



Oatlands College

External Speaker/Visitor Policy

This policy relates to all external speakers, visitors and facilitators to Oatlands College.

“External speaker”/ “Visitor” is used to describe any individual who is not a student or staff member of our school and includes guest speakers, Department of Education officials, parents, contractors etc. This includes any individual who is a student or staff member from another school. All sessions organised with guest speakers in and outside of our school building are still within the responsibility (and liability) of our school.

Visiting speakers can enrich the student’s experience by working alongside the curriculum to enhance the spiritual, social, personal, cultural, physical and political development of the students. Our responsibility is to ensure that the information is delivered within a safe environment and that care is exercised to respect the diverse views and values of all students in our school community.

Aim

This policy aims to provide guidelines for all visitors to the school in order to provide a safe and secure environment for our students and staff. The policy establishes clear protocols and procedures for monitoring and managing visitors to the school, which are understood by all staff, visitors, parents, and the Oatlands College Board of Management, and conforms to safeguarding and child protection guidance, Children First 2015. We aim to ensure that all visitors comply with this policy and the Visiting Speaker’s agreement.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Children First 2015
- Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter 0023/2010

General Requirements for Visitors

1. All visitors should report to the main office when arriving or leaving the school premises.
2. All visitors will sign in and be issued with a visitor's badge, which they must wear at all times. (with the exception of parents/guardians and those whose visit is brief e.g.: deliveries, enquires)
3. Where possible, visitors should obtain authorisation from a staff member prior to their visit.
4. Visitors should be familiar with this policy. The organising staff member can direct visitors to the school website to access this policy.

Parents as Visitors

Parents wishing to meet with teachers or management are required to make an appointment in advance. Parents can contact the school office to make an appointment. Parents should not at any time, drop into the school and request an ad hoc meeting. Parents who visit the premises during the school day to collect students for external appointments are required to report to the school office.

Speakers/Facilitators

To safeguard our students, we expect all visiting speakers to adhere to the following statements:

1. Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the school, promote anti-discriminatory practice and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals.
2. Any messages communicated to students do not seek to glorify high-risk behaviour, which might encourage similar copycat behaviour.
3. Any messages communicated to students do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise students through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies.
4. Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication.
5. Activities are matched to the needs of students.
6. Visitors will be accompanied by a member of staff at all times and are aware of the safeguarding policy and practice relevant to interaction with students in the school.
7. No personal details (phone number/email etc.) are to be shared with students.
8. The school may use photographs from the event on their webpage and twitter feed.

Organising an event with an external speaker

The member of staff (organiser) who has invited the external speaker is responsible for the activities that take place within their lessons/events. The organiser must ensure that all visitors are aware of their responsibility in line with this policy. The organiser will ensure that the visitor is fully briefed.

No event involving any visitor may be publicised or considered confirmed until the speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. In that regard, it is imperative that sufficient time is allowed to enable this process to take place.

Our School reserves the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with any visitor if this policy is not followed or if health, safety, and security criteria cannot be met.

Procedures

The organiser will:

- Carry out necessary research on their planned event.
- Email details of the event to management for approval. The email should include:
 - the year group(s) for whom this event is planned
 - Name of speaker/facilitator(s)
 - Date and time of event
 - Cost of event
 - Planned event venue (classroom/canteen/sports hall etc.)
- Notify the visitor of the Oatlands College policy regarding external speakers and visitors. This is available for them on the school website.
- If any visitor is to be involved in teaching, training, coaching, counselling, or mentoring, they should have the appropriate Garda vetting. The organiser must liaise with management to organise this vetting and as this may take several months, ample time must be allowed for this if required.
- Add the event to the Oatlands College dedicated calendar and notify staff of the event and students involved.

During the event

- The visitor should be met at reception, signed in and be issued with a visitor's badge which they must wear at all times.
- Guest Speakers should be accompanied by a member of staff at all times during their visit to the College. If any visitor is to be alone with students for teaching, training, coaching, counselling, or mentoring, they should have the appropriate Garda vetting.
- Sufficient staff must be present in a supervisory capacity, particularly in the event of a student leaving the session for follow up/support/monitoring.
- After the presentation, the visitor should be accompanied to reception to sign out and return the visitors' badge.
- If there are any concerns arising during the event, the event/presentation may be stopped, and these concerns should be reported immediately to school management.

After the event

After the event, the speaker/presentation will be reviewed by the organiser. If the event was beneficial to the students, the speaker will be considered for future events.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 5th December 2022.