

St. Mary's
Special School, Drumcar



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SCHOOL VISITOR POLICY

School Visitor Policy

The Board of Management of St Mary's Special School 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 pupils 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 pupils and staff.
- Establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors, whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of the school.

Definition

Visitors to the school are defined as all people other than staff members and pupils of the school.

Type of Visitor

- Parents collecting children for external appointments; attending for a scheduled meeting with class teacher or school principal
- Visiting parents of/prospective pupils
- Department of Education and Skills Officials
- Clinicians and Therapists employed by HSE or HSE funded organisation
- Chaplin and Priest
- Third level student on placement
- Paid coaches and instructors
- Volunteers (parents, sport coaches, etc.)
- Contractors
- Guest Speakers
- Entertainment groups
- Visiting Sports teams and coaches

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 pupils.

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

1. All visitors shall report to the school reception when arriving or leaving the school premises.
2. Notices shall be displayed at the Reception Area indicating that all visitors are required to register with the school office. Visitors sign-in and sign-out book must be completed.
3. Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorisation from the principal in advance. At the discretion of the principal, such prior authorisation may be required.
4. 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.
5. Consideration will also be given to the timing of visits as staff are not always readily available to meet visitors e.g. when engaged in teaching or supervision.
6. If conflicts occur because of the number of visitor requests or other circumstances, parents of currently enrolled pupils will generally be given preference.
7. All school visitors must comply, at all times, with Board of Management and Department of Education & Science policies, administrative rules and school regulations.

Guidelines for All Visitors

1. In the interests of safety all visitors to the school should enter through the front door and check into the school reception.
2. Visitors must wait at reception and enter the school when a member of staff is ready to escort them.
3. Teachers are willing to meet visitors at an appropriate time, however, only visitors with appointments will be permitted to see a member of staff.
4. If a visitor approaches a member of staff without an appointment, the member of staff reserves the right to defer speaking about the matter in question until a later, more convenient time.
5. All visitors must at all times be escorted throughout the School by a member of teaching staff and must not be left out of the staff's own line of supervision.
6. Under no circumstances will a visitor be allowed to be verbally or physically aggressive towards a pupil or a member of staff. In this instance the person will be asked to leave the school immediately and, if he/she refuses, then assistance should be sought from a colleague or the Principal.
7. In the event of an unacceptable breach of these guidelines, the assistance of the Board of Management or outside authorities may be sought.

Parents as Visitors

- Parents wishing to meet with teachers or the Principal 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 pupils for external appointments are asked to report to the school office and sign their child out and in if the pupil returns to school before the end of the school day.
- Parents must not go through the School without being escorted by a member of the teaching staff and under their supervision at all times.
- 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 and 2.

Clinicians and Therapists: HSE

- Will provide evidence of pupil appointment on Employer's Headed Paper prior to making appointment to visit school.
- Will provide evidence of place of work and employment on first visit to school (Work photo id).
- Will comply with Classroom Observation and Confidentiality Agreement in case of in-class observation of pupil.
- Garda Vetting.

Clinicians and Therapists: other than HSE

- Will provide evidence of Garda Vetting to Principal if no Local Arrangement in place.
- Will be accompanied by staff member at all times when in school building.
- Will provide evidence of pupil appointment on Employers Headed Paper prior to making appointment to visit school.
- Will provide evidence of place of work and employment on first visit to school (Work photo id).
- Will comply with Classroom Observation and Confidentiality Agreement in case of in-class observation of pupil.
- Will make prior arrangements with Principal and class teacher.

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 submit certificate to indicate they have completed Tusla elearning programme on Child Protection.
- Must submit a Garda Vetting report prior to commencement.
- Should have appropriate experience of working with young people.
- Must provide the names and contact details for two character referees.
- Must have current public liability insurance.

Third Level Students on Placement

- Students must submit a Garda clearance form prior to commencement.
- Students will only work directly alongside a member of the school staff.

- Evidence of Insurance cover must be produced prior to beginning placement at St Mary's Special School.
- Signed Induction form on first morning, stating that they will adhere to all school policies and maintain confidentiality.

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 school staff at all times and under their supervision and sign in as appropriate with evidence of identify.

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.
- Guest Speakers on subjects/areas other than the approved curriculum must be approved by the Patron prior to being invited to the school.

Volunteers

- Volunteers must submit a Garda clearance form in advance of commencing work and have completed recruitment process.
- Volunteers will only work directly alongside a member of the school staff at all times.

Entertainment groups

- Entertainment groups may be invited to the school where the principal teacher's authorisation has been sought and must submit a Garda clearance form, or be accompanied at all times by a member of staff.

Special Situations

Parents are requested to make the school aware of visiting rights of parent(s) should any special conditions prevail. Documentary evidence may be required.

All meetings held in school must proceed in an atmosphere of mutual respect and be conducted in a polite manner.

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 authorities shall be called if necessary.


Permission for Observations

(Please complete this form when you grant permission)

Implementation:

This policy was ratified by Board of Management on 3/7/18.


Signed:


Chairperson, Board of Management

Date:

3/7/18

Signed:


Principal

Date:

3/7/18

Permission for Observations

[Please complete each consent where you grant permission.]

Pupil Name

Throughout the course of the year at St Mary's Special School, we receive requests for pupils to be observed and to share information about pupils for the following reasons:

- A. **Clinicians and therapists** may wish to observe pupils in their class setting, including Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Behavioural Consult sessions, and Physiotherapist.
- These observations form part of the pupil's assessment and inform clinical/ therapeutic recommendations.
 - Because many of these sessions occur with other pupils, it is necessary to obtain permission from all parents/guardians of pupils of the class. Consequently, your signature below will allow these observations to take place.
- B. **School staff may be requested to share information** with clinicians/therapists who are working with pupils/ classes. This may include information stored or collected by school staff or by staff alongside/under direction of clinicians/therapists

Please be assured that confidential information pertaining to your child will not be shared by the observing individual(s). A Parent/Legal Guardian/Carer may withdraw their consent at any time, by informing the School Principal in writing.

Consent Part 1

- ☐ **I consent for my child to be present in class when observation of another pupil of the class takes place. Please sign and date below:**

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

_____ Date

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

_____ Date

Consent Part 2

- ☐ **I consent for my child to be observed by clinician or therapist to inform recommendations for my child. Please sign and date below:**

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

_____ Date

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

_____ Date

Consent Part 3

- ☐ **I consent for information on my child to be shared with the relevant professionals who may be involved in the assessment and subsequent provision of services and equipment for my child. Please sign and date below:**

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

Date

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

Date

Consent Part 4

- ☐ **I understand that if I do not give permission for my child to be present during an in-class observation, school will attempt to make alternative arrangements in place. However if this is not possible he/she may have to remain at home.**

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

Date

Parent/ Legal Guardian
Signature
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Parent/ Legal Guardian/Carer

Relationship to pupil: _____

Date

Classroom Observation and Confidentiality Agreement

Pupil Name: _____

Class: _____

Class Teacher: _____

Observer: _____

Agency: _____

Purpose of Observation: _____

Date(s) of Observation(s): _____

The undersigned parties agree as follow:

1. The observer must have written permission from the parent/guardian before being permitted to observe.
2. The observation must be scheduled in advance and held on a date and time convenient for the classroom teacher. The observer must follow the fire regulation sign-in and sign-out policy.
3. Any observations regarding the above-named pupil will be shared only with the parent/guardian, or with class teacher/school Principal or agency representatives with the express written consent of the parent/guardian and will be used for clinical/ therapeutic/ educational purposes only.
4. The observer agrees to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity and other private information of the pupils in the class. Any observations made by the observer regarding the pupil's interactions with other pupils in the class will not disclose the identity of those other students.

Observer Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Principal: _____