School Visitor's Policy

Policy Details	
Policy Title:	School Visitor's Policy
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Owner:	Senior Director: School Improvement
Approved by:	Trust Executive Group
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Rationale

Haberdashers' Academies Trust South seeks to provide all school visitors with a warm, friendly and professional welcome, whatever the purpose of their visit. We know that we need to look outward, welcome external expertise and be inclusive of our communities. This means that visitors are an important part of the development and growth of our organisation. At the same time, schools have a legal duty of care for the health, safety, security and wellbeing of all pupils and staff. To ensure that the Trust can continue to welcome visitors into our schools, we will implement this School Visitors' Policy to ensure clarity and safety for all.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, pupils and visitors to our schools.

Haberdashers' Academies Trust South operates as a united group of schools and, as such, is referred to as a singular body. However, in some areas, it is appropriate for each school to adopt discrete procedures, acknowledging its individual identity specific personnel and systems. This policy should be read in conjunction with Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Aims

This policy was written to create an environment in which both our school community and visitors feel safe and where continuity of teaching is given priority. A visitor is defined as any person entering the school buildings who is not an employee of Haberdashers' Academies Trust South schools, e.g. parents, guardians, governors, trustees, pupils not attending the school, contractors or activity organisers. Overall, the policy aims:

- To ensure the safety of pupils, staff and other adults and young people on our premises.
- To keep an accurate record of all persons on the school site in the case of an emergency evacuation procedure

Implementation

Types of visitor

There are varied reasons why external visitors visit our schools. It is important to understand the purpose of any visit and ensure that the right measures are taken to make any given visit successful. In some instances, a visitor might also be referred to as an 'Agency third party', but for the purpose of this policy, the term 'visitor' covers all external parties visiting our schools. Types of visitor include:

- Visitors who attend the school in connection with children and who have a professional role i.e. social workers, educational psychologist, SEND officers, Officers from the Fair Access team, TETC team or other support workers or health related professionals;
- Visitors attending to work with children in roles such as peripatetic tutors, sports coaches, mentors;
- Visitors who attend the school in connection with the building, grounds or equipment i.e. builders, contractors, maintenance staff or IT workers;
- VIPs – Very Important People;
- Other legitimate visitors i.e. parents, parent helpers, school governors, benefactors;
- External partners who may be delivering a talk, assembly, event or workshop with pupils;
- Organisations which have input to the curriculum, learning and support, such as the NSPCC, sports specialists/coaches, music tutors, alternative education providers and PCSO's, Early Intervention Officer etc.;
- Other pupils who do not attend the host school – they may be attending for events, organised visits etc.

Welcoming Visitors

All visitors should enter by the main entrance and sign in at the main reception, or a designated reception desk (if needed to aid logistics during a group visit). The staff leading this area have an important role, and to enable them to do their job in the best possible way, staff should alert them to any visitors ahead of the scheduled visit. Visitors to our schools are welcomed professionally and with warmth. It is important to remember that not all visitors are familiar with school environments and may need calm and reassurance.

The front office / reception desk staff will clearly establish:

- the name of the visitor;
- the purpose of the visit;
- the designated contact at the school;
- any required documentation or identification.

The visitor and reason for the visit is checked against a list provided by the designated staff contact.

A copy of the school's safeguarding procedures is shared, including names of Designated Safeguarding Leads.

The visitor signs in and must wear a clearly visible visitor lanyard at all times. Schools have different coloured lanyards for DBS checked visitors and non-DBS checked visitors. Staff will be familiar with the different coloured lanyards.

General Guidance

The following points offer general guidance that should be adhered to across the Trust. Effective implementation of this policy will ensure staff, students and visitors are safe and have a good understanding of the expectations of behaviour within the school environment. No visitor may be on site without permission.

Before the visit:

- Before any visitor is invited to the school, the Principal or a member of the senior leadership team, should be informed, with a clear explanation as to the relevance and purpose of the visit and intended date and time of the visit.
- When inviting visitors to the school the member of staff hosting the visit should ensure they are asked to bring in formal identification (including photo id) with them at the time of their visit and be informed of the procedure for visitors as set out below:
- Members of staff arranging for and hosting visitors must inform the school office in advance so that this information can be entered into the school diary.
- Where possible, DBS information should be obtained prior to the visit.

During the visit

- All visitors must report to the school reception desk in the main reception / designated reception desk for group sign-in; school safeguarding processes and DSL information is shared.
- Before entering the school, all visitors will be asked to sign in on the online system, 'Inventry', and wear a photo visitor badge in a Visitor lanyard. This must be visible at all times whilst on-site. In the case of a group visit with a separate sign-in list, this list will be shared with school reception staff immediately after sign-in.
- Once signed in, visitors will be met at reception by the relevant member of staff.
- Visitors will then be escorted to their point of contact OR their point of contact will be asked to come to the school reception to receive the visitor. The contact will then be responsible for them while they are on site. The visitor must not be allowed to move about the site unaccompanied unless the school has completed the relevant checks (through DBS) or has received details of this through the organisation employing the visitor.
- All visitors should remain in the school only for the specific time and in the exact location relevant to their visit.
- Visiting professionals who are in regulated activity, (those who are working directly with or may come into contact with our pupils), will be asked for photo ID and Enhanced DBS information (and where relevant for ongoing unsupervised visitors, a barred list check). All information is recorded on the school Single Central Record.

At the end of the visit

On departing the school, visitors should leave via the school reception (or designated exit if different during a group visit). Just as they have felt welcomed on their arrival, school staff should thank visitors for their time and ask for any feedback they would like to share. This is an important part of ensuring our schools are welcoming and inclusive.

- Sign out.
- Complete an evaluation form (optional).
- Return the identification badge and lanyard to the school office.

School Regulations

All visitors should be reminded that the school regulations apply to them, and in particular:

- Schools are designated no smoking sites;
- Neither swearing, nor abusive behaviour is tolerated;
- Schools do not allow visitors to bring dogs into school buildings;
- The fire evacuation, emergency lockdown and health and safety procedures must be adhered to;
- No photographing, filming or audio recording is allowed at any time, without the Principal's permission – under no circumstances should personal devices (including mobile phones, smart devices or wearable recording devices) be used for photography or filming;
- Mobiles phones are not permitted to be used in the presence of pupils once entering the school;
- Information relating to pupils must remain confidential;
- All visitors should familiarise themselves with the school's information on safeguarding including details of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and if there is that if there is any cause for concern this must be passed on immediately to a member of staff;
- Pupils, parents or guardians are asked not to open any outside doors to visitors. School office staff will open the doors when they are able to focus on the visitor;
- Visitors should not be alone with pupils unless agreed by the school for professional meetings (once all safeguarding checks are in place);
- Pupils are taught to inform a teacher of any adult they do not recognise who is not wearing a visitor's lanyard.

General Expectations of Behaviour in Schools

- Visitors should respect the values, ethos, strategies and policies in place in schools. There is an expectation that visitors will not use language or behave in a way that could be considered offensive, in line with our EEDI strategy.
- Visitors should not say anything or behave in any way that could inadvertently bring our schools or Trust into disrepute.
- Staff should be treated with respect and have the right to undertake their work without abuse or harassment, this includes sexual harassment. The 'Working in Partnership with our Parents and Guardians Guidance' (available on the Trust and school websites) outlines clear expectations around communication between staff, parents and guardians.
- Pupils and staff should treat visitors with respect and consideration. Schools are not familiar environments for all our visitors and they should feel welcomed at all times.

Principal's Discretion regarding Visitors to School

- The Principal has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to disrupt the normal running of the school, particularly if any of the above regulations or expectations of behaviour are contravened. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately.

- Visits may be prohibited at certain times of the school year, such as at the start and end of term, immediately before or after school breaks and while testing, examinations or other pupil assessments are taking place.
- The school has the right to adapt or set aside the usual procedures in the event of special activities such as parents' evenings, open days, examinations and assessment days, school events, Music, Sport, Art and Drama performances. These events will be risk assessed and a list of attendees gathered if applicable.

Staff and students working across sites:

Staff and students visiting other schools within the group should sign in and wear their staff badge at all times. This includes Central Trust Team staff who often work at multiple sites, and may be unaccompanied on site.

Communication

This policy is available at all times on the Trust and School website and the staff intranet, Habs Hub, for all stakeholders to view and refer to. Staff will be reminded of the information outlined in this policy regularly through staff meetings, diary/ calendar planning meetings and one-to-one conversations. This policy will be shared with governors at regular intervals.

This policy will be shared with visitors ahead of school visits so that they are aware of the expectations and protocols that are expected when visiting school sites.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal, delegating to a senior leader where appropriate.

Feedback from visitors regarding their visit is useful insight and should be brought to the attention of the Principal and Business Manager so that visits can be improved where needed, or good feedback given to staff where excellence has been recognised.

This policy will be reviewed each year by the Trust Executive to ensure it remains relevant.

Any breach of the policy will be reported to the appropriate authorities and a school may prohibit a visitor from entering the school grounds in the future, to safeguard their school community.

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Governor Visits Policy and Guidance
- Working in Partnership with our Parents and Guardians Guidance
- Photography and Video Policy

- EEDI Strategy
- Inclusive Language Guide

Additional Links:

- https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection-schools/school-visitors