

St Patrick's High School



Visitors' Policy

**Procedures and Acceptable Standards
of Behaviour for Visitors to
St Patrick's High School**

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Mission Statement

As a Catholic School in partnership with parents and the community, the school seeks to provide children of all abilities with a secure, caring, stimulating and happy environment where high values of work, personal integrity and learning can be achieved and where all pupils are encouraged to develop their talents and character and to contribute positively to home, school, church and society.



Designed by the Junior Leadership Team

CONTENTS

	PAGE NO.
Aim & Objectives	3
Procedures for Visiting St Patrick's High School	5
Procedures for dealing with Threatening Behaviour	6
Addendum to Policy (Response to Covid-19)	9
Service Level Agreement (External Agencies)	11
Appendices	12
Incident Report Form	
Model Letters	
Commitment to School Ethos	

St Patrick's High School, Visitors' Policy and Procedures

The Board of Governors of St Patrick's High School actively encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that students benefit when the relationship between home, the community and school is a positive one. We encourage partnerships with our parents and work hard to maintain mutual respect and recognition of shared responsibility for our pupils. As an inclusive school, we also recognise the importance of community links to fully meet the needs of all our pupils. St Patrick's High School thus seeks to assure all visitors of a warm, friendly and professional welcome to the school, whatever the purpose of their visit.

The school also has a legal duty of care for the health, safety, security and wellbeing of all students and staff. This duty of care incorporates the duty to safeguard all students from any form of harm, nuisance or abuse. In performing this duty, the school recognises that there can be no complacency where child protection and safeguarding procedures are concerned.

In line with our mission statement and values, we expect parents and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards our pupils, members of school staff and the wider school community at all times and all members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place.

Thus this policy also outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour from parents/visitors is unacceptable. It is therefore a requirement that all parents, visitors and volunteers (without exception) comply with the following policy and procedures.

AIM

The ultimate aim is to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff on site so that St Patrick's High School is a school where students can learn and enjoy curricular and extracurricular experiences in an environment where they are safe from harm.

OBJECTIVE

To have in place a clear protocol and procedures for the admittance of students/visitors, including parents/volunteers to the school which is understood by all staff, governors, visitors and parents and conforms to child protection and safeguarding guidelines.

To have in place a procedure for dealing with breaches of protocol and procedures.

Where and to whom the policy applies

St Patrick's High School is deemed to have control and responsibility for its students anywhere on the school site, 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/volunteers entering the school site during the school day or for after-school activities (including peripatetic tutors, parent supervisors, sports coaches, and topic related visitors e.g. authors, journalists).
- All governors of the school
- All parents, guardians and volunteers
- Other education related personnel including students, substitute teachers, Building Maintenance, deliveries and all other independent contractors visiting the school premises

- Independent contractors who may transport students on minibuses or in taxis

Related policies

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

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Evacuation Procedures
- Home School Agreement

PROCEDURES FOR VISITING ST PATRICK'S HIGH SCHOOL

In light of COVID-19 and PHA Guidance, to ensure appropriate standards of Health and Safety, visitors to the school must be by appointment only. Please contact the school to arrange an appointment. In most cases, it will be possible to discuss issues/concerns via telephone. Only essential visitors will be allowed on site and will be required to certify that neither they or any household member have any symptoms of Coronavirus. They will also be required to wash / sanitise their hands, on arrival and maintain 2m distancing. *Face coverings must be worn by all adults visiting the school site. Meetings should not last more than 15 minutes.

- All visitors to the school should enter the school by the Front Entrance. No visitor should enter the school by any other point.
- Visitors should report to a member of the Administration Staff at the Reception Window. At reception, all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them.
- Under the current PHA guidance, parents should comply with Health and Safety regulations and will be asked to confirm that neither they, nor members of their household have symptoms of Covid-19.
- Parents will be asked to wait in the Visitor Reception Area while teacher/point of contact comes to reception.
- Meetings with parents should take place in meeting rooms adjacent to reception areas and last no more than 15 minutes.
- Visitors will be alerted to information regarding *Fire Safety Evacuation* and *Safeguarding and Child Protection* procedures within the school.
- 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.

**Schools should be aware that some persons (including children) are exempt from wearing face coverings (Northern Ireland Re-Opening of Schools Guidance: New School Day, P35)*

Visitors'/Volunteers' Departure from School

- In departing the school building, visitors/volunteers MUST leave via the main reception and inform Administration Staff.

Unknown/Uninvited Visitors to the School

- Any visitor to the school site, who is unaccompanied by staff, should be approached politely to establish their identity and reason for their visit. They should then be escorted to reception to complete registration procedures.
- The procedures under "Visitors to the School" above will then apply.
- In the event of the visitor refusing to comply, they should be asked to leave the site immediately and the Principal/Vice-Principal (or any member of the Senior Leadership Team should the Principal be unavailable) informed promptly. The Principal/Member of the Senior Leadership Team 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.
- A summary will be presented to the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

Visits by outside agencies

Any member of staff wishing to invite someone into the school to work with our students must:

- Confirm the visit in writing to the Principal.
- Liaise with the Designated and Deputy Designated teachers to ensure that the appropriate vetting arrangements have been put into place.
- Request from the external agency evidence of their accreditation if necessary and a copy of their Mission statement, if applicable.
- Ensure that the external agency is aware of, and has signed commitment to promote the values of the school.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH THREATENING BEHAVIOUR

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school. It is important that discussions between visitors and staff are conducted in a calm and respectful manner. In the vast majority of such situations this is what happens, but on very rare occasions, aggression and verbal and or physical abuse is directed towards our pupils, members of school staff or members of the wider school community.

The Board of Governors expects and requires its members of staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to defuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement of other colleagues where appropriate. However, all members of staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse. Violence, threatening behaviour and abuse against school staff or other members of the school community, including other parents and students, will not be tolerated. All members of the school community have a right to expect that their school is a safe place in which to work and learn. There is no place for any form of abuse, threatening behaviour or violence in our school.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and which will not be tolerated in relation to members of staff, and other members of the community are:

- Verbal intimidation, for example shouting or swearing, either in person or over the telephone
- Constant emails and/or phone calls which amount to harassment and intimidation, despite the school's best efforts to address a situation
- Regularly emailing staff and expecting responses at unreasonable times such as late at night or weekends. Emails will be responded to within one working day
- Inappropriate electronic activity including recording conversations, publishing abusive or inappropriate content with regards to the school, teachers or students on social networking websites such as Facebook and Twitter or in email communication
- Any form of physical contact, physical intimidation, e.g. standing unnecessarily close to a member of staff
- The use of rude or aggressive hand gestures, including shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Spitting
- Breaching the school's security procedures.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour. Whilst the use of such behaviour is unacceptable in all circumstances, the school is particularly concerned to protect its students from being exposed to such behaviour (whether or not directed at them).

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment has been prepared to protect staff by ensuring:

- On parents' evenings, teachers will attend together.
- That individual consultations will take place in an area where staff may summon help if necessary.
- That two members of staff will see a parent together when it is thought that the consultation could be difficult.

During the Incident

If an incident arises, the member of staff should follow these procedures:

- Ask the person to leave or invite them to a room away from a crowded area or classroom.
- Ask the Principal (or Vice-Principal in her absence) for support. If a parent/guardian behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, the Principal or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedures should be followed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a parent or carer may be banned by the Principal from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

Police Assistance

In the event of a parent (or other person) becoming aggressive or violent, the school **will not hesitate to contact the police**. When the situation does not require immediate Police response, but there is prior knowledge of likely trouble, the Principal may contact the local Police Station or the School's Community Officer for advice.

After the Incident

The Principal will:

- Ask the people who witnessed the incident to make witness reports in writing as soon as possible after the incident. (See attached Incident Report Form). Reports must be signed and dated.
- Make it clear that the reports may be disclosed to the perpetrator and the witness should say whether or not they are prepared for this to happen.
- Consider whether the person should be banned or given a warning letter.
- The Principal will discuss this with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and keep him/her informed.
- If a letter is thought appropriate, a letter will be sent to him or her. (See Model Letter 1).
- If a ban is appropriate, the Principal will give the parent an opportunity to make representations about this before finalising the ban. If the Principal considers it unwise to allow the parent back on the premises at this time, she will impose a temporary ban for a week, to give the parent an opportunity to make representations in writing (See Model Letter 2). As soon as this happens the Principal will write to the parent informing him/her of the decision to extend the ban or not to renew it after the initial week has elapsed. (See Model Letter 3 and 4).
- If a ban is renewed after the initial week, the Principal will impose any further ban for a fixed period of time and explain that she will review the ban at the end of that period.
- In imposing a ban, the following steps will be taken:

- The parent/carer will be informed, in writing, that she/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that police involvement or an injunction application may follow.
- Where an assault has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the local authority and the police will be included.
- The chair of the Board of Governors will be informed of the ban.
- Where appropriate, arrangements for pupils being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Arrangements in Place for Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Addendum to Policy

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have carried out comprehensive risk assessments in line with Department of Education, Education Authority and Public Health Agency guidance and direction. These are available on request. Key points are summarised below:

- We have developed a clear protocol and provision in the event of a member of staff or pupil presenting with COVID-19 symptoms while at school. This includes clearly defined safe areas for isolation until an individual can safely travel home.
- We have put in place hand sanitising stations onsite. This includes the installation of hand gel dispensers at all external entry points and to all classrooms.
- We will provide tissues and antibacterial spray to all classrooms, along with lidded waste bins for the safe storage of used tissues.
- We have put in place a comprehensive communications plan, delivered through posters across the site and verbal reminders from staff, to ensure good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- We have significantly enhanced cleaning provision. We use chlorine-based and anti-viral cleaning products, and new cleaning procedures and protocols have been put in place, including a much-increased frequency of cleaning. All our cleaning personnel have received specific training on cleaning for Covid-19.
- Our year groups are returning in small, consistent groups to minimise mixing. These groups having dedicated classrooms and outdoor spaces.
- We are enforcing social distancing: verbal reminders and posters are reiterating the messaging, and physical reminders such as barriers and line markings are in place to minimise inadvertent contact.
- We have designated discrete, distinct year group drop off and pick up locations to avoid mixing at the beginning and end of each day.
- We have strict controls in place to ensure parents/carers do not come into school.
- We have put in place mandatory training for all staff on COVID-19 measures.

How you can help us:

- Limiting the spread of infection is everyone's responsibility. You can help us to keep our community safe by:
- Washing your hands frequently, with soap and water.
- Using tissues (or the crook of your elbow) whenever you need to cough or sneeze, disposing safely of your used tissues and washing your hands immediately.
- Staying at least 2m apart from other people and encouraging your children to do the same.
- Staying away from School if you are ill for any reason – and isolating for 14 days, in line with Government guidance, if necessary.
- Respecting and supporting all of the safety measures that we have put in place.

All visitors/volunteers must follow the procedure below:

- You must only come into the school by appointment only
- Wherever possible, you should make use of video-conferencing technology and telephones for meetings.
- You must enter by the front door, hand sanitise on arrival and then report to the main reception
- Only essential visitors will be allowed on site and will be required to certify in writing that neither they or any household member have any symptoms of Coronavirus. Forms are at all reception points. They will also be required to wash / sanitise their hands, on arrival



Mission Statement

As a Catholic School in partnership with parents and the community, the school seeks to provide children of all abilities with a secure, caring, stimulating and happy environment where high values of work, personal integrity and learning can be achieved and where all pupils are encouraged to develop their talents and character and to contribute positively to home, school, church and society.

Service Level Agreement for Use with External Agencies Working in School

I/We have read the school ethos and policies of St Patrick's High School. Conscious that we are providing guidance and support within a Catholic school, we agree to formally adhere to your ethos and policies:

- In working with young people
- In the delivery of the programmes outlined below:

I am/We are willing to provide full details of material content to: Principal, Senior Leaders, Teachers, Parents, Governors and other Appropriate Bodies, and agree to fully implement any changes deemed necessary by the above representatives. I accept the right of the school to withdraw the invitation issued to support the school in the education of our young people. I/We formally accept the above terms of reference and in so doing I/we will acknowledge the agreement made.

Signed: _____ (External Agency)

Area of Delivery: _____

Date: _____

Countersigned: _____ (Principal/Designated Teacher)



APPENDICES

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

This includes trespass, nuisance or disturbance on school premises, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, threats, aggression, physical violence and intentional damage to personal property.

This form should be completed as fully as possible (please use a continuation sheet if necessary). For an incident involving or witnessed by a child, a member of staff should complete the form on their behalf. However, any discussion between one witness and another should not precede completion of the form, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

Date of incident: _____

Time of incident: _____

1. Member of staff reporting incident

Name: _____

Work address (if different from the school address):

Position: _____

2. Personal details of person assaulted/verbally abused (if appropriate)

Name: _____

Work address (if different from school address)/home address (if child):

Position (if member of staff): _____

Class: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

3. Details of trespasser/assailant(s) (if known)

4. Witness(es) if any

Name: _____

Address: _____

Other information

Relationship between member of staff/child and trespasser/assailant, if any.

5. Details of incident

a) **Type of incident** (e.g. if trespass, was the trespasser causing a nuisance or disturbance and how; if assault, give details of any injury suffered, treatment received etc.).

b) **Location of incident** (attach sketch if appropriate).

c) **Other details:** describe incident, including, where relevant, events leading up to it; relevant details of trespasser/assailant not given above; if a weapon was involved, who else was present?

6. **Outcome:** (e.g. Whether police called; whether trespasser was removed from premises under section; whether parents contacted; what happened after the incident; any legal action?).

Other information (to be completed as appropriate)

a) Possible contributory factors.

b) Is trespasser/assailant known to have been involved in any previous incidents YES/NO?

c) Give date and brief details of (b) if known.

d) Had any measures been taken to try to prevent an incident of this type occurring? If so, what? Could they be improved?

e) If no measures had been taken beforehand, could action now be taken? If so, what?

f) Name and contact details of police officer involved, and incident number or crime reference number, as appropriate.

g) Any other relevant information.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Model Letter 1 – warning letter from Principal

Dear

Re: Your conduct on school premises on *(insert date)*

I refer to the incident that took place on the school premises today (*or insert relevant day*) when you (*insert details of the incident*).

If the Principal did not witness the incident they may wish to use the following text: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (*if relevant: including your own*), and it would appear (*insert details of incident*).

Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of those visiting our School. I must therefore warn you that if you are involved in a similar incident again, you will leave me with no alternative other than to ban you from coming onto the school premises without my written permission.

I do hope that this will not be necessary and that I can rely on your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Model Letter 2 – Ban from school premises for one week (or so) whilst obtaining the parent’s account and views from Principal

Dear

Your conduct on the school premises on *(insert date)*

I refer to the incident that took place on the school premises today (*or insert relevant day*) when you (*insert details of the incident*).

If the Principal did not witness the incident, the following text may be used: I have considered the witness accounts of the incident, (*if relevant: including your own*), and it would appear (*insert details of incident*).

Your behaviour falls short of the standard of conduct expected of those visiting our School. (*Omit if this is a first incident – As you will remember, I have previously warned you about your behaviour when I wrote to you on (date)*). I have considered the matter very carefully and have decided that you should not be allowed on to the school premises from now until (*insert date*). During that time, I will review the situation. Before I make a final decision you may, if you wish, write to me to give me any further information you want me to take into consideration. You have until (*insert date*) to write to me.

If you need to speak to me or a member of staff about any matter, please telephone and I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. You will not be allowed to come onto the school premises unless you have a letter from me giving you authorisation.

If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises. If you were to commit this offence, you would be liable to prosecution in the magistrates’ court. If you were to be convicted, you would be liable to a fine and a criminal conviction.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Model Letter 3 – Ban from school premises for specified period from Principal

Dear

Your conduct on the school premises on *(insert date)*

I refer to the incident that took place on the School premises on *(insert relevant day)* when you *(insert details of the incident)*. In my letter dated *(insert date)*, I referred to my intention to ban you from the premises and I invited you to make representations to me about this.

I have considered the points you have made to me and I have decided to proceed with the ban for a period of *(insert number of weeks or an indefinite period)*, until *(insert date)*, after which the ban will be reviewed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and myself. I will write to you again when this review is going to take place so that you may make written representations, which we will take into account. When we have made our decision, I shall write to you to inform you of it together with our reasons.

If you need to speak to me or a member of staff about any matter, please telephone and I will make the necessary arrangements and confirm them to you in writing. You will not be allowed to come onto the school premises unless you have a letter from me giving you authorisation.

If you do not comply with this ban, you will be guilty of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises. If you were to commit this offence, you would be liable to prosecution in the magistrates' court. If you were to be convicted, you would be liable to a fine and a criminal conviction.

I regret that I have had to take this action and hope that I can rely on your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Model Letter 4 – Ban from School premises from Principal

Dear

Your conduct on school premises on *(insert date)*

On *(insert date)* I wrote to you informing you that I had temporarily withdrawn permission for you to come onto the school premises. To enable me to determine whether to confirm this decision for a longer period, I gave you the opportunity to let me have your written comments on this incident by *(insert date)*.

I have not received a written response from you/I have now received a letter from you dated *(insert date)*, the contents of which I have noted. *(delete either sentence as appropriate)*.

(However) in the circumstances, *(insert detail)* I have decided to restore to you the permission to come onto the school premises, with immediate effect.

Nevertheless, I remain very concerned at the incident which occurred on *(insert date)*, and I must warn you that if there is any repetition of your behaviour on that occasion, I shall not hesitate to withdraw permission for you to come onto the premises again.

Yours sincerely

Principal