

SCHOOL VISITORS POLICY

Scoil Baile an Droichid

Rationale

The Board of Management of Scoil Baile an Droichid seeks to provide an open and friendly learning environment, which values and encourages visitors to the school. At the same time the Board has a legitimate interest in avoiding disruption to the educational process, protecting the safety and welfare of the students and staff, and to protect and preserve the schools facilities and resources from misuse or vandalism.

AIMS

The aim of this policy is to provide guidelines for all visitors to the school and in so doing;

- Provide a safe and secure environment for our students and staff.
- Establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors, whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of the school.

DEFINITIONS

Visitors to the school are defined as all people other than staff members, students, and parents/guardians involved in the task of delivering or collecting children at the start or end of the school day.

Type of Visitor

- Parents/Guardians
- Department of Education & Skills Officials
- Guest Speakers
- Paid coaches and instructors
- Volunteers (parents, sport coaches, etc.)
- Contractors

RESPONSIBILITIES

The school principal shall have the authority to determine which visits are permitted as well as the discretion to set any appropriate conditions on the nature and extent of such visits. In exercising this discretion, the principal shall consider the purpose of the visit, the impact of the visitor's presence and the relationship of any visitor to the students.

School personnel shall seek to assure that parents and other visitors are courteously received and that sincere efforts are made to provide them with the information as may be needed to foster a cooperative relationship between home, school and community.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VISITORS

- Each visitor is required to use the buzzer system at the front door. The secretary, principal or deputy principal will determine whether they may be permitted into the building. The person who buzzes them in will also ensure that they leave
- Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorisation from the principal in advance. At the discretion of the principal, such prior authorisation may be required.

- Visits may be prohibited at certain times such as the first and last weeks of school, immediately before or after school holidays or other breaks and while preparations for school events are being conducted.
- All school visitors must comply at all times with Board of Management and Department of Education & Skills policies, administrative rules and school regulations.

Parents as Visitors

- Parents wishing to conference with teachers during the course of the school day are required to make arrangements in advance.
- Parents who visit the premises during the school day to collect students for external appointments are asked to call to the classroom and sign their child out
- Parents who have been invited to visit the school as part of an open day, special event or scheduled school performance are exempt from these requirements.

Guest Speakers

- Guest speakers may be invited to the school where the principal teacher's authorisation has been sought and where it has been deemed that the use of such a speaker will bring specific knowledge and expertise to enrich the planned curriculum.
- A check list for the organisation of guest speakers is appended to this document.
- Guest Speakers on subjects/areas other than the approved curriculum must be approved by the Patron prior to being invited to the school.

Paid Coaches & Instructors

- Will work under the supervision of a designated teacher.
- Should have a recognised qualification in the activity they are to deliver.
- Must have received Child Protection training.
- Must have submitted a Garda Vetting report to the school or the organization they work for.
- Should have appropriate experience of working with young people.
- Must provide the names and contact details for two character referees unless it is covered by their organisation.
- Must have current public liability insurance.

Volunteers

- Volunteers who will be on the premises during school hours must submit a Garda clearance form.
- Volunteers will only work directly alongside a member of the school staff.

Contractors

- Contractors who may regularly have staff on the premises during the school day will be required to provide Garda clearance reports for same.
- Contractors who may occasionally visit the premises during the school day must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

Other Visitors

- The local parish priests may visit the school at their own discretion
- The Diocesan Advisor, Sr. Essie visits the school from time to time
- Board of Management members, especially the Chairperson of the Board may visit
- Inspectors from the Department of Education are welcome to visit
- Parent Council members may visit by appointment for meetings etc.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

* Both custodial and non-custodial parents of a Scoil Baile an Droichid student have rights to visit the child's school unless a court order exists restricting such contact. In the event that a non-custodial parent seeks permission to visit, the school shall make every effort to notify the custodial parent in advance of the visit.

* The principal has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.

* The education of children is of utmost importance to the school and disruptions to this teaching on a regular basis will not be tolerated. Parents and others are requested to make appointments to speak to teachers and staff in order to ensure that no teaching and preparation time is lost and also ensure that time and attention is given to the visitor in question.

* The school endeavours to be a welcoming place for pupils, their families and the wider community and will hold events to encourage people to visit the school at certain times of the year e.g. Green Flag celebrations, assemblies, event celebrations, open evenings, information evenings, coffee mornings, Grandparents Day, Infant Introductory meetings. (This list is not exhaustive)

Policy Links

This policy is linked to other school policies such as: Child Protection Policy, Garda Vetting, Confidentiality Policy, Health & Safety, Home-School Links, Complaints Procedure, Guardianship Policy, Community Links among others.

Ratification & Review

This policy will be reviewed as necessary. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX

GUEST SPEAKER CHECK LIST

This checklist will be used by staff in school to support them through the stages of involving a visitor in the classroom.

Before the visit

- Why is this visitor being asked into school?
- Does the visitor come with any recommendations?
- Has the school used this visitor before?
- What experience has this visitor of working with this age group?
- Have parents been informed of the session (if appropriate)?
- How will you ensure that pupils are hearing a balance of opinions about the topic/issue?
- Has the visitor submitted A Garda clearance report?

Preparing the visitor

- Is the visitor aware of the context of the contributions they have been asked to make?
- Has the visitor identified the intended learning outcomes for their input?
- Have the resources and materials been reviewed for appropriateness and the maturity of the pupils?
- Is the visitor aware of the aims of their visit?
- Has the visitor been made aware of the school ethos?
- Is the visitor aware of the ability and maturity level of the young people they will be working with?
- Will the visitor make a pre visit to the school?
- Are the school's legal responsibilities to the children and young people being met?
- Has the visitor been supplied with copies of the relevant school policies?
- Is the visitor aware of any risks to health and safety?

Preparing the visit

- What arrangements will be made to welcome the visitor to the school and introduce them to the class?
- Is the size of the group appropriate to the activity and learning purpose?
- Is this visit part of a planned programme with preparation beforehand and follow up afterwards?
- How will the group be prepared for the visitor?
- What resources will be needed for the session?

During the visit

- Will the school be able to respond appropriately to questions or incidents that may arise after the visitor has left?
- How will the teacher support the visitor in this work?
- Will a member of the school staff be present during the session?

After the visit

- How will the outcome of the evaluation inform future work?
- Is there opportunity for feedback and discussion about the impact of the visitor's session?

Evaluation

The teacher and visitor will ensure that time has been agreed to jointly evaluate the session. The following questions can be used as prompts:

- What was the young people's response to the session(s)?
- Have the learning outcomes been achieved?
- What went particularly well in the session(s)?
- Which parts (if any) of the session were not successful?
- Were the resources and materials used appropriate?
- In what ways do you think that the session(s) could be improved?
- Are there any issues from this session that you think need addressing further?

Pupil evaluations will be carried out to inform future planning and will focus upon:

- What pupils have learnt in the sessions;
- What they like about the sessions;
- What they didn't like about the sessions;
- What else they would like to know about.