



Visitors to School Policy 2024-26

The Board of Management of Nun's Cross NS 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 school's 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 and the Board of Management, 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

1. Parents
2. Department of Education Officials
3. Guest Speakers
4. Paid coaches and instructors
5. Volunteers (parents, sport coaches, etc.)
6. Contractors
7. Couriers
8. Salespeople
9. Clergy

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.

School visitors who will be visiting more than once will need to be Garda vetted prior to their visit. This information should be kept in the school office. From time to time groups or organisations may work with the children for longer periods. Such organisations will be asked to provide their safeguarding statements with the office.

General Requirements For Visitors

1. All visitors shall report to the secretary when arriving and leaving the school premises.
2. Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorisation from the principal in advance. At the discretion of the principal, such prior authorisation may be required.
3. Visits may be prohibited at certain times such as times of standardised testing and while preparations for school events are being conducted.
4. If conflicts occur because of the number of visitor requests or other circumstances, parents of currently enrolled students will generally be given preference.
5. All school visitors must comply at all times with Board of Management and Department of Education policies, administrative rules and school regulations.
6. School visitors must wear a lanyard to inform students and staff that they are authorised to be on the premises. These can be collected from the office.

Parents as Visitors

- Parents wishing to conference with teachers or administrators during the course of the school day are encouraged to make arrangements in advance.
- Parents who visit the premises during the school day to collect students for external appointments are asked to report to the school secretary.
- Parents who have been invited to visit the school as part of an open day, special event or scheduled school performance are exempt from requirements 1 to 4.

Guest Speakers

- Guest speakers may be invited to the school where the principal'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 checklist 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 principal prior to being invited to the school.

Paid Coaches & Instructors

- Will work under the supervision of a designated teacher.
- Must submit a Garda Vetting report.
- Should have appropriate experience of working with young people.

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 report to the school principal when arriving and leaving.
- Contractors may include fire safety officers, electrician, plumber, pest control, security services.

Special Situations

Both custodial and non-custodial parents of a Nun's Cross N.S. 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.

Policy applies to all staff.

Review Date: January 2026

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Nun's Cross National School on the _____.

Signed:

Chairperson

Principal

APPENDIX

GUEST SPEAKER CHECKLIST

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 supplied proof of Garda vetting? Has the visitor provided child protection and safeguarding documentation relating to their service.

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