



# ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

## **Visitors' Policy**

**Revised: January 2026**

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is to educate, empower and support the students in our school to reach their full potential by focusing on their holistic development and as a Rights Respecting School, embrace the opportunities of living according to the catholic faith and celebrating diversity

### **Rationale:**

The Board of Governors of St Mary's High School have responsibility for the general welfare and safety of all the students and staff and carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment. While Parents/Carers and Visitors to the school are very welcome, there needs to be a clear set of guidelines so that safeguarding requirements are not compromised in any way. All staff and students have the right to carry out their work in a safe environment, free from behaviours that may cause any interruption or distress. The purpose of this policy is to outline the expected conduct of all visitors while on the school premises so that we can create a safe environment and an atmosphere of mutual respect.

### **Aims:**

The aims of this policy and its associated procedures are to:

- protect the welfare of students, staff and visitors while on the school premises;
- foster positive relationships with our Parents/Carers and Visitors in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding;
- develop a set of guidelines and procedures for Visitors so that all safeguarding requirements are adhered to.

### **Roles and responsibilities:**

#### ***The Board of Governors/Principal/Designated Teacher:***

- Develop a clear and robust set of guidelines and procedures for the school staff to follow before admitting Parents/Carers and Visitors to the school and when on the school premises;
- To ensure clear procedures are in place for admitting Parents/Carers and Visitors to the school;
- Review school procedures on a regular basis to ensure the aims of this policy are being adhered to.

***Staff (Teaching and Non-teaching) must:***

- Notify reception in advance if they are expecting a Parent/Carer or Visitor to the school, detailing their name, role, appointment time and purpose of the visit;
- Meet the Parent/Carer or Visitor at reception:
  - ask the Parent/Carer or Visitor to sign the Visitors Book and record the time of arrival
  - ensure they receive a 'Visitors' badge from reception staff
  - accompany the Parent/Carer or Visitor to the Conference Room or allocated room/hall.
- Supervise the Parent/Carer or Visitor at all times when in the school building and accompany back to reception after the meeting, ensuring they sign out in the Visitors Book;
- Ensure meetings are purposeful and professional at all times;
- Make every effort to provide Parents/Carers with the information they require (subject to data protection) so that a positive and co-operative relationship can be maintained between home and school.

**Procedures:**

**Parents/Carers:**

1. All meetings must be pre-arranged, requested by either a Teacher or Parent/Carer;
2. Parents/Carers can request a meeting with a teacher by telephoning the school.
3. Admin staff will ask the Parent/Carer the reasons for them seeking a meeting;
4. Admin staff will e-mail the details of the meeting request to the teacher. The teacher will contact the Parent/Carer to discuss the request for a meeting;
5. When arriving to the school for a planned meeting, Parents/Carers must wait outside the main doors until the teacher is available for the meeting. The Teacher will meet the Parent/Carer at reception and:
  - a. ask the Parent/Carer to sign the Visitors Book and record the time of arrival;
  - b. ensure they receive the 'Visitors' badge from reception staff;
  - c. accompany the Parent/Carer to the Conference Room for the meeting. After the meeting they will be accompanied back to reception where they will be asked to sign out in the Visitors Book;
6. If a member of staff has agreed to meet with 2 or more parents/carers, then they should endeavour to ensure that another member of staff is available to be present during the proposed meeting.
7. Parents/Carers attending a meeting in school should be accompanied by a member of staff at all times;
8. If no appointment has been pre-arranged, administrative staff will check to see if someone might be available to meet with the Parent/Carer at that time. If the member of staff is unavailable, administrative staff will inform the Parent/Carer that they will be contacted at a later stage to discuss the issue/arrange a meeting.
9. If a Parent/Carer indicates that they are unwilling to leave the premises until someone becomes available, the Vice Principal /Principal/Senior Teacher will deal with the situation;
10. If during the meeting a Parent/Carer becomes uncooperative, the teacher may inform the Parents/ Carers that the meeting has been terminated and request that they leave the school premises. If they continue to be uncooperative the Vice Principal and/or Principal/ Senior Teacher will be contacted, the Building Supervisor may also be alerted. Except in the circumstances where they believe their own safety would be compromised, a member of staff should remain with the parent/carers until assistance arrives.

11. Schools are subject to GDPR. Parents/Carers must not use any device for the purposes of taking photographs or making voice/video/recordings whilst on the school premises.

***Education Authority Staff:***

- Education Authority Music Tutors and Education Welfare Staff do not require supervision in school as they are employees of the Education Authority and have completed Access NI (vetted). Music Tutors and the school's Education Welfare Officer receive Child Protection Training from a member of the Safeguarding Team.

EA Staff must:

- Report to Reception and sign in and out in the Visitors Book;
- Wear their identification lanyard/badge at all times;
- Follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures at all times.

***Social Services Staff:***

- On occasions Social Service Staff may request to meet students in school. All requests must be approved by the students' Parent/Carer and the Designated Teacher/Vice Principal before permission is granted.

Social Service Staff must:

- Wear their identification lanyard/badge at all times;
- Sign the Visitors book at Reception and record time of arrival;
- Reception staff will contact the Vice Principal/Designated Teacher to inform of arrival of Social Service personnel and they will be taken to the Conference Room for their meeting with a student;
- At the end of their meeting report to the Vice Principal/Designated Teacher and sign out at reception.

***Other Visitors:***

**Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers are used on a regular basis to support the curriculum. Such speakers/agencies must agree to deliver their programme in accordance with the school's ethos and relevant policies. Facilitators of ongoing student programmes are vetted (Access NI) and receive Child Protection Training from a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Guest Speakers must:

- Report to Reception and wait on the designated member of staff;
- On arrival sign the Visitors Book and record their time of arrival;
- Wear the Visitors Badge given at reception at all times;
- Sign out in the Visitors Book, recording time of departure.

Guest speakers will be supervised at all times by a member of school staff when in the school building.

## **School Maintenance**

The school will make every effort to ensure that maintenance work takes place outside of normal school hours, where possible. The school has a legal responsibility, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to ensure that private contractors work in a responsible manner when on site. When working on the school premises, contractors have a duty to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the school who may be affected by their work activities and to co-operate with school procedures.

Maintenance Staff must:

- Report to Reception and wait on the school's Building Supervisor;
- On arrival sign the Visitors Book and record their time of arrival;
- Wear the Visitors Badge given at reception at all times;
- Sign out in the Visitors Book, recording time of departure.

Maintenance staff will be supervised at all times by one of the schools' Building Supervisors.

## **Breach of Visitors' Policy**

Whilst it is anticipated that visitors to the school will be respectful of our procedures, it should be noted that any form of disruption to the operation of the school or harassment and intimidation of staff, students or other members of the school community will not be tolerated.

Visitors are expected to wear their lanyard(s) at all times and, due to safeguarding and security concerns, can expect to be asked to identify themselves if they are not. The Principal, on behalf of the Board of Governors, reserves the right to put in place arrangements for addressing serious situations where the approach of a Parent/Carer or Visitor might amount to harassment or intimidation of staff, students or other members of the public. In such cases, the Principal will ask a Parent/Carer or Visitor to leave the premises and may contact the PSNI, if necessary. Should harassment and/or disruptive behaviour continue, either in person or online, the Principal will undertake a risk assessment and, in consultation with the Board of Governors, may apply restrictions on entry to the school premises and may include an application for an injunction to restrain the individual(s) from entering the school premises.

## **Related School Policies:**

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Preventative Curriculum Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Students with SBEW Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Learning Support Policy

**Dissemination of the Policy:**

Pastoral Policies are shared with all Parents/Carers. These are available on the school’s website and on the school app.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:**

The Vice Principal/Designated Teacher, Mr. M. Fitzpatrick is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of The Visitors Policy. Mr. Fitzpatrick will revise the policy and procedures in light of guidance from DE or changing school procedures.

Signed by Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Review: \_\_January 2029\_\_\_\_\_