



St. Mary's Secondary School

Convent of Mercy, Newport, Co. Tipperary V94 RY18

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Registered Charity Number: 20148379



Visitor Policy

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of C.E.I ST. (Catholic Schools, An Irish Schools Trust). The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills, and is a co-educational school.

School Management: The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School is a statutory Board, appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport operates as a Catholic co-educational Secondary School, to provide teaching and learning of the highest quality for the benefit of the community which it serves.

In pursuing this mission we aim:

- To provide a quality educational experience that caters for the full range of academic aptitude and abilities.
- To foster the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, moral and religious development of our students.
- To enable pupils to achieve their full potential academically.
- To promote the Catholic ethos and faith.
- To cater for the needs of the local community in so far as ethos, resources and facilities permit.

Ethos: As a CEIST school, St. Mary's seeks to promote the five key elements of the CEIST charter.

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person.

Creating Community.

Being Just and Responsible.

Rationale

This policy is to provide guidelines for all visitors to the school, and in doing so, 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 St. Mary's Secondary School. Faithful to the CEIST ethos of creating community, we encourage a fostering of links between our school and the wider community.

Definition

Visitors to the school are defined as all people other than staff members and students. These visits may be regular, planned or unplanned. Such visitors may include parents, Department of Education officials, guest speakers, retreat teams, performers, book reps, paid coaches and instructors, etc. This list is not exhaustive. Parents/guardians who regularly drop and collect students to and from school are not regarded as visitors in the context of this policy. (See *Parents/Guardians as Visitors* below). Likewise, visitors to school events such as Masses, concerts, PTMs etc are exempt from the sign in/sign out and identity procedures, however, the other rules and regulations pertain.

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.

Guiding principles for Visitors

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with St. Mary's Secondary School Child Safeguarding Statement, and in line with the Children First Act 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017

Cognisance has been taken of GDPR and St. Mary's Secondary School Data Protection and Vetting Policies

The school recognises that outside facilitators can play an extremely valuable role in supporting and augmenting St. Mary's school programmes.

The staff aims to seek speakers and outside contributors who best complement and enrich the subject matter and proposed learning outcomes of school curricula and programmes.

Talks and programmes delivered by outside agencies or speakers must be consistent with, and complementary to the St. Mary's Secondary School ethos and our mission statement. Such visits should be planned, researched and implemented in partnership with school personnel, and following consultation with school management.

Management, subject teachers and programme organisers will, through informal discussion, conduct ongoing monitoring of speakers and contributors. Student feedback is extremely valuable and valued in this process.

General Requirements for Visitors

- All visitors shall report to the school office when arriving and leaving the premises, and sign the visitors logbook, noting date, time etc.
- Any visitor may be requested to produce an appropriate form of identification at the reception area.
- 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.
- It is the responsibility of the organising teacher to confirm that the visiting speaker has been Garda vetted. In the event that a speaker is not Garda vetted, it is the responsibility of the organising teacher to accompany the speaker at all times whilst on the premises. On arrival at the school office, the visiting speaker will sign the visitor's logbook, and the entry will be co-signed by a member of staff.
- All school visitors must comply at all times with Board of Management, and Department of Education policies, administrative rules and school regulations, including circular 0023/2010. This circular specifically deals with visitors in relation to Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.)
- Any individual who disrupts the educational environment, acts in a disorderly or disrespectful manner, damages school property or violates the visitor policy, or the law, may be requested to leave the premises. Such an individual may be prosecuted, and may, at the discretion of the Principal and/or Board of Management, be prohibited from returning to the school or attending any other school events. Failure to comply with requests to leave the school grounds, or other restrictions imposed by the school, may result in the filing of trespass charges against the offending individual.

Parents/Guardians as Visitors

- Parents/Guardians wishing to confer with teachers or management are required to make arrangements in advance. Parents can contact the school office to make an appointment. Parents/Guardians are strongly discouraged from calling into the school, requesting an ad hoc meeting.

External Sports Coaches

- Will work under the supervision of a designated teacher
- Should have a recognised qualification in the activity that they are to deliver
- Must have current Garda Vetting
- Should have appropriate experience of working with young people

Timetable for Review

While reviewing this policy, due consideration has been given to all aspects of the wellbeing of students at St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, and particularly to the Wellbeing Policy Statement and framework for practice (2018 – 2025), which recognises the unique position of schools in promoting the wellbeing of students.

The Facilitator/Guest speaker/Visitor Policy will be reviewed as the need arises, and/or every three years. The next review is scheduled for 2025.

Policy review team: Mr. D O' Callaghan, Ms. E. Mullally, Ms. G. Foley

Relevant dates for this policy:

Policy reviewed and amended by team: May & September, 2022

Consultation with Transition Year Coordinator: 22nd September, 2022

Consultation with Principal: 13th October, 2022

Consultation with Staff: 19th October, 2022

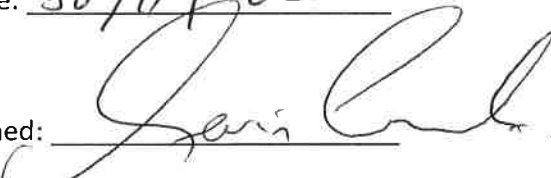
Consultation with Parents Council: 25th October, 2022

Draft Policy presented to Board of Management: 30th November, 2022

Policy approved by Board of Management: 30th November, 2022

Signed: 
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 30/11/2022

Signed: 
Principal, St. Mary's Secondary School

Date: 30/11/2022.