Using Outside Visitors - policy and guidance

Policy written 2016, review 2019, 2022, 2025
Next review 2028

The purpose of the policy

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Develop a co-coordinated approach to using visitors;
- Monitor and evaluate how we use visitors to support pupil learning;
- Ensure that visitors know how their input is supporting pupil learning and how their contribution fits with the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- Comply with relevant health and safety legislation, and develop good practice.
- Provide a secure environment for all pupils, staff and visitors.

NB: for the purpose of this policy, visitors are those presenting to children, not those here in the capacity of other work eg mentoring, therapy, social work, governor visits etc.

Why we use outside visitors in the school

The use of visitors to support pupil learning has the potential to be very effective. Visitors bring into the classroom a wealth of experiences, expertise, different approaches or viewpoints to complement and extend teaching and learning that takes place during the normal school day. Visitors can increase children's self-esteem, confidence and independence. They can assist in delivering extra-curricular activities and can help offer a comprehensive range of exciting, high-quality in and out of school hours activities to pupils. However, teachers need to manage the involvement of visitors to make sure that their input will support the achievement of learning objectives and that pupils are offered balanced views about a particular subject. For contributions to be successful for all involved there needs to be a clear shared understanding of the learning objectives for the session and the needs of the young people taking part. The different roles that people carry and the contributions they make to pupil learning need to be clearly identified.

Visitors can enhance learning because they are able to:

- Bring a depth of experience, skills and subject knowledge that would not otherwise be possible;
- Put across an issue or point of view that teachers may not be able to articulate;
- Talk more openly or comfortably around certain issues;
- Be more open about personal experiences;
- Be seen as neutral and not part of the school organisation or authoritarian framework;
- Act as positive role models and counter stereotypical images;
- On some subjects, carry more credibility than teaching staff;
- Provide a varied and alternative learning experience for young people;
- Raise young people's awareness of the community in which they live;
- Give local services and agencies a "human face" and a higher profile.

Visitors who work within the school

A wide range of visitors are invited into the school to contribute in a variety of ways.
These include:

- Health professionals.
- Artists/poets;
- People with a particular expertise, experience or knowledge;

- Theatre in Education groups;
- Sports professionals;
- Police officers;
- Fire service;
- Music and dance professionals;
- Language support assistants;
- Staff, students from other schools;
- Varying careers to share;

How we use visitors in the school

Visitors contribute to learning in a variety of settings, such as:

- Curriculum extension or enrichment activities,
- Assemblies;
- Extracurricular event or club;
- Community projects;

Links to relevant school policies

The relevant school policies should be shared with the outside visitors. These are likely to include:

- Safeguarding;
- Behaviour;
- Health and Safety;
- Relevant curriculum policies.

Issues when using visitors in school

Safeguarding and security

All visitors must report to the school office and sign in, their DBS will be checked if the activity they are taking part in relates to regulated activity with the children. They will be given a visitor's pass that must be worn at all times and will be escorted to their place of work. They will also be have access to a copy of the school's safeguarding leaflet for their information. School staff will accompany any visitors, whilst they move around the school.

All visitors will sign out at the office at the time of departure from the school building.

Sensitivity

Care is needed when handling sensitive and/or controversial issues that may arise. Staff and pupils should be involved in setting the climate for the lesson and make clear how all involved in the lesson are expected to behave towards each other during the session. This should enable everyone involved to feel safe and secure.

Part of that discussion should include consideration of what kind of information is for sharing beyond the classroom.

Confidentiality

Where visitors support the curriculum, they must be made aware of and abide by the school's policy regarding disclosures and confidentiality. The boundary between providing individual advice and providing learning opportunities for groups of pupils must be made clear to everyone.

Visitors from outside agencies may well have a role in providing confidential advice and support to individual young people as part of their regular work. This circumstance is very different from discussing issues in an educational setting and both the visitor and pupil need to be clear about the distinction.

Teacher involvement in the session

It is vital that the teacher is present during any session with an outside visitor but his/her degree of involvement will vary and should be negotiated with the visitor beforehand. Clearly, visitors should not be used as cover. The teacher needs to be present so that she/he knows exactly what has happened during the session. This will ensure continuity with the rest of the programme as well as understanding any issues relating to the visitor's session that may arise later. Issues may be raised during the session that the visitor may not be able to deal with or may not be appropriate person to deal with the issue.

Risk management and relevant training qualification

The school will ensure that visitors are suitably qualified and have had the relevant safeguarding checks carried out before they attend the school.

Risk assessments will be shared with school staff as required.

A checklist for teachers

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 the visitor before?
- What experience has this visitor of working with this age group?
- Have parents been informed of this session (if appropriate)?
- How will you ensure that pupils are hearing a balance of opinions about the topic/issue?
- Has a risk assessment been performed and does it need to be?
- Has the visitor had a DBS check?

Preparing the visitor

- Is the visitor aware of the context of the contributions they have been asked to make?
- 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 schools legal responsibilities to the children and young people being met?
- Has the visitor been given access to 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 the preparation beforehand and follow up afterwards?
- How will the group be prepared for the visitor?
- What resources will be needed for the session?
- Is the space provided appropriate to the activity?
- What role would the visitor request the teaching and support staff to take?

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 sufficient number of staff be present during the session?

After the visit

- How will the outcome of the evaluation inform future work?

<u>Evaluation</u>

The teacher and visitor will ensure that time has been agreed to jointly evaluate the session as required. The following questions can be used as prompts:

- What was the young people's response to the session(s)?
- 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 form this session that you think need addressing further?

Discussions with pupils 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 would they like to know about?

The document Keeping Children Safe in Education was reissued to schools in 2021 detailing statutory guidance, placing a duty on schools to promote the welfare of children. This outside visitors' policy complies with the government guidance stated in the KCSIE 2024 (or latest version) document.