



Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré



PROCEDURE ON VISITORS/GUEST SPEAKERS



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Procedures on Visitor/Guest Speakers

Mission Statement

Our mission statement is committed to:

- Recognising the worth of the whole individual,
- Educating students in a caring environment,
- Promoting our cultural heritage,
- Preparing our students for a meaningful and spiritual life,
- Contributing to the life of the whole community.

Rationale

The aim of this policy is to provide guidelines for all visitors to the school and in doing so:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for our students and staff.
- Establish protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors, whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of the school.

In devising this policy reference has been made to Circular No. 0043/2018, (Appendix 1).

Visitors to our School

Visitors may be defined as all people other than staff members and students. Parents who drop and collect students from school would not be regarded as visitors.

Responsibilities

The school principal shall have the authority to determine which guest speakers/coaches are permitted as well as the discretion to set any appropriate conditions on the nature and

extent of such visits. If a teacher wishes to invite a guest speaker/coach to the school, it is their responsibility to receive prior clearance from the principal.

General requirements for visitors/guest speakers

- All visitors/guest speakers shall report to the school office when arriving/leaving the school premises and sign in/out in the school visitors book (as per notice at school reception).
- All visitors/guest speakers may be requested to produce an appropriate form of identification at reception.
- All visitors (except parents/guardians and those briefly visiting the school as is the case with deliveries and enquiries) shall be requested to wear a school issued lanyard indicating that they are a visitor to the premises.
- All external persons to support the curriculum and extracurricular activities must comply with Board of Management and Department of Education policies, administrative rules and school regulations.

Parents as Visitors

- Parents wishing to meet with teachers, school management or administrators are required to make appointments in advance. Parents must direct their initial enquiries to their child's year head. Parents can make these appointments by contacting the school office.
- Parents who visit the school during the school day to collect their child for an external appointment must report to the school office and sign their child out and back in if the child is returning before the end of the school day.

Guest Speakers

- Guest speakers may be invited to the school when approved by the Principal and the Board of Management and where it has been deemed that the use of such a speaker will bring specific knowledge and expertise to enrich the planned curriculum.
- If the visitor is involved in wellbeing/wellbeing promotion the student support team must be presented with the Appendix of Circular No. 0043/2018 entitled Checklist: Use of Programmes and/or External Facilitators and the team must be satisfied that all requirements are met.
- It is the responsibility of the organising teacher to ensure that the speaker has valid Garda Vetting.
- Guest speakers should be always accompanied by a member of staff during their visit unless alternative arrangements have been authorised by management.

Conduct of Visitors

Verbal aggression towards School staff will not be tolerated. Management has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.

Adoption and Communication

The Board of Management adopted these procedures at a meeting on 01/04/2025 and are available on the school website.

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

Secretary: _____

Circular to Management Authorities of all Post Primary Schools: Secondary, Community and Comprehensive and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards

Best practice guidance for post primary schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

This circular supersedes Circular 0023/2010

1. Introduction

The Department of Education and Skills has developed a Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice which recognises the unique position of schools in promoting the wellbeing of students. **This policy requires that a Wellbeing Promotion Process is developed and implemented, through the use of the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process, in all schools by 2023.**

School management, principals and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and the most appropriate education in order to promote the wellbeing of their students. They also have a duty to protect students in their care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes. The Department therefore wishes to advise management authorities of the necessity to adhere to best practice when implementing the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

This circular offers best practice guidance in selecting wellbeing promotion programmes and/or external facilitators (both once-off speakers and those delivering programmes over a period of time), to support the implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process including, in particular, the selection for social, personal and health education (SPHE), and relationships and sexuality education (RSE) curricula. The advice provided in this circular applies with effect from the date of issue.

2. Responsibility of Schools

The Education Act (1998) states that:

A recognised school shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

Schools are in a unique position to promote wellbeing, and social and emotional learning, and should ensure a whole school approach to wellbeing promotion and early intervention when considering appropriate use of external supports and services. Students flourish where there is a whole school approach to supporting their growth and where there is a shared belief in their potential for development, learning and wellbeing. Boards of management, school

leaders and school staff are responsible for providing an environment that nurtures and supports students, and play a central role in providing leadership and direction for the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated approach to wellbeing promotion.

The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice assists schools in ensuring that wellbeing promotion is embedded within the school's existing practice. The school's review and development process using the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice provides guidance and practical resources to assist in the further enhancement of whole school approaches to wellbeing promotion in the areas of:

- culture and environment
- curriculum (teaching and learning)
- policy and planning
- relationships and partnerships

To ensure effective implementation of a whole school approach the school needs a structure such as a student support team which has wellbeing promotion as part of its responsibility.

It is essential that school managers and all staff continue to develop their competence and confidence in the promotion of wellbeing. **The qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and she/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of wellbeing education.** This can be achieved through accessing continuing professional development (CPD) which includes the sharing of expertise and learning, and having opportunities to model and engage in collaborative working. The curricular elements of wellbeing promotion should be delivered by staff who are trained for this purpose having completed relevant CPD.

When a need is identified through the implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process and schools choose to select a programme or external speaker, it is important that best practice guidance as outlined in this circular is followed.

3. Supporting the School's Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process with Programmes and/or External Facilitators

Use of programmes and/or external facilitators can play a role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to wellbeing promotion. Programmes and/or external facilitators are most likely to be effective when they:

- are part of a whole school approach and address an identified need
- are delivered to class groups with the involvement of school staff and the appropriate involvement of parents/carers
- enhance protective factors which predispose students to positive outcomes in the face of adversity such as: facilitating supportive adult pupil relationships, strengthening life

skills, helping students believe in their capacity to overcome hardship and building a sense of mastery over life circumstances

- adopt a planned implementation process, for example, incorporate needs analysis, use evidence informed programmes and track and evaluate outcomes for students
- are implemented and used in a school in a sustained way over a number of years in order to bring about lasting effects and benefits.

4. Guidance for Engaging External Facilitators

When engaging external facilitators schools are advised to consider the following best practice criteria:

- External facilitators supplement, complement or support an identified component of the school's Wellbeing Promotion Process.
- External facilitators are approved by the principal and board of management in consultation with the relevant teaching staff. All materials proposed for use by the external facilitator must also be agreed in advance by the principal and the board. All external facilitators are compliant with the school's child protection policy and other relevant school policies and procedures.
- The school authority satisfies itself, having regard to its own legal advice if required, that it has met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for such external facilitators.
- Programmes used are delivered by facilitators who are qualified to work within the specific area of content and with the students for whom the programmes are designed.
- Relevant school staff liaise with facilitators in advance of the delivery.
- External facilitators always work under the guidance and supervision of the relevant classroom teacher who remains in the classroom with the students at all times and retains a central role in the delivery of the subject matter. Absence of the teacher may undermine the integrity of the curriculum, and the credibility and professionalism of the teacher. It may also compromise the safety of the students.
- Relevant school staff are informed of the details of the programme being provided by external facilitators.
- Parents/carers are consulted and made aware in advance of the content of the programmes provided by external facilitators.
- External facilitators and programmes are evaluated by students and teachers with regard to the subject matter, messages communicated, methodology and proposed learning outcome.

5. Appraisal of Appropriate Use of External Facilitators

When appraising appropriate use of external facilitators, schools should consider the following best practice criteria:

- Facilitators supply comprehensive information to the school about their organisation, programme content and programme methodology.
- Facilitators demonstrate an understanding of the Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and appropriate educational training and qualifications.
- Facilitators demonstrate skills in facilitating and managing groups and students.
- Facilitators demonstrate an understanding of the general organisation and structure of schools.
- Facilitators show an understanding of the role of school management, school support structures, roles of support staff and other relevant support services in the event of a challenging situation arising.

6. Appraisal of Appropriate Use of Programmes

When appraising the appropriate use of programmes, schools should consider the following best practice criteria:

- The programme or input supports/complements the whole school Wellbeing Promotion Process which includes the social personal and health education, physical education and civic, social and political education curricula.
- Consideration is given to the programme's sustainability and whether the programme will bring about lasting effects or if its benefits will end on the completion of the programme.
- The programme is appropriate for the educational stage of the students, and includes evidence informed content and methodology with clear educational outcomes.
- The programme content is appropriate for the age, gender and cultural background of students.
- The programme does not focus on a single topic or use shock tactics, and does not directly or indirectly raise an unhealthy awareness of, for example, topics such as suicide*, self-harm or eating disorders. The programme and its outcomes have been independently evaluated and/or informed by research and evidence.
- The programme does not place an unreasonable onus on students to take an unduly high level of responsibility for the wellbeing of their peers.

*Schools can be increasingly concerned about suicide prevention and may consider offering suicide related programmes provided by external agencies or individuals. In particular, in the aftermath of a suicide tragedy, there may be an impetus to introduce suicide prevention

programmes to the school. This could be at a time when the students are particularly vulnerable and may require a very different and specialised support or intervention. Such decisions should be taken in close consultation with those involved in coordinated responses from the relevant services such as the National Educational Psychological Service, the Health Service Executive's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and others in the community. Programmes that aim to reduce suicidal behaviour among young people may have positive outcomes for some students but unintended negative consequences for others. Safety and appropriate support of all students is paramount and particular consideration should be given to:

- the potential risks of delivering the proposed programme
- any vulnerabilities that exist within the group of students
- how any programme on suicide awareness/mental health promotion ensures safety and support for the audience during and after the delivery of the programme.

The checklist (Appendix) provides guidance for schools when using external programmes or engaging external facilitators to support the implementation of the school's Wellbeing Promotion Process.

7. Further information

Teachers who require information, advice, guidance and support should contact the relevant Department of Education and Skills support services in order to meet their professional development needs. The local Health Service Executive's Health Promotion personnel are also available to provide information, guidance and support.

Dalton Tattan

Assistant Secretary Department of Education and Skills July 2018

Please bring this circular to the attention of teachers and members of the school board of management.

This circular may also be accessed at www.education.ie under www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms