

St Brigid's GNS School Visitors Policy

Policy Statement

The Board of Management assures all visitors a warm, friendly and professional welcome to St Brigid's Girls National School, whatever the purpose of their visit.

The School 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 or nuisance. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management and senior staff to ensure that this duty is uncompromised at all times.

In performing this duty, the Board of Management 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 visitors escorted departure from the school site.

Policy Responsibility

The Principal is the member of staff responsible for implementation, coordination and review of this policy. The Principal will also be responsible for liaising with the school's teachers, snas, caretaker & secretary as appropriate. All staff members are responsible for remaining vigilant throughout the school day. All breaches of this procedure must be reported to the Principal by the staff member that has witnessed the breach.

Aim

To safeguard all children under this school's responsibility both during school hours curriculum and out of school hours activities which are arranged by the school. The ultimate aim is to ensure that students of St Brigid's GNS can learn and also enjoy extra-curricular experiences, in an environment where they are safe from harm.

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, board of management, visitors and parents and conforms to child protection and safeguarding guidelines.

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 walls), during normal school hours, during after school activities and on school organised (and supervised) off-site activities.

The policy applies to:

- All staff employed by the school
- All external visitors entering the school site during the school day or for after school activities (including peripatetic teachers, sports coaches, and topic related visitors e.g. authors, journalists)
- All board of management members of the school

- All parents and volunteers
- All pupils
- Other Education related personnel (Advisors, Inspectors)
- Building & Maintenance and all other Independent contractors visiting the school premises
- Independent contractors who may transport students on minibuses or in taxis

Protocol and Procedures

Visitors to the School

All visitors to the school may be asked to bring formal identification with them at the time of their visit (unless they are named on the approved visitors list as set out below). They must follow the procedure below.

- Once on site, all visitors must report to reception first. No visitor is permitted to enter the school via any other entrance under any circumstances.
- At reception, all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them. They should be ready to produce formal identification upon request.
- All visitors will be asked to sign the Visitors Record Book which is kept in reception at all times making note of their name, who/why they are visiting and if applicable, their organisation and car registration.
- All visitors will be required to wear a red identification badge – the badge must remain visible throughout their visit.
- Visitors will then be escorted to their point of contact **OR** their point of contact will be asked to come to 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 they are registered on the Approved Visitor List

Approved Visitor List

The School will hold an approved visitor list for visitors who frequently visit the school site to undertake work within the school (including contractors and supply staff).

To qualify for this list the visitor must have demonstrated, prior to the visit that they have the written authorisation of the Principal to travel around the school site unaided.

Visitors on the Approved List **MUST** follow the same procedures on entry to the premises (i.e. come to reception and sign in the visitors book). A copy of the approved visitor list will be kept behind reception at all times.

Parental Volunteers

All members of the board of management and parent association as well as all parental volunteers, engaged in relevant work or activities, are Garda vetted by the school. Relevant work or activity is defined in the Children First Act 2015 as any work or activity which is carried out by a person, a necessary and regular part of which consists mainly of the person having access to, or contact with, children.

Volunteers who will be working with children under the supervision of the class teachers must wear a blue identification badge. The above procedures apply for these volunteers when entering and exiting the school.

Visitors Departure from School

On departing the school, visitors MUST leave via reception and:

- Enter their departure time in the Visitors Record Book alongside their arrival entry
- Return the identification badge to reception
- A member of staff will escort the visitor to the main entrance door (ensuring the visitor does not re-enter the school site, potentially breaching security).

School Open days/ school community events

Supervision rotas are devised and carried out for each school open day or school community event. Visitors to the school are supervised by school staff in the school hall and escorted throughout the building/ grounds as appropriate. Whole school Parent/Teacher meetings are the one exception. While every effort is made to escort Parents/Guardians to their child's teacher/teachers, due to the large numbers of Parents/Guardians visiting our school at the same time for Parent/Teacher meetings, it is not possible to have every visitor escorted throughout the building by a staff member. However whole school Parent/Teacher meetings are held outside of school hours and parents are reminded that the meetings are for Parents/Guardians only and that children should not be present for the meetings. All Parents/Guardians are buzzed into the school using the school door intercom at reception and are then directed to the relevant teacher. Directional signage is placed at regular intervals throughout the school to assist Parents/Guardians. All Parents/Guardians exit the school through the main school door at reception.

Unknown/Uninvited Visitors to the School

Any visitor to the school site who is not wearing an identity badge should be challenged politely to enquire who they are and their business on the school site.

They should then be escorted to reception to sign the visitors' book and be issued with an identity badge. The procedures under "Visitors to the School" above 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 Deputy Principal) should be informed promptly.

The Principal or Deputy 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. In the event of uninvited visitor/s becoming abusive or aggressive on a number of occasions, the BOM may make the decision to exclude the aggressive/abusive uninvited visitor from entering into the school except on written invitation from the school. Similarly, if an uninvited visitor to the school is abusive or aggressive to the point where the safety of the children and/ or staff members is threatened, the BOM may make the decision to exclude the said person from entering school grounds with immediate effect, except on written invitation from the school.

Board of Management and Volunteers

All board of management, parents association and parent helpers, carrying out relevant work or activities as previously described above, must comply with Garda Vetting procedures, completing a vetting form (if not already held) via the School office.

The School must check all board of management and parent helpers vetting certification is current (i.e. less than 3 years old).

New board members of members of the parents association will be made aware of this policy and familiar with its procedures as part of their induction. This is the responsibility of the Principal.

New volunteers will be asked to comply with this policy by staff they first report to when coming into school for an activity or class supporting role.

Staff Development

All staff members should ensure that they are familiar with the all aspects of this policy. As part of their induction, new staff will be made familiar with this policy for External Visitors and asked to ensure compliance with its procedures at all times.

Linked policies

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

- Child Protection Safeguarding Statement.
- Healthy and Safety Policy.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Brigid's GNS on the 8th March 2018.

The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in March 2019