



VISITORS POLICY

Reviewed in October 2023

To be approved by Full Governing Body in November 2023

Introduction

This document outlines the visitor procedures we follow, which are designed to ensure best practice in safeguarding all the children and young people at Holmwood School, as well as keeping visitors as safe as possible and maintaining good security. We expect all those who visit schools to appreciate the need for these procedures and to cooperate fully and willingly. We apologise for any inconvenience, but it is vital that the policy is applied consistently and we hope nobody will take offence at this.

It is also important that all school staff know the procedures. This will smooth the process of welcoming visitors, minimise interruptions to lessons, and help to ensure pupil safety.

Before the Visitor Arrives

Good practice begins before a visitor arrives in school. The visitor, or his/her manager, should be made aware that evidence of identity will be required and that proof of vetting (DBS) will also be necessary in most cases. Office staff should be informed about visitors who are expected. If appropriate, (ie if there are implications for a number of classes) the visitor should be mentioned in briefing. It is best practice to have a member of staff available to meet the visitor in reception. If staff are in any doubt what needs to be done to prepare for a visitor to come to school, they should check with a member of the leadership team. A DBS should be seen or a vetting system should be used. Photo ID should also be seen.

On Arrival

All visitors must report to reception, give their names, company/ organisation and purpose of visit, including who it was that invited them to Holmwood School. They will be asked for photographic ID (unless on our list of known regular visitors) and directed to Inentry System to fill in their details, including car registration number if applicable. They will be briefed on any relevant health and safety issues eg fire drills.

A visitor's badge will be issued and must be worn where it is easily visible. The only exceptions are for professionals from partner agencies who regularly work in school and have their own official ID badges.

We also need to know that anyone who may have unsupervised contact with children has been subject to relevant checks, including satisfactory DBS clearance.

Signing out

Visitors should sign out and return badges to reception when they leave. This is particularly important for fire regulations. All visitors, other than the known professionals who regularly spend time in our school, should be accompanied to reception when their visit comes to an end, to ensure that they have signed out and safely left the building.

What if a Visitor has no badge?

Any visitor without a visible badge should be politely challenged by staff. Staff not challenging unidentified visitors will be neglecting their duty to ensure school security and pupil safety. Remember that infrequent visitors, even parents, volunteers etc. will not be known by all staff and therefore need to be wearing a badge.

If staff see a visitor who is known to them but is not wearing a badge, the chances are that they have not followed the correct visitor procedures and should be asked to return to the office to obtain a badge.

We do not wish to put pupils at risk or under stress, but where staff judge it appropriate, pupils should be briefed to report if they see a visitor without a badge, in the same way as we would want pupils to share any concerns.

No occasional visitor should be loaned a door fob.

Contractors should be asked about their requirements for door access etc. and arrangements agreed with the Senior Administrator or a member of the Leadership Team.

Parents / carers visiting or bringing pupils into school after appointments etc.

Parents who bring pupils into school after the start of the school day due to hospital, dental appointments etc. need to introduce themselves at reception. They will either be asked to wait in the foyer for a member of the classroom staff to come and collect their child.

Placements and Volunteers

Staff working on supply, volunteers and students/ trainees on placement must follow the signing in process. Then they must wait for the person who arranged the placement to meet them, unless they have been in school before and **by prior arrangement** it has been agreed that they can proceed to the class in which they will be working.

Once the placement is well-established, and the person has been already introduced to the staff team, a badge is not required. Otherwise, even this category of visitors should be issued with badges.

Important to note

Regular professional visitors such as Speech Therapists, Nurses, LA Advisors, Educational Psychologists, Social Workers etc. should be wearing their employer's standard identification badge. They should still enter their details in the visitors book and be compliant with our regulations. We do not need to see individual DBS certificates but we do verify that all such staff have been vetted by their employers.

Safeguarding Procedures: Visitors to School

The school maintains a "Single Central Record" summarising key details for all staff who are employed by the school, or are chosen by us to work here.

As an appendix to the single central record, regular visitors, including staff who regularly work in the school, but are not employed or chosen by us, are listed, with notes about their DBS status where applicable.

Governors and other frequent visitors who could have unsupervised contact with children, or could access information about pupils, or could be seen by vulnerable young people as holding a position of trust, are also listed.

The level of detail recorded is appropriate to the role of each individual. For example, self employed contractors have been required to provide an original enhanced DBS certificate as well as evidence of identity.

Supply agencies must provide written confirmation that all appropriate checks have been undertaken, and we retain evidence that supply staff have been cleared through these checks.

Staff employed by public bodies are required as minimum to provide evidence of identity (as indicated in the DCSF Guidance on Safer Recruitment and Keeping Children Safe 2016). As an additional level of reassurance, we seek confirmation from partner agencies that they have rigorous vetting procedures in place, and we keep records of confirmation of DBS status for frequent visitors where this is available. If there is any doubt whatsoever that an individual may not have evidence of satisfactory DBS clearance, then he/she must be accompanied at all times when there is any potential for contact with pupils. This may be inconvenient or even embarrassing, but visitors to schools must be aware of the priority given to safeguarding children. We must emphasise to visitors that any measures put in place are not related to suspicions about them personally, but are a part of procedures which must be applied consistently if they are to be of any real value.

If a DBS is more than five years out of date, then a reference form by the Mainstream Head Teacher must be completed. If there is no concerns, the guest may visit.