



Sycamore Hall Preparatory School Visitors to School Policy

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Sycamore Hall Preparatory School

Guidance on Visitors to Schools

1. Introduction

This guidance is intended to help schools manage visitors in a way that ensures the safety of children and adults on the school site. Responsibility for this lies with the head teacher.

2. Guidance and Responsibilities

The head teacher is responsible for implementing this guidance and for ensuring all staff are aware of it, are able to apply it on a day-to-day basis when welcoming visitors to the school, and understand that it applies to all visitors equally.

It should be included within the school's safeguarding policy and referenced in the school's health and safety policy and other relevant policies.

Types of Visitor

There are a number of different types of legitimate visitors to a school, including:

- Visitors who attend the school in connection with children and who have a professional role (e.g. social workers, educational psychologist, SEND officers, targeted support workers or health-related professionals).
- Visitors attending to work with children in roles such as peripatetic tutors and sports coaches.
- Visitors who attend the school in connection with the building, grounds or equipment (e.g. builders, contractors, maintenance staff or IT workers).
- 'Special Category' visitors (see below).
- Other legitimate visitors (e.g. parents, parent helpers)

¹ The term 'school' refers to all types of regulated educational establishments - all schools whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, alternative provision academies and pupil referral units, maintained nursery schools and further education colleges and sixth-form colleges with students under age 18.

Where practicable visits should be pre-planned, with the head teacher or a member of staff aware of the planned visit. An anticipated and effectively organised visit should run smoothly taking into account not only the need to safeguard children, but also the reputation of the school and the ability of the visitor to fulfil the purpose of the visit. Where appropriate, risk assessments should be undertaken.

3. Procedures for ALL visitors

- Wherever possible, visits to schools should be pre-arranged.
- Visitors must enter school via the school entrance.
- All visitors should
 - explain the purpose of their visit, who they are in school to see, and (where applicable) who has invited them; should produce formal identification, where applicable, showing their photo ID provided by their employer or other agency;
 - where they will be working with children, provide written verification provided by their employer or other agency to confirm that requisite safeguarding checks (including DBS checks) have, where applicable, been undertaken; and
- be asked to sign the visitors' record book or equivalent.
- A visitor's badge should be worn and displayed prominently.
- Visitors will be escorted to their destination by a member of staff.
- All visitors should be accompanied by a member of staff. Visitors should not be alone with pupils or children unless (a) this is a legitimate feature of their purpose for being in school (for example, a social worker seeing a child) and (b) on arrival in school the visitor has confirmed their identity, satisfactorily explained the arrangements for and purpose of the visit and shown written verification provided by their employer (or other organisation) confirming they have had the appropriate DBS check.
- On departing the school, visitors should sign out of the building, return their visitor badge and be seen to leave the premises.

4. Categories of Visitor

4.1 Special Category Visitors

These can usefully be categorised as visitors of local, national or international prominence, often in the public eye in positions of considerable importance and influence. Sometimes classified as “VIPs”, the following are examples of special category visitors whose presence in school necessitates particular consideration:

- Members and former Members of Parliament and Government
- Diplomats and senior public servants
- Chairpersons/ Chief Executives of major companies and organisations
- Leaders in industry, trades, commerce and other professions
- Senior officers from charitable trusts
- Trade union leaders
- Religious leaders
- Civic and local community leaders
- Notable academics, Olympians, poets, authors, journalists, high profile prize winners and those prominent, with or without fame or “celebrity”, in such fields as sport, music, film, theatre, and broadcast, social and other media.

Important considerations for special category visits

An invitation should be made in advance with sufficient time to enable appropriate planning for a safe and successful visit in appreciation of how the visit will be hosted and how it will be experienced and perhaps reported. Careful thought should be given to the arrangements for escorting and supervising the visitor and the need to do so at all times.

In general terms special category visitors should be treated in a very similar way to any other. However, the identity of the prominent visitor, and the nature of and arrangements for the visit, will determine the extent to which in certain circumstances, for that visitor – though not for any associated entourage – normal protocols (such as satisfying a receptionist of proof of identity or permanently displaying an identifying badge) might appropriately be waived.

Nevertheless, all those visiting should be accompanied at all times by a member of staff.

4.2 Doncaster Council Staff

Doncaster Council staff who visit schools and who have unsupervised contact with children will have had an appropriate DBS check conducted by their employing service. If the nature of their work requires it, the service will also have applied the requirements of the Childcare Disqualification regulations.²

In these circumstances the statutory guidance³ says:

Schools and colleges must obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organization, that they have carried out the same checks as the school or college would otherwise perform on any individual who will be working at the school or college (or who will be providing education on the school or college's behalf, including through online delivery). In respect of the enhanced DBS check, schools and colleges must ensure that written notification confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business.

Where the agency or organization has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school or college, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, the school or college must obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency.

Where the position requires a children's barred list check, this must be obtained by the agency or third party by obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with children's barred list information, prior to appointing the individual.

The school must also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

³ Keeping Children Safe in Education. DfE September 2023.

Schools will need to see to their satisfaction identification from visitors to confirm that they do indeed work for Doncaster Council. All Doncaster Council staff visiting schools carry photo identification alongside their name and job role.

4.3 Staff from other agencies

The same requirement as in 4.2 applies. If schools have "written notification" from an agency that their staff have a DBS "Enhanced with barred list information" check, then it is not necessary for the visitor to produce individual evidence of their DBS check before being granted unsupervised contact with children.

4.4 Contractors

The statutory guidance⁴ says:

Schools and colleges should ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school or college, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including children's barred list information).

For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including children's barred list information) will be required. In considering whether the contact is regular, it is irrelevant whether the contractor works on a single site or across several sites. In cases where the contractor does not have opportunity for regular contact with children, schools and colleges should decide on whether a basic DBS disclosure would be appropriate.

Under no circumstances should a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised, or engage in regulated activity relating to children. Schools and colleges are responsible for determining the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances.

If an individual working at a school or college is self-employed, the school or college should consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

Schools and colleges should always check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school or college.

⁴ Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2023

For building or maintenance contractors schools should establish a formal agreement regarding access to specific areas of the building. For many building projects physical separation – fencing off of the work areas, will provide additional safeguards. Any DBS checks required should be completed before the contractor begins work in school.

4.5 Trainee teachers

The statutory guidance⁴ says:

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school or college, the school or college must ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. If these trainee teachers are engaging in regulated activity relating to children (which in most cases by the nature of the work, they will be) an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information) must be obtained.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. Schools and colleges should obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that the school or college would otherwise be required to perform, and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

There is no requirement for the school to record details of fee-funded trainees on the single central record.

As with other visitors who have been checked by an external organisation, the school should have "written notification" that appropriate checks have been made. If tutors of trainee teachers do not have unsupervised contact with children they will not require a DBS check. If they do have such contact then it will be the responsibility of their institution to undertake the check and inform the school that appropriate checks have been made.

4.6 Parents and relatives

Keeping Children Safe in Education says that schools do not have the power to request DBS checks and barred list checks, or to ask to see DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending, for example, a sports day. In these circumstances head teachers should use their professional judgment about the need to escort or supervise visitors.

4.7 Ofsted

Ofsted has provided Doncaster Council with written confirmation that all Ofsted staff who would visit a school have been through a DBS "Enhanced with barred list information" check. They have also confirmed that all approved additional inspectors have been through a DBS "Enhanced with barred list information" check. Ofsted provides a list of all approved additional inspectors at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=additional+inspectors>

Schools can regard this note as constituting "written notification" that Ofsted staff have been subject to relevant checks.

Concerns related to a visitor

Pupils, staff and parents should be made aware of who they should report concerns to or go to for help and advice if they have concerns about a visitor. This would be any teacher in the first instance, who should then report the concerns to the designated person for safeguarding.

Any issues regarding the suitability of visitors to the school should be noted by the designated person for safeguarding and promptly brought to the attention of the head teacher.

Unknown, uninvited or malicious visitors to the school

Any visitor to the school site who is not wearing an identity badge should be challenged politely by staff and escorted to sign the visitors' book and be issued with an identity badge. Failure to comply should result in them being asked to leave the site and the head teacher or other senior person informed. In extreme circumstances or if the person refuses to leave, the police could be called.

See School Emergency Plan

Monitoring and Evaluation

As with all safeguarding policies, the school should monitor and review its implementation and effectiveness on a regular basis.