# FAQS FOR SCHOOL CLEANING

METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE SCHOOL CLEANING

The area-based model for school cleaning in metropolitan Melbourne started on 1 July 2018. Under the model, each Melbourne school sits within one of eight cleaning areas. A single service provider services each cleaning area under a contract administered by the Department. This approach ensures our cleaning staff receive industry-standard conditions. This is the only way where we could be absolutely sure that our cleaning staff are receiving industry-standard working conditions. The model also provides schools with access to high-quality cleaning services, supported by school-specific performance standards and ongoing audits and reporting.

### How can I make the agreed standards and frequencies work in my unique school environment?

The standards and frequency tables have been designed to not only be in line with industry benchmarks but to ensure that the level of service is comparable to what schools were receiving in the past. The service providers must meet these standards and allocate sufficient resources to do so.

As long as the minimum standard is met, schools are able to tailor the cleaning to suit their needs. This is done through the cleaning services plan.

The cleaning services plan covers:

* access times,
* security arrangements,
* weekly tasks,
* staff rosters,
* areas you wish to trade-off,
* holiday (periodic) cleaning arrangements,
* induction processes.

Having an agreed cleaning services plan provides you with an important accountability tool to receive and monitor consistent cleaning and standards from your provider. The cleaning services plan is a live document that you review with your provider during the cleaning review meetings held termly.

More information about cleaning services plans is on page 10 of the user guide.

### Why is my service **provider not allocating more hours?**

The area-based cleaning model is based on an agreed standard of cleanliness at an agreed frequency, not on the number of hours spent cleaning.

The Department has not ‘bought’ a set number of hours, nor have we instructed providers to allocate a certain number.

Your service provider is required to meet the standards and allocate sufficient resources to do so.

When should I start discussing the holiday (periodic) clean with my provider?

We know the terms are busy times, but the sooner you can think about what your school needs during the term clean and communicate this with your provider and record it in the cleaning services plan, the better it will be for you.

For your periodic clean, you will want to discuss with your provider:

* maintenance works scheduled over the term break,
* shut down schedules for building or maintenance work,
* school holiday programs.

By discussing this early with your provider, they will be in a better position to schedule their workforce, bring in additional resources and / or equipment and induct any new staff needed.

### What do I do if I’m having issues with the cleaning or my provider?

Having an agreed Cleaning Services Plan will ensure that your provider, including the local cleaning team, are aware of your school’s unique environment and how to undertake the cleaning to meet your needs. The Plan is an important accountability tool.

If your provider is not meeting the agreed Plan or you are having issues with your cleaning, review the below document for clear steps on how to work through the issue:

* [Working with your school cleaning service provider](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/working-with-cleaning-service-provider.docx)

Your provider also undertakes monthly audits of the clean, which a school representative is invited to and encouraged to attend. Your provider will meet with you termly to review the previous term’s cleaning, the cleaning services plan and discuss the upcoming term requirements. This is a beneficial opportunity for you to discuss any changes needed and adjust the Plan.

The Department meets with providers regularly to ensure they meet their contractual obligations. Providers are required to submit to the Department monthly reports on progress, including the results of the monthly audit that a school representative participated in and all issues raised through their contact centre and their resolution.

These mechanisms mean we are able to hold providers to account and ensure the cleaning standards and frequencies are met.

### Where can I go for support and more information?

A suite of resources to help schools manage their cleaning is available in the intranet, including all the documents listed in this reference guide, as well as frequently asked questions and a template to lodge formal requests and issues with your service provider.

If you have any further queries about these changes, contact the School Cleaning Unit on cleaning@education.vic.gov.au or 1300 842 754.