Visiting Speaker and Guest Policy

Our school Mission Statement	
St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.	

Our school

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. We are located in north Dublin and we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students. Our school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined above in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies.

Rationale

This policy is to provide guidelines for all visitors to the school and in so doing, provides a safe and secure environment for our students and staff. This policy also establishes protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors whilst not compromising the open and inviting nature of the school.

Definitions

Visitors to the school are defined as all people other than staff members and students. Parents/guardians who regularly drop and collect students to and from school would not be regarded as visitors.

Types of Visitors

Our school has a variety of regular, planned, and unplanned visitors to the school. Such visitors may include:

1. Parents / Guardians
2. Department of Education and Skills officials

3. Guest speakers
4. Paid coaches and instructors
5. Contractors/owners and employees of other businesses
6. Any other persons who arrive on the school premises (other than students and staff members)

This list is not exhaustive.
The school principal shall have the authority to determine which visits are permitted as well as the discretion to set any appropriate conditions on the nature and extent of such visits. In exercising this discretion, the principal shall consider the purpose of the visit, the impact of the visitor's presence and the relationship of any visitor to the students. School personnel shall seek to assure that parents and other visitors are courteously received and that sincere efforts are made to provide them with the information as may be needed to foster a cooperative relationship between home, school and community.

General Requirements for Visitors

1. All visitors shall report to the school office when arriving or leaving the school premises.
2. All visitors (except parents / guardians and those briefly visiting the school as is the case with deliveries and enquiries) shall be requested to wear an appropriate form of identification when on school premises.
3. Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorisation from the principal in advance. At the discretion of the principal, such prior authorisation may be required.
4. All school visitors must comply at all times with Board of Management and Department of Education and Skills' policies, administrative rules and school regulations, including Circular 0023/2010. This circular deals specifically with visitors in relation to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). (Appendix 1).
5. Visitors should be familiar with this policy. The organising teacher can direct visitors to the school website to access this policy.

Parents / guardians as Visitors

- Parents / guardians wishing to conference with teachers or administrators are required to make arrangements in advance. Parents can contact the school office to make an appointment.
- Parents / guardians who visit the premises during the school day to collect students for external appointments are required to report to the school office and sign their child out and also back in if the student returns to school before the end of the school day.

Guest Speakers

- Guest speakers may be invited to the school when approved by the Principal and where it has been deemed that the use of such a speaker will bring specific knowledge and expertise to enrich the planned curriculum.
- Guest speakers should be accompanied by a member of staff at all times during their visit unless alternative arrangements have been authorised by management.
- A checklist for the organisation of guest speakers is appended to this document. (Appendix 2)
- Please also see General Requirements for Visitors above.

Paid Coaches and Instructors

- Will work under the supervision of a designated teacher.
- Should have a recognised qualification in the activity they are to deliver.
- Must receive Child Protection training.
- Must submit a Garda Vetting report.
- Should have appropriate experience of working with young people.
- Must provide the names and contact details for two character referees.
- Must have current public liability insurance.
- Please also see General Requirements for Visitors above.

Contractors/owners and employees of other businesses

Contractors and businesses who may regularly have staff on the premises during the school day will be required to provide Garda clearance reports for the same.
Contractors / businesses who may occasionally visit the premises during the school day must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

Special Situations

Parents / guardians are requested to make the school aware of visiting rights of parent(s) should any special conditions prevail. Documentary evidence may be required. School 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.

School Policies

Other school policies may be particularly relevant to this policy. Please see our Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy. Visit our website to view school policies https://staidanscbs.ie/

Communication, involvement and dissemination
This policy was written by the Visiting Speaker and Guests Policy working group along with School Planning and Policy Co-ordinator. A process of consultation was then carried out involving school management, staff, the students' council, and the parents' council.

Evaluation
We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all of our school policies.
Specifically important to this policy are:

- Student feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental / Guardian feedback

Review and Development
We are also committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and also to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Ratification History

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13th May 2026

Signed:

Thomas J Byrne
Chairperson of the Board

Liam Reilly
Principal

Appendix 1

Circular 0023/2010

To Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Principals of all Post-Primary Schools

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education and Science wishes to advise management authorities of the necessity to adhere to best practice guidelines in the mandatory implementation of SPHE/RSE in the junior cycle and RSE in the senior cycle.

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with students and that s/he can have a powerful impact on influencing students' attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education.

The SPHE/RSE programme should have a substantial skills development element and should not merely be information based. Such skills are developed over time and founded on an ongoing relationship based on trust, understanding and mutual respect.

Young people flourish in an environment where there is a whole-school approach to the holistic growth of students and where there is a shared belief in their potential for development, learning and wellbeing.

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.

School management, principals and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and most appropriate social, personal and health education for 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.

VISITORS TO POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS: GUIDELINES

If schools wish to enhance or supplement SPHE/RSE by inviting visitors to the classroom precise criteria must apply. Outside facilitators who contribute to the SPHE/RSE programme can play a valuable role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned, comprehensive and established SPHE/RSE programme. Any such visitor or visiting group should adhere to the guidelines of good practice as set out in the SPHE Handbook Section 7 and which are condensed herewith:

- Visitors to the classroom or school, particularly those engaging directly with students, should be aware of relevant school policies including the school's child protection policy, RSE policy and substance misuse policy. Any such visit must be carefully planned in advance in line with the relevant whole-school SPHE/RSE programme(s) and policies.

- Talks/programmes delivered by outside agencies or speakers must be consistent with and complementary to the school's ethos and SPHE/RSE programme. Visits should be planned, researched and implemented in partnership with school personnel.

- Relevant teachers need to liaise with and be involved with all visitors and external agencies working with the school and the whole staff needs to be made aware of same.

- It is strongly recommended that parents should be consulted and made aware of any such visiting people or agencies to classrooms / schools.

- The school's SPHE/RSE coordinator may also help in the process of whole-school planning and coordination to support the effective implementation of SPHE/RSE.

- It is of the utmost importance that classroom teachers remain in the classroom with the students and retain a central role in delivery of the core subject matter of the SPHE/RSE programme. The presence of the classroom teacher should ensure that the school follows appropriate procedures for dealing with any issue(s) that may arise as a result of the external input(s).

- All programmes and events delivered by visitors and external agencies must use appropriate, evidence- based methodologies with clear educational outcomes. Such programmes are best delivered by those specifically qualified to work with the young people for whom the programmes are designed.

- All programmes, talks, interventions and events should be evaluated by students and teachers in terms of the subject matter, messages, structure, methodology and proposed learning outcomes.

PLEASE NOTE

Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE. In light of this, schools are advised to avoid the following approaches:

Scare tactics

Information that induces fear, and exaggerates negative consequences, is inappropriate and counterproductive.

Sensationalist interventions

Interventions that glamorise or portray risky behaviour in an exciting way are inappropriate and can encourage inappropriate risk taking.

Testimonials

Stories focused on previous dangerous lifestyles can encourage the behaviour they were designed to prevent
by creating heroes/heroines of individuals who give testimony.

Information only interventions

Programmes which are based on information alone are very limited in the learning outcomes they can achieve and can in fact be counter productive in influencing values, attitudes and behaviour.

Information that is not age appropriate

Giving information to students about behaviours they are unlikely to engage in can be counterproductive in
influencing values, attitudes and behaviour.

Once off/short term interventions

Short-term interventions, whether planned or in reaction to a crisis, are ineffective.

Normalising young people's risky behaviour

Giving the impression to young people, directly or indirectly, that all their peers will engage/are engaging in risky behaviours could put pressure on them to do things they would not otherwise do.

Didactic approach
Didactic approaches which are solely directive in nature are ineffective in the successful implementation of
SPHE/RSE.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information, advice and support is available from the SPHE Support Service which is a partnership between the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Health and Children, and the Health Service Executive, in association with Marino Institute of Education.

SPHE Support Service
(Post-Primary)
Marino Institute of Education
Griffith Avenue
Dublin 9.

Tel: (01) 805-7718
Fax: (01) 853-5113
Email: sphe@mie.ie
Website: www.sphe.ie

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 Education Personnel/Circulars.

Alan Wall

Principal Officer
Teacher Education Section
March 2010

Appendix 2

GUEST SPEAKER CHECKLIST

This checklist will be used by staff in school to support them through the stages of involving a visitor in the classroom.

Before the visit

- Why is this visitor being asked into school?
- Does the visitor come with any recommendations?
- Has the school used this visitor before?
- What experience has this visitor of working with this age group?
- Have parents been informed of the session (if appropriate)?

Preparing the visitor

- Has the visitor identified the intended learning outcomes for their input?
- Have the resources and materials been reviewed for appropriateness and the maturity of the pupils?
- Is the visitor aware of the aims of their visit?
- Has the visitor been made aware of the school ethos?
- Is the visitor aware of the ability and maturity level of the young people they will be working with?
- Will the visitor make a pre visit to the school?
- Has the visitor been made aware of the relevant school policies?
- Is the visitor aware of any risks to health and safety?

Preparing the visit

- What arrangements will be made to welcome the visitor to the school and introduce them to the class?
- Is the size of the group appropriate to the activity and learning purpose?
- Is this visit part of a planned programme with preparation beforehand and follow up afterwards?
- How will the group be prepared for the visitor?
- What resources will be needed for the session?

During the visit

- Will the school be able to respond appropriately to questions or incidents that may arise after the visitor has left?
- How will the teacher support the visitor in this work?
- Will a member of the school staff be present during the session?

After the visit

- How will the outcome of the evaluation inform future work?
- Is there opportunity for feedback and discussion about the impact of the visitor's session?

Evaluation

The teacher and visitor may evaluate the session. The following questions can be used as prompts:

- What was the young people's response to the session(s)?
- Have the learning outcomes been achieved?
- What went particularly well in the session(s)?
- Which parts (if any) of the session were not successful?
- Were the resources and materials used appropriate?
- In what ways do you think that the session(s) could be improved?
- Are there any issues from this session that you think need addressing further?

Pupil evaluations may be carried out to inform future planning and will focus upon:

- What pupils have learnt in the sessions;
- What they like about the sessions;
- What they didn't like about the sessions;
- What else they would like to know about.