

# St. Patrick's Primary School



## Visitors' Policy

Ratified by Board of Governors on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

Reviewed Bi-annually

Next Review Date: Spring, 2025.

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## **1. Policy Statement**

St. Patrick's Primary School assures all visitors a warm, friendly and professional welcome, whatever the purpose of their visit. The school also has a legal duty of care for the health, safety, security and wellbeing of all pupils and staff. This duty of care incorporates the duty to safeguard all pupils from subjection to any form of harm, abuse, nuisance or inappropriate influence. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, Principal and Vice-Principal to ensure that this duty is followed at all times. In performing this duty, the school recognises that there can be no complacency where child protection and safeguarding procedures are concerned. The school therefore requires that all visitors (without exception) comply with the following policy and procedures. Failure to do so may result in the visitor's escorted departure from the school site. (See 6.8)

## **2. Policy Responsibility**

The Principal is the member of staff responsible for the implementation, co-ordination and review of this policy. The Principal will also be responsible for liaising with the school's Vice-Principal and Child Protection And Safeguarding Team, as appropriate. All breaches of this procedure must be reported to the Principal. Failure by staff members to adhere to this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

## **3. Aim**

To safeguard all children within the school's responsibility both during school hours and out of school hours' activities which are arranged by the school. The ultimate aim is to ensure that pupils at St. Patrick's Primary School can learn from and enjoy curricular and extra-curricular experiences in an environment where they are safe from harm. The school also has a responsibility to protect and preserve its resources against theft, vandalism and misuse.

## **4. Objectives**

To have in place a clear protocol and procedure for the admittance of external visitors to the school, which is understood by all staff, governors, visitors and parents and adheres to child protection and safeguarding guidelines.

To enable the school to account and care for all visitors to the site in the event of an emergency or practice drill.

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## 5. Where And To Whom The Policy Applies

The school is deemed to have control and responsibility for its pupils anywhere on the school site (i.e. within the school boundary fence), during normal school hours, during after school activities and on school organised (and supervised) off-site activities.

**Visitors are defined as all people other than current staff members, long term substitute staff, pupils and parents/guardians involved in the task of delivering or collecting pupils at the start or end of the school day.**

The policy applies to:

- All governors of the school.
- All external visitors entering the school site during the school day or for after school activities (including tutors, sports coaches, and topic related visitors e.g. authors, journalists, musicians, artists).
- Temporary part-time substitute teachers/classroom assistants.
- All parents and volunteers.
- Other education related personnel (advisors, inspectors, health professionals, Educational Psychology Service).
- Buildings and maintenance and all other independent contractors visiting the school premises.

## 6. Protocol And Procedures

### 6.1 Visitors Invited To The School:

- Before any visitor is invited to the school, the Principal or Vice-Principal, should be informed, with a clear explanation as to the relevance and purpose of the visit and intended date and time of the visit. Once the proposed visit is entered into the Principal's diary this will be discussed as part of the regular review of diary events between the Principal and Vice-Principal.
- When inviting visitors to the school the member of staff hosting the visit should ensure they are asked to bring in formal identification (including photo ID) with them at the time of their visit and be informed of the procedure for visitors as set out below:
  - a. Members of staff arranging for and hosting visitors must inform the school office in advance so that this information can be entered into the Principal's Diary.

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- b. All visitors must report to reception (secretary's office).
- c. At reception, all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them. They should be ready to produce formal identification. All visitors will be asked to sign the school's Visitor Book (GDPR compliant).
- d. All visitors will be given the appropriate safeguarding, health and safety and school information before they leave reception.
- e. Visitors will then be escorted to their point of contact OR their point of contact will be asked to come to the school reception to receive the visitor. The contact will then be responsible for them while they are on site. The visitor must not be allowed to move about the site unaccompanied unless the school has completed the relevant checks (Access NI) or has received details of this through the organisation employing the visitor.
- f. On departing the school, visitors should leave via the school reception and:
  - i. Inform the school Secretary/Principal or Vice-Principal that they are leaving.
  - ii. Sign out.

## **6.2 Unknown/Uninvited Visitors To The School**

Any visitor to the school site who is not wearing a visitor badge should be challenged politely in relation to who they are and their business on the school site. They should then be reminded of the school procedure and escorted to reception to sign the Visitors' Book, if approved. The procedures under 6.1 will then apply. In the event that the visitor refuses to comply, they should be asked to leave the site immediately and the Principal or Vice-Principal informed. The Principal/Vice-Principal will consider the situation and decide if it is necessary to inform the police. If an unknown/uninvited visitor becomes abusive or aggressive, they will be asked to leave the site immediately and warned that if they fail to leave the school grounds, police assistance will be called for.

The Principal/Vice-Principal reserve the right, and have the authority to prohibit any potential visitor from entering or remaining within the school.

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## 6.4 Governors and Volunteers

All parent and other volunteers (such as business and partners) **must** complete an AccessNI form via the school office before starting a volunteer role, if working unsupervised with pupils. This is not required if they are being supervised by a member of staff when working with children, however a Risk Assessment should be completed.

Governors will be treated as volunteers. If they are to be in contact with children a Risk Assessment should be completed and they should be supervised at all times. They should sign in and out at reception as detailed previously. New governors will be made aware of this policy and become familiar with its procedures as part of their induction. This is the responsibility of the Principal/Vice-Principal and Chair of Governors.

## 6.5 Buildings and Maintenance Contractors

Contractors follow the procedure as set out in 6.1 When pupils are on the premises, the contractors must be supervised at all times by the Principal/Vice-Principal or if she is unavailable, by another senior member of staff. No contractor/engineer is permitted to work in, or move around the school, unsupervised when pupils are on site unless they have a valid Access NI certificate which has been checked and verified.

## 6.6 Parent Visitors

Partnership with parents is a strong and unique feature of St. Patrick's which the school wishes to preserve. At the same time, the safeguarding and wellbeing of pupils and staff must be maintained.

Any parent wishing to discuss matters relating to their child should arrange a meeting with the class teacher at a time convenient to both so as to maximise teaching and learning time.

Parents who visit the school site at times other than the start and end of the day are expected to report to Reception to make the purpose of their visit known. They will then be escorted to their point of contact OR their point of contact will be asked to come to the school reception to receive them. The contact will then be responsible for them while they are on site and will escort

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them off the premises at the end of the visit. The visitor must not be allowed to move about the site unaccompanied.

Parents collecting their child for an appointment/external activity or escorting their child back to school following an appointment/external activity should report to Reception and record the relevant information in the school's Children's Sign In/Sign Out Book (GDPR compliant). This includes parents of pupils in the Year 1 mobile classroom.

If the parent needs to visit a room in a classroom zone for any other reason they will be escorted by a member of the office staff or directed to a specific waiting area (for example) when attending parent meetings).

Exceptions to this are when there is a planned school or classroom event (e.g., Breakfast Morning, Annual Achievements Assemblies, etc.) in which case school staff will be available to steward parent visitors around the school and to undertake all reasonable precautions to ensure that visitors to the school are genuine.

## **6.7 Ex Pupils and Ex Members of Staff**

Ex St. Patrick's pupils and ex members of staff may request or arrive at the school for a visit. They must be signed in and be fully supervised at all times.

## **6.8 Unacceptable Behaviour**

Everyone who enters St. Patrick's P.S., Eskra - pupils, staff, governors and visitors - should be treated with respect and courtesy. If this does not occur the behaviour may be deemed as unacceptable.

If this becomes an issue from either:

- A member of staff who has treated or is treating a visitor unacceptably;

If a visitor believes they have been mistreated on a visit to St. Patrick's P.S., Eskra, the Complaints Procedure must be implemented. The visitor should request to meet with the Principal or Vice-Principal as soon as possible. The Complaints Procedure can be accessed on the school website or requested from reception.

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Or

- A visitor who has treated or is treating a member staff, pupil or another visitor in an unacceptable manner;

This includes any person visiting or accessing the school for any reason including EA Officers, CCMS Officers, ETI Inspectors, parents, presenters, contractors, Educational Psychology Service personnel, etc. This should be referred to the Principal who will investigate the incident and build a picture of what has occurred. The Principal or Vice – Principal will seek to interject in the situation and speak to the visitor.

This action may include:

- escorting the individual or group from the school.
- giving the individual or group a copy of this policy.
- contacting the police, if necessary.

However, if the unacceptable behaviour continues the Principal will report this to the Board of Governors who will instruct the Principal/Vice-Principal on the appropriate action.

This action may include:

- forwarding a written warning from the Governors advising the individual or group of this policy,
- monitoring the situation,
- contacting the Education Authority DARS department, and if the behaviour continues, referring the situation to the Education Authority's Legal Department who will instruct the Governors on proceeding to enforce 'restricted access' to the school grounds.

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## 7. Check List for Members of Staff Organising Visits from External Agencies

Be confident that the visitor/external agency has the expertise in the subject that they are delivering and the experience and skills in delivering sessions to children and young people.
Staff arranging speakers at the school must notify the Principal in advance of the plans so that she can be assured that the appropriate checks are carried out to ensure messages delivered are appropriate and align with the stated values of the school.
Check (or ask a senior member of staff to help with this) that the visitor comes from an organisation which has values which align with those of the school.
Agree in advance for details of what the content of the talk/lesson will be.
Before the visit, discuss with the visitor how the session fits in with the school's programme, scheme of work, values and ethos.
Discuss and agree aims of session, professional boundaries, including responsibility for classroom discipline and fees, if applicable, before the session.
Inform the visitor of, number, age and gender ratio of pupils and special educational needs (if applicable).
Provide access to relevant school policies and Risk Assessments, as appropriate.
Inform relevant people of the presence and remit of the visitor, e.g. school office in advance for the Principal's diary and Visitor Book.
Inform pupils in advance of the activity.
Provide the visitor with a named contact.
Organise meet and greet arrangements and classroom or assembly lay out.
Ensure the relevant staff member (i.e. class teacher) is present during the session and responsible for class discipline.
Ensure the activity meets Health & Safety guidelines.
Ensure the visitor/external agency is thanked for their contribution and where applicable, fees are paid.
Give pupils time to reflect on what they have learned.

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## 8. Staff Development

As part of their induction, new staff will be made conversant with this policy for visitors and asked to ensure compliance with its procedures at all times. This policy is also available from the school office and on the school website.

## 9. Linked Policies

This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with other related school policies, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Fire Evacuation Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Complaints Procedure

An additional **Procedures For Visitors Information Sheet** has been developed in (See Appendix 1)

### REVIEW

This policy statement will be reviewed bi-annually.

This policy was ratified on 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

This policy was reviewed on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.

Next Review Date: Spring, 2025.

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# Appendix One

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Principal: Mrs. Keira McCallan BA (Hons), PQH

## Procedure For Visitors To The School

- Visitors can only enter with the permission of the Principal or Vice-Principal.
- Please **do not** visit the school if you are feeling unwell.
- Visitors must sign in at reception and take note of Child Protection, Fire Safety and No Smoking information on the Visitors' Screen.
- Visitors may be given a Visitors' job depending on the nature of their visit. This must be returned to a member of staff at reception before departure.

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