Acorn School Policy

Visitors and Visiting Speakers

POLICY STATEMENT

- To demonstrate our commitment to fostering an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and tolerance and where diversity is celebrated. This policy outlines the procedures relating to events where visitors and/or external speakers are invited into the school.
- To have in place a clear protocol and procedure for the admittance of external visitors to the school which is understood by all the Team Members, governance and oversight teams, visitors, and Parents/Carers, and conforms to safeguarding guidance.
- The policy also details the school's approach to ensuring that we are protecting both Pupils and Team Members and adhering to the legislation within the Prevent duty. This policy is written with reference to the Prevent Duty contained within Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Duty states that specified authorities including Schools and Further Education Colleges, in the exercise of their functions, must have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

Document Control			
Policy Code:	32	Policy Owner:	Quality Team
Version:	25.04_v1.02	Policy Author(s):	Abbie Heard (Quality Manager)
Date ratified:	May 2025		
Review Frequency:	2 years		
Next review date:	April 2027	Ratifying Committee:	PRG

Document History (last 3 versions)			
Date of Issue	Version No.	Person(s) responsible for change	Nature of Change
April 2025	1.02	Abbie Heard	Review
June 2023	1.01	Abbie Heard	

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1. Rationale

1.1.1 Visitors are welcome to our school. They make a valuable contribution to the school community in many different ways.

1.1.2 The learning opportunities and experience they bring are encouraged and appreciated.

1.1.3 It is, however, the school's responsibility to ensure that the safety, security, and welfare of its Pupils is not compromised at any time. The school is equally responsible to the whole school community for ensuring that visitors comply with the guidelines.

1.1.4 Our school has responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of its Pupils anywhere on the premises, during normal hours, during after school activities and on school organised (and supervised) off site activities.

1.1.5 The policy applied to all visitors to our school, including and not exclusively,

- All teaching and non-teaching Team Members employed by the school, including agency workers and volunteers.
- All external visitors entering the school site during the school day.
- All members of the governance and oversight team.
- All Parents and Carers.
- All Pupils.
- External stakeholders (Commissioners, Advisors, Inspectors, Social Workers).
- Building and Maintenance contractors.

2. External Visitors to our School

2.1 Protocol and Procedures

2.1.1 Before a visitor is invited to the school, a senior member of the school team should be informed with a clear explanation as to the relevance and purpose of the visit and intended date and time for the visit.

2.1.2 Visitors who are visiting by arrangement must be identified by the person responsible; they should identify themselves and sign in and out at reception, the name, time and date, their position and time of arriving at and leaving the premises should be recorded. Planned visits should be communicated via Team Member meetings etc., so that all Team Member and Pupils, if appropriate, are aware of the visit to avoid any misunderstanding or anxiety.

2.1.3 All visitors must report to reception first where they will be welcomed by a member of the team. They must not enter the school by any other entrance.

2.1.4 Visitors should be made aware of Fire and Safeguarding procedures and be given the visitors leaflet providing them with further information.

2.1.5 Generally, visitors should only be seen by appointment and no unknown visitors should be allowed to enter the school with authorisation.

2.1.6 All contractors and supply agency support should be treated as visitors until all safer recruitment checks have been completed and the details added to the Single Central Record (SCR)

2.1.7 Visitors should always be treated with courtesy; an explanation should be given for any delays and the necessity for security procedures although most will be aware of the guidelines. All visitors should be made welcome and comfortable.

2.1.8 Visitors should be informed of the Acceptable Use of Technology and Social Media policy and be asked to keep their phones safety stored away.

2.1.9 Pupils should always be appropriately supervised when there are visitors on the premises.

2.1.10 Prior communication and consultation with the school community regarding visitors allows for appropriate preparation. This should include contractors being communicated to the Headteacher by the maintenance team.

2.1.11 All visitors will be required to wear an identification badge and lanyard.

2.1.12 Visitors will then be escorted to their point of contact, or their point of contact will be asked to come to reception to receive the visitor. The contact will then be responsible for them while they are on site.

2.1.13 On departing the school, visitors should leave via reception, sign out and hand in their lanyard, before being escorted to the school gate to leave the site.

2.1.14 Where possible, visits by contractors for maintenance should be made at times when the Pupils are not on the premises. Please consult the Contractors Policy for further information.

2.1.15 The potential impact of having visitors on the Pupils should be considered and where necessary Pupils should be appropriately prepared. This could be through social stories or photos and information about visitor being shared ahead of time. The Integrated Therapies Team can offer support around this where required.

2.2 Unknown/Uninvited Visitors to School

2.2.1 Unknown visitors should be asked for identification, and the purpose of their visit should be conveyed to the Headteacher or another member of Senior Management if the Headteacher is not available.

2.2.2 Any visitor to the school site who is not wearing an identification badge should be challenged politely to enquire who they are and their business on the school site. They should then be escorted to reception to sign in and be issued with an identification badge. The procedures for invited visitors then apply.

2.2.3 In the event that the visitor refuses to comply or cannot prove identification, they should be asked to leave the site immediately and the Headteacher or member of the Senior Management Team should be informed promptly.

2.2.4 The Headteacher will consider the situation and decide if it is necessary to inform the police.

2.2.5 If the unknown/uninvited visitor becomes abusive or aggressive, they will be asked to leave the site immediately and warned that if they fail to leave the school grounds, police assistance will be called.

2.3 Use of External Agencies and Speakers

2.3.1 An external speaker or visitor is defined as any individual or organisation who is not a Team Member or Pupil that has been invited to speak to Pupils or Teams Members.

2.3.2 An event is any event, presentation, visit, activity, or initiative organised by a Pupil or Team Member that is held at our school. It also includes events where an external speaker is streamed live, or pre-recorded event is shown.

2.3.3 All speakers or visitors should be made aware by the person or group arranging the event (by referring visitors to this policy on the school website) that they have a responsibility to abide by the law and the school's policies including that they:

- Must not advocate or incite hatred, violence or call for the breaking of the law.
- Are not permitted to encourage, glorify, or promote any acts of terrorism including individuals, groups or organisations that support such acts.
- Must not spread hatred and intolerance in the community and thus aid in disrupting social and community harmony.
- Must be mindful of the risk of causing offence to or seek to avoid insulting other faiths or groups, within a framework of positive debate and challenge.
- Are not permitted to raise or gather funds for any external organisation or cause without express permission of the Head Teacher.

2.3.4 Freedom of speech and expression are our human right, and they are protected by law. However, we have a duty to ensure the safety and welfare of our Pupils, Team Members, and our communities.

2.3.5 We want all of the events and activities initiated to broaden and enhance the experience of our Pupils to be safe, without risk to the reputation of the school, and within the law. It is a possibility, however, that an external speaker or their topic of discussion has the potential to go against our conditions for a safe event.

2.3.6 We are committed to working together with event organisers and in some cases, external speakers themselves, to make sure that we reach a judgement that is reasonable, informed and within the law. At our school, we encourage the use of external agencies or speakers to enrich the experiences of our Pupils; however, we will positively vet those external agencies, individuals, or speakers who we engage to provide such learning opportunities or experiences for our Pupils

2.3.7 We ensure that we do not unwittingly use agencies that contradict each other with their messages or that are inconsistent with, or are in complete opposition to, the school's values and ethos

2.4 Guidance for Team Members

2.4.1 The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead/Person (DSL/DSP/P) must be informed of any events that involve external speakers through this procedure. No event involving any external speakers may be publicised or considered confirmed until speaker has been cleared through the procedure detailed in this policy. This includes advertisements through any social media platform.

2.4.2 The Headteacher, or those with delegated authority, reserve the right to cancel, prohibit or delay any event with an external speaker if the policy is not followed or if health, safety, and security criteria cannot be met.

2.4.3 Any activity that utilises an external speaker must be proposed no later than 14 days before the date of the event to allow the DSL/DSP to make adequate safeguarding and content checks. Any request made outside of this timeframe will be rejected unless there are extenuating circumstances.

2.4.4 Before proposing the visit of an external speaker, the organiser should conduct brief research into the proposed speaker. If in doubt as to the suitability of a speaker, they should refer the decision to SMT or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

2.4.5 Reasons for doubt could be (but are not restricted to) the following:

- Any person or group on/or linked to the UK Government list of proscribed terror organisation https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proscribed-terror-groups-or-organisations--2
- Talks by organisations generally considered to be extremist.
- A speaker who is known to have spoken previously at another institution on a topic that has caused fear or intimidation of Pupils or Team Members.
- A speaker accepted in mainstream as being highly controversial.

- A link or links to any person or group that has been connected with any controversy of a negative or positive nature.
- A speaker who has significant profile and attracts a following that could create crowd control and health and safety issues
- A speaker from a political party during an election

2.4.6 In the event of referral, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To not permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead.
- To not permit the external speaker to attend the event (if it is a wider event).
- To fully permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead unrestricted.
- To permit the event with the external speaker to go ahead on the basis of regulatory steps designed to reduce risk. These may include observation of independent filming, the inclusion of opportunities to debate or challenge the view being held.

2.4.7 In making recommendations, the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead/Person may consult on a wider basis with the senior team to assess the risk of the visit on the following criteria:

- The potential for any decision to limit freedom of speech.
- The potential for the event going ahead to cause reputation risk to the school.
- The potential for the speaker's presence on site to cause fear or alarm to Pupils or Team Members AND/OR to give rise to breach of peace.

2.4.8 The external speaker consent form (Appendix 1) should be completed and forwarded to the Headteacher/DSL /DSP no later than 14 days before the planned event. The completed form will be held by the DSL/DSP and logged on the central record.

2.4.9 The Team Member/s responsible for organising an event with an external speaker(s) must ensure that the correct signing-in procedures are followed, and that the speaker (s) are issued with visitor badges and escorted whilst at the school.

2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

2.5.1 The suitability of all visitors invited into school to work with the children will be assessed throughout the visit and a decision made as to whether they may be asked to visit the school in future.

3. Appendix 1 – External Speaker Consent Form

Team Member completing this form	
Role	
Setting/Campus	
Date form submitted	

Name of guest speaker	
Organisation	
Purpose of the visit and rationale for speaker	
Registered address	
Contact number	
Email address	

Event details & Checklist

Target audience	
Expected numbers and groups	
Have they visited the school before?	
Planned date of visit	
Planned location of visit	
Planned time of visit	
Expected arrival and departure time	
Is the event open to external visitors?	
Are there any concerns about the speaker's reputation? If yes give details	
Is there any risk associated to the topic or location? If yes give details	
Is there potential for the speaker to use language that may be unlawful? If yes give details	

SMT Completion

SMT member name	
SMT member role	
Date of review	

Decision

Decision	Tick
I have reviewed the information provided and am satisfied that the visit can go ahead	
I have reviewed the information provided and require further discussion or information form the visit organiser	
I have reviewed the information provided and recommend a risk assessment takes place prior to permission being given	
At this stage permission for the visit is refused	

Rationale for decision (if applicable)

Additional notes and comments following actions taken (if applicable)

SMT member name	
SMT member signature	
Date	