.2.2 hazards are clearly marked and alternative routes of entry/egress are devised.
- 3.6.3 Visitors make arrangements to visit the School with the School Head or a Teacher.
- 3.6.4 The visit is arranged for a time that does not disrupt learning and teaching, if possible. For School-to-School visits, Co-Curricular or Extra-Curricular activities are scheduled out of School hours.
- 3.6.5 The School Head arranges for an alternative venue if the School cannot safely host the proposed number of Visitors as well as Students and MEHA Staff.
- 3.6.6 The Visitor is advised not to attend the School if they become unwell.
- 3.6.7 If the Visitor will be at the School for longer than one day/on more than one occasion and is over 18, the School Head seeks a Police Check and a Deed of Indemnity (Annex A) prior to entry to the School.
- 3.6.7.1 Regular Visitors must provide a copy of a valid Police Check for each country the Visitor has lived in for 12 months or longer over the past five years, as well as all countries of citizenship, is required. The Police Check must show no convictions, ie: it must be a 'clear' Police Check. Volunteers who are Parents/Guardians of a Student at the School are excepted from this requirement.
- 3.6.7.2 Australia - AFP Police Check (Code 37) is required (state/territory 'working with children/vulnerable people' checks are not designed to be used across Australian states or territories or internationally).
- 3.6.7.3 UK- International Child Protection Certificate (a DBS check is for work in the UK, not internationally).
- 3.6.7.4 United States - FBI Records Check
- 3.6.7.5 Canada - RCMP criminal record check
- 3.6.7.6 For all other locations, go to <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/contact-us/offices-and-locations/list> and select the country, then search for police check, criminal record check, police clearance or similar.
- 3.6.7.7 Visitors who are not Parents/Guardians, part of an International Visit a Contractor/Contracting Organisation or a visiting Dignitary complete the General Release and Waiver in Annex A and return it to the School Head prior to entering the School. Contractors are provided with a Contractor Code of Conduct in the form of

Annex B and the Deeds of Indemnity in Annexes C and D to sign and return to the School Head prior to entering the School.

- 3.6.7.8 Visitors are not permitted entry to the School if they have not returned their signed forms/Police checks, where requested to do so.
- 3.6.8 The Visitor is asked to provide details of proposed donations. Where donations are made, the procedures in paragraph 3.6 are followed.
- 3.6.9 If the Visitor is delivering a speech or talk, the Visitor is asked to ensure that the content complies with the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji 2013, ie: is not discriminatory; promotes the principles of democracy and the rule of law, freedom of religion and the values of openness and tolerance. Speakers are also briefed about the School community so content may be tailored appropriately. The Visitor is asked to present their speech to the School Head for review prior to the visit.
- 3.6.10 Visitors are advised that filming, photography or recording of Students will only be permitted where a Parent/Guardian gives written consent in the form of Annex E, and of the School's dress requirements. The School Head arranges for Parent/Guardian consent for any photography/filming or recording of children, if required. Alternative arrangements are made for Students not participating in the activity, where necessary.
- 3.6.11 International School Visits: The School Head provides a copy of the Student Code of Conduct (see the *Student Code of Conduct Policy*³) and asks that the International Students are made aware of it and are asked to abide by it during their visit. The International Teacher organising the visit is sent the Deed of Indemnity in Annex F to complete and return prior to the visit/at the start of the visit.
- 3.6.11.1 The School Head advises that any Students/International Students with a history of violent behaviour or have engaged in/are under investigation for sexual assault are not permitted to visit the School.
- 3.6.11.2 The School Head also confirms the details of any non-Teachers who may be accompanying the Students. Anyone who is not a Parent/Guardian of a Student at the visiting School is to provide the School Head of the host School a clear Police Check prior to the visit.
- 3.6.11.3 The School Head confirms in writing that International Teachers hold a Police Check or otherwise meet the requirements for such checks in the location where they are registered.

³ <http://www.education.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/STUDENT-CODE-OF-CONDUCT.pdf>

- 3.6.11.4 The School Head checks whether FTSA registration is required and if so, advises the Visitor to obtain registration prior to entering the School. The School Head checks FESA prior to the Visitor's arrival to ensure registration has been granted.
- 3.6.12 The Visitor is advised where to enter the School, and told to go to the School Office and ask for the relevant point of contact upon arrival.
- 3.6.13 The Visitor enters the School by the main gate or otherwise as directed.
- 3.6.14 The Visitor is identified to ensure they are the individual who made the arrangement. At this point, if a Visitor looks visibly unwell, is drunk, appear to be affected by drugs or otherwise pose a potential danger to Students are advised that the School cannot permit them to have contact with Students. This is managed in a delicate and respectful manner, preserving the Visitor's dignity and privacy.
- 3.6.15 A suitable form of identification is sought and the details noted in the School Visitor book. The Visitor also notes the date, time of entry and departure, signature and nature of the visit in the School Visitor book. The School Head ensures that Deeds of Indemnity, code of conduct forms and parental permission forms have been completed.
- 3.6.15.1 School-to-School visits/International School Visits: the Visiting teacher/International Teacher signs in for the group.
- 3.6.16 If the Visitor is not dressed appropriately to meet with Students, the School Head has a discreet word with the individual and seeks alternative clothing for the Visitor before they leave the School office.
- 3.6.17 Visitors are reminded that they should maintain an apolitical stance and not express political views during their visit.
- 3.6.18 The Visitor is provided with a Visitor badge or other form of Visitor identification. If the Visitor has not provided the School with a clear Police Check they are escorted to their destination and supervised while on the School premises. Visitors are taken to the Staff washrooms if they need to avail themselves of the facilities. If the Visitor has a Police Check they are either directed to their location or escorted and allowed to proceed with their visit unsupervised.
- 3.6.19 Adult Visitors (except International Teachers) are supervised, except contractors. If a contractor is not working within the sight of at least one Teacher, Students are accompanied by another Student if going to the washroom or on an errand.
- 3.6.20 Age appropriate washrooms are used by Visitors.

3.6.21 The School Head provides a receipt for the donated goods and thank you letter, if one is being provided.

3.6.22 The Visitor notes the time of their departure in the Visitor book, if required.

3.6.23 The Visitor leaves the School by the main gate or otherwise as directed.

3.7 Donations and Building, Maintenance and Repair Work

3.7.1 The School Head of the host School seeks the input of:

3.7.1.1 the Asset Management Unit⁴ to confirm that any donations of furniture or assets, or building repair or maintenance work supports the MEHA's capital works programme. Director Libraries or delegate to ensure that proposed donations of books are appropriate.

3.7.1.2 The School Head of the Host School notifies the Donor Harmonisation Unit⁵ via email of the donations, and the donations are listed in a central database.

3.7.2 The Asset Management Unit approves the details of any building, repair or maintenance work and prepares a submission for the Permanent Secretary's approval of the work.

3.7.3 The Asset Management Unit works with the Visitor and the School Head to obtain relevant approvals, which the Visitor pays for.

3.7.4 The Asset Management Unit inspects work prior to completion to ensure that any conditions in the Permanent Secretary's approval are met. The Visitor arranges for any other professional inspections required to obtain Department of Town and Country Planning or Ministry of Economy approval.

3.7.5 The Asset Management Unit monitors building, repair or maintenance work to ensure work does not diverge from the approval. Where works are significantly different from that approved, a new approval is sought from the Permanent Secretary.

3.7.6 The Asset Management Unit ensures that the final work is inspected by an appropriate professional and that the scope of the works has been met. The Unit provides written approval of the work to the Permanent Secretary and also the Visitor to confirm satisfactory completion.

3.7.7 Donations are recorded in the School's inventory book or in the form of Annex G.

⁴ Facilities Support Unit under the new structure.

⁵ The Executive Support Unit until the Donor Harmonisation Unit is staffed.

3.8 Reports of Bullying or Harassment by Visitors, Policy Breaches, Unauthorised Visits or Incidents

- 3.8.1 Any MEHA Staff member who is advised of an unapproved visit advises the Divisional Education Officer of the breach, unauthorised visit or incident. Complaints of bullying or other behaviour are reported to the Permanent Secretary.
- 3.8.2 Reports are made within 24 hours of notification, preferably as soon as possible after receiving the information.
- 3.8.3 The MEHA staff member seeks as much of the following information from the informant as possible, and as appropriate for the situation, or for complaints regarding tour operator behaviour, provides the following information:

3.8.4 For Complaints of Bullying etc, Policy Breaches/Unauthorised Visits

- 3.8.4.1 The name of the Visitor
- 3.8.4.2 The date, time and duration of the breach
- 3.8.4.3 Who, if anyone, from the School or in the MEHA agreed to the visit
- 3.8.4.4 Whether any payment was received by the School
- 3.8.4.5 The details of the Students present in the class visited
- 3.8.4.6 Details of where the Visitors were taken in the School and whether Students were present in those locations with the Visitors
- 3.8.4.7 Whether photographs, films or recordings were taken during the visit, and whether they included Students
- 3.8.4.8 Any other details about the breach to assist with further investigation.

3.8.5 For Incidents Arising Before or During an Approved Visit

- 3.8.5.1 A copy of all relevant documents for the individuals involved, where a visit was approved
- 3.8.5.2 Details of any police reports or other records or notes relating to the incident, including witness statements.
- 3.8.5.3 Details of any medical or other assistance obtained by MEHA staff.

3.8.6 Divisional Office Actions

- 3.8.6.1 The Divisional Education Officer advises the Permanent Secretary of the issue as soon as possible, via Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary, and follows the advice with a submission including all relevant details.
- 3.8.6.2 The Permanent Secretary gives permission for the Divisional Education Officer to liaise with staff at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Immigration or Solicitor-General, as appropriate.
- 3.8.6.3 Where appropriate, the Donor Harmonisation Unit prepares documentation for the Permanent Secretary to refer matters to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare or the Permanent Secretary, Fiji Immigration.

3.9 Unruly Visitors

- 3.9.1 Students and Teachers are moved to safety if required.
- 3.9.2 A Teacher asks the Visitor to leave, and if the Visitor will not leave, the Police are called.
- 3.9.3 If safe to do so, the Teacher asks the person's name so it may be given to Police later.
- 3.9.4 The Teacher notes as much as they can about the individual to recount to Police if required eg: age, height, clothing, car make, car model, licence plate of vehicle.
- 3.9.5 The School Head notifies the Police, the School Management Committee, Divisional Education Officer and Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary. In serious cases, Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary notifies the Permanent Secretary.

3.10 Intruders

- 3.10.1 The Visitor is asked what they are doing on the premises. If they have a plausible explanation they are escorted to the School Office and the Visitor book checked/School Head consulted to validate their claim.
- 3.10.2 If the Visitor does not have a Visitor badge or other form of identification marking them as a Visitor, they are given one. If they are required to be escorted they are escorted to and from their location.
- 3.10.3 If the Visitor does not have a legitimate reason for being on the School premises they are asked for their name and address, then asked to leave.
- 3.10.4 If the Visitor refuses to leave, the Police are called.

3.10.5 The School Head records the details of the incident and reports it to the School Management Committee as well as the Divisional Education Officer and Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary. In serious cases, Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary notifies the Permanent Secretary.

3.11 Access to Students

3.11.1 If not already known to the School Head or Teacher, the Visitor is asked for their name and a copy of a driver's licence or other form of photo identification to confirm their identity. If the person becomes agitated, this is a sign that they may not be authorised to collect the child or have access to the Student.

3.11.2 Students are not allowed to leave before School finishes or during class. If the Visitor claims an emergency has occurred and the Student must leave, the School Head verifies this with the Parent, Guardian or family member.

3.11.3 The School Head checks the School records to confirm who the Parents/Guardians have authorised to collect their child. If the person is authorised, the School Head photocopies the drivers license and attaches a copy to the Student's file. The Student may be taken from the School by the adult, but the details of the car registration, make and model should be noted on the photocopy of the drivers licence.

3.11.4 In all other cases, or where the School Head wishes to be certain the authorisation is valid, the Parent/Guardian of the child is contacted to confirm what the Visitor is saying, and to confirm whether access to the child should be granted. If the Parent/Guardian cannot be contacted, the Visitor is asked to wait until they can be contacted, or if they are acting suspiciously, are asked to leave. The Police are notified immediately if the person is acting suspiciously.

3.11.5 The School Head records the details of the incident and reports it to the School Management Committee as well as the Divisional Education Officer and Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary. In serious cases, Deputy Secretary, Primary and Secondary notifies the Permanent Secretary.

3.11.6 The School Head notifies all Teachers of the incident and advises all Teachers to contact the School Head immediately if the person is seen approaching or on the School premises. The School Head places a picture of the individual in a prominent place so they may be identified, and takes any other security measures recommended by the Police or considered necessary.

3.11.7 Where separated Parents cannot agree on visitation or access to a Student, the School Head refers the family for counselling with the School Counsellor a NSAAC counsellor. Where necessary and/or appropriate, the School Head also contacts the local Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation officer or calls the Kids Helpline on 1325 for assistance to resolve the matter.

Annexes

Annex A - Deed of Indemnity - Individual Visitor

Annex B - Contractor Code of Conduct

Annex C - Deed of Indemnity - Contractor Organisation

Annex D - Deed of Indemnity - Individual Contractor or worker of a Contractor Organisation

Annex E - Parent/Guardian Permission

Annex F - Deed of Indemnity - Visiting School (non-MEHA)

Annex G - Donation record

Approved for implementation



Alison Burchell

Permanent Secretary for Education, Heritage and Arts

Date: 4 / 9 / 2019