
Catholic Education Service for England and Wales

Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools



Promoting and Supporting
Catholic Education in England and Wales

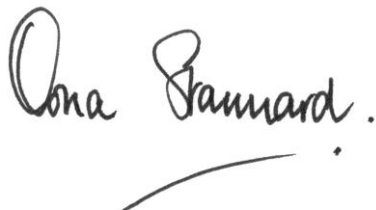


Preface

I am grateful to Edward Hayes, previously the Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Nottingham, diocesan colleagues and others who formed the Working Group that enabled this Protocol for Visitors to Catholic Schools to be prepared. They have offered us something that you may wish to take and use in its current state, to amend and personalise for use in your own circumstances, or to take and use as a trigger for discussion and your own planning where you may feel there to be a need.

The development of a Protocol was suggested by many working in or with our schools who felt that the contribution of external visitors deserves welcome but sometimes causes anxiety where parameters are not clear, nor understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities. I hope that this Protocol will help you to work together more confidently. It is issued at a time of considerable change and reorganisation in Education, including the prospect of Governmental changes in the requirements for safeguarding and vetting procedures. However, this Protocol refers to them as they remain at the time of this publication. Whatever the future may hold, the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults will always be a high priority for us, as will be upholding the Catholic ethos of our schools.

I trust that this Protocol will be useful and I invite any comments or suggestions for its development to be sent to general@cesew.org.uk.



Dr Oona Stannard
Chief Executive & Director

14 February 2011

Introduction

The Gospel of Jesus Christ invites all those who follow him to discover the fullness of life. Catholic schools continue this mission of Christ that he has entrusted to his Church. The task of Catholic education is to educate children and young people in an environment of faith that will enable them to discover through their experience of learning the abundance of life that the Lord offers to them.

This vision of education strives to support the true flourishing of every human person who is part of a Catholic school community, acknowledging that they are made in the image and likeness of God and that the meaning and purpose of their existence is to be found in him. The consequences of such a vision of education commits every Catholic school to provide an education that supports an authentic intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and social development. As students engage in this process of education, fostering skills and attitudes that support their learning they are given the opportunity to discover their true identity, purpose and future destiny for their lives.

The strategic vision for Catholic education is entrusted to staff, parents, governors and shared with all other stakeholders who serve the school community. Amongst these stakeholders are representatives of a variety of external agencies that seek to support the school in its educational endeavours. Such collaboration and dialogue is essential in every school as it strives to provide an authentic Catholic education for its students.

Catholic schools do not exist apart from society and the Church is very aware of the invaluable contribution that external visitors have made and continue to make to our schools. Schools are encouraged to continue the excellent relationships they have developed with their guests for the continuing benefit of their students.

This guidance is offered to Catholic schools and external agencies who generously support their work. Its aim is to provide a framework within which expectations of visitors supporting Catholic schools can be clearly defined so that fruitful dialogue and mutual collaboration can be achieved.

Expectations

Legal Framework:

National guidance is that external services should be delivered in Catholic schools in a way that is consistent with the beliefs and values of these schools.

External advisers are to follow the policies of individual schools in group or classroom discussions.

Providers must understand the legal obligations upon the Foundation Governors. These are to ensure that formation and Religious Education in the school are based on the teachings of the Church. This obligation is set out in the Trust Deed of the Diocese, sections 21(3) and 21(4) of the Education Act 2002 together with Regulation 8 of the School Governance (Constitution)(England) Regulations 2007 and the Instrument of Government for individual schools.

Remember too that Governors and Headteachers are the ones who decide on who may come into the school as speakers and service providers. There are some exceptions:

- Law enforcement officers in certain circumstances;
- HM Chief Inspector of Schools (Section 4 of Part 1 of Chapter 1 of the Education Act 2005);
- LA in certain health and safety circumstances (Section 15(2)(iii) of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998).

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that its child protection policy is adhered to at all times.

What can external visitors expect from a Catholic school?

- A welcome acknowledging their expertise and the enrichment it will provide for students;
- Informative, supportive and cooperative relationships through a working agreement.

What can the school expect from external visitors?

All programmes, teachings or activities within the school should be:

- Beneficial to pupils;
- Consistent with Gospel Values and the teaching of the Catholic Church;
- Consistent with the school's Mission Statement, goals, aims and objectives;
- Built on mutual trust, respect and appreciation of each other.

Model agreement

Working Agreement for [school name] Catholic School and External Agencies

We welcome all external agencies and providers and thank them for the contribution they make to our school.

School contact details	Agency contact details
School:	Organisation:
School contact:	Contact name:
Tel:	Tel:
Fax:	Fax:
Email:	Email:

Criteria

All programmes, teaching or activities within our school must be:

- Beneficial to our pupils;
- Consistent with the Catholic Gospel values and teachings of the Church;
- Consistent with the school’s Mission Statement, goals, aims and objectives;
- Built upon mutual trust, respect and appreciation of each other.

Mission Statement

Department/Focus

Session(s) to be delivered

Date/s:

Time/s:

To: (e.g. pupils, parents, governors)

Agreed aims of the session(s):

Brief description of programme including methods:

Success criteria: (these should be measurable, not simply a completion of tasks)

Evaluation methods: (state who will do this and reporting/feedback responsibilities)

Checklist	Yes	No	Comments/action
Have the resources/materials to be used in session been reviewed including websites?			
Have confidentiality issues been discussed and agreed?			
Have behaviour management issues been discussed?			
Have relevant school policies been explained?			
Has the role of the teacher been discussed?			
Has follow-up work been planned?			
Have safeguarding issues been discussed including CRB?			
Have any other issues or concerns been discussed?			

Signed (school)	Signed: (agency)
Date:	Date:

Did the visit fulfil the criteria above?

Did any issues arise?

Signed

(school)

Signed:

(agency)

Date:

Date:

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the External Providers?

Any person or organisation not employed by the school who works or volunteers in school to deliver an element of the school's curriculum (e.g. Connexions, School Nurse, Sports Coaches).

What about parents?

Each school should develop its own system for ensuring that parents and volunteer helpers who work under the direction of a member of staff are fully informed about the school's expectations and their own responsibilities in that regard.

Why do we need a Protocol?

To ensure that the Catholic ethos of our schools is consistently maintained and not undermined either intentionally or accidentally and to provide a clarity of expectation at the outset which will prevent any misunderstanding or cause embarrassment to either party.

Who should apply the Protocol?

All staff should know the Protocol and apply it but the final responsibility lies with the Headteacher for its day to day application and with the Governing Body for its adoption and review.

What about confidentiality?

Schools should have their own confidentiality policies/agreement and should apply these appropriately.

Does the Protocol just apply to Catholic pupils or all pupils?

The Protocol is school-based and when parents apply for a place they accept the ethos the school promotes and the education it provides, therefore the Protocol applies to all.

Are there groups/individuals that should not be invited into school?

Any group or individual unable to agree to and uphold the terms of the Protocol agreement should not be invited into school.

How do I find out whether any organisation is unsuitable?

If you have any concerns, seek advice from the appropriate authority (e.g. Diocese, CESEW, RE Adviser, LA) or carry out research into the organisation on the internet.

What happens if there is a conflict of views?

Before provision is made, there should be discussion and dialogue. If a resolution cannot be achieved and the Protocol cannot be agreed then the agency or individual should be refused entry.

What do I do if a visitor breaches the Protocol?

Follow up with the individual or the organisation and discuss the incident. Ensure that the Protocol is agreed and enforced for future visits if the provider/individual is to be invited into school again.

What about web-based providers?

The school cannot control the internet but in discussions about the provision, they should ensure that they are made aware of any web-based resources which may be drawn to the attention of the pupils in order to judge their suitability.

Examples of Good Practice

Here are two examples of documentation made available by schools that demonstrate supportive guidance for external visitors.

1. School Nurse Drop-in Service (From a Secondary School)

XXX Catholic School

Healthy Schools 'Drop-In' Service - Agreed Protocol

The provision of a Healthy Schools 'Drop-In' Service is the natural extension of our current programme and it is envisaged that it will complement services and support already in place for our young people. Its fundamental purpose is to advise, support and guide young people on their road to a healthier lifestyle.

As with all that takes place within our school, the service will be underpinned by our Catholic ethos and will support our Mission Statement. The staff involved will follow a clear protocol; one which has been approved by our Governors and Senior Staff and one that has had the benefit of parental consultation.

The confidentiality statement which supports the work of the 'Drop-In' Service is clear in its parameters: it hopes to support young people as individuals while recognising the need that in particular instances, information may need to be shared with other agencies or individuals.

We would hope that by offering this service in school, our young people would seek advice and support in a safe and secure environment and one which understands and supports the teachings of our faith.

This Protocol has been devised to ensure a consistent and ethical approach from all those involved in the 'Drop-In' Service and to clarify our expectations with regard to confidentiality and accountability. It is hoped that it will ensure the maintenance of a quality service for young people, colleagues in education, and parents/carers by providing a supportive framework for practice.

Target Group: All staff and young people within the school environment.

Aims

- To provide an accessible, private location for young people to seek contact with the school nurse;
- To ensure the provision of a non-judgemental open access clinic for all those who wish to use it;
- To identify any health-related problems and offer appropriate advice towards the promotion of physical and emotional well-being;
- To maintain open, trusting and honest relationships with all young people;
- To liaise with any member of staff as required within the clear boundaries of our confidentiality statement and within the nursing professional code of conduct;
- To ensure that the interests and welfare of each young person remains paramount in any proposed intervention.

Professional Responsibilities

School nurses are committed to maintaining standards of practice which adhere to confidentiality in respect of their clients. The duty of confidentiality accorded to any young person under the age of 16 is the same as that accorded to any other young person.

However, information may be shared with the permission of the young person or where it is deemed in the best interests of that young person to do so. This should always be clearly explained to the young person unless to do so may put them at risk of further harm. Further advice may be sought.

If concerns are expressed in relation to vulnerable young people, school nurses will work within the Area Child Protection Procedures at all times.

Written records are maintained for each child or young person. Any specific concerns will be documented and there will be an up to date record of any involvement or support provided. The young person will be made aware of this by the school nurse and all such records will be kept in a secure off-site location.

School nurses may refer on to other agencies if necessary in order to address an identified need. Wherever possible, open communication with parents/carers will be encouraged in order to provide a family-centred approach. However, the young person's decision will be respected within the parameters of our confidentiality statement.

Numerical records of attendance may be kept in order to evaluate the clinic and develop the service.

Confidentiality Statement

When you are with the School Nurse you have a right to privacy and confidentiality.

This means that we will not tell anyone else about you visit unless:

- You are being hurt by someone;
- You are being made to do something you are not happy about;
- You are going to do anything that may harm you or someone else;
- You are breaking the law.

If we are worried about these things, we will always tell you first.

Please remember

- You have a right to expect all these reasons to be explained;
- You can bring someone else with you if you wish;
- You have the right to be listened to and taken seriously;
- You have the right to make your own informed choices;
- We are here to help and support you.

Proposal

From XXXX, the School Nurse Service will deliver a weekly school-based health ‘drop-in’ service for one hour.

This will comprise:

- A comprehensive holistic approach to health and well-being, primarily to students offering support and motivation to adopt a healthier lifestyle and the identification of risky behaviours;
- Delivery to an agreed Protocol in line with the ethos and character of the school;
- Advice also available to staff and parents;
- Liaising and referral to specialist services both internal and external to the school;
- Signpost to appropriate agencies.

What it is not!

- A First Aid service;
- A counselling service;
- A treatment room;
- A chat shop;
- A counselling service;
- An alternative to lessons;
- The answer to all problems.

But it is ...

A channel to a better and healthier lifestyle.

In order to safeguard the character and ethos of the school, the 'Drop-In' Service will not issue contraceptives or contraceptive advice. Students who make such requests will be referred in the first instance to Catholic agencies and workers in the field.

The school will also buy in the services of a social worker employed by the Catholic Children's Society who will be based in XXXX for one day a week and who will liaise with the School Nurse to provide information and advice from a Catholic perspective independently from school staff.

Key Staff in School

- Headteacher;
- Child Protection Officer;
- School Nurse;
- Chaplaincy Team;
- Social Worker.

Protocol for Volunteers in Primary Schools

XXX Catholic Primary School Protocol for Volunteers in School

Thank you for offering to come into our school to support us: your help is very much appreciated!

Due to the increasing numbers of parents and helpers coming into schools daily, and the drive from the government to ensure that child protection procedures are followed and reviewed accordingly, we have decided to draw up this information sheet. We hope that this information assists you by:

- Ensuring your experience is positive while supporting activities in school;
- Explaining the best way to work as part of the adult team in school;
- Ensuring that your position is clear when working with our children;
- Protecting you through our guidance within our child protection policy and procedures;
- Showing how valued your contribution is to us.

Confidentiality:

It goes without saying that confidentiality is vital within the school environment. Please refer to any member of staff if you see or hear anything about which you feel unsure. Refrain from talking about what you have seen or been doing in school with other parents: always refer any concerned parents, who want to talk with you about their child's time in school, to the class teacher - rather than being drawn into conversations or giving opinions about school matters.

Behaviour:

We are very keen at XXXXX to encourage good and correct behaviour in our children at all times and we have systems in place to help us to do this: Golden Rules, Golden Time, House Points, Certificates and Stickers - all sorts of positive behaviour management strategies! We also have sanctions that are clear to pupils, including, for example, missing a period of break time.

Please keep in close contact with the teacher or member of staff with whom you are working. They will deal with any discipline or behaviour issues. Once you have finished your sessions, please do not discuss such matters with anyone else.

Working with groups or individual children:

You will usually remain in the classroom when carrying out activities. You should not often find yourself alone with a child or groups of children. On the rare occasion that this happens (e.g. taking children to the cooker in the staffroom or reading with a child) keep the door open, ensure that the adult in charge knows where you are and has agreed on where you are working. Many of our work areas in school are open (e.g. the long corridor between Y1 and Y3), which makes them a good base. It is helpful only to volunteer if you are not looking after pre-school children, who would be unable to accompany you in school.

In Conclusion:

We aim for all our volunteers to have CRB clearance which, although it may sound alarming at first, is for your own benefit as well as ours, giving security and reassurance to us all.

If you feel able to comply with the above Protocol, welcome aboard! We look forward to continuing to develop all aspects of our school family, in which you play an important part. On behalf of the children, staff and governors, thank you for your time, dedication, skills and enthusiasm.

Head Teacher

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