



Guidance on Visitors, including VIPs to Nottinghamshire Academies

1. Introduction

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that visitors to the site are effectively managed within the existing system of school control measures and risk assessments. Advice on keeping the school community safe and limiting the spread of the virus is available from [Health and Safety](#)

2. Guidance and Responsibilities

Policy statement and principles

Vision and Values of Stone Soup Academy

Stone Soup Academy is an alternative provision free school in the centre of Nottingham, serving students outside mainstream education in an environment that encourages their academic and personal development. We are committed to the education and welfare of our students, with the goal of preparing them for a successful future in our community. The foundation of our work is the ambition to create systems that equip young people who would otherwise be left behind. All too frequently, students who are deemed to be difficult or disruptive are faced with a future of unemployment or social disadvantage. The Academy holds at the heart of its work the ambition to create an environment that fully equips students for their personal and academic development. Our goal is to empower each individual student to achieve in practical, functional, and long-lasting ways. To access futures that when they joined us they did not seem possible to achieve.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- Provide a supportive environment that aids the learning and personal development of all students;
- Improve the behaviour and attitude of each student with both adults and their peers;
- Reinforce each student's self-esteem and integrity;
- Instil an understanding of fundamental British values for citizenship.

Vision Statement

'Creating Unimagined Futures'

We believe that every young person has the opportunity to succeed by being motivated and inspired, rather than contained. Our school aims to develop young

people into unique, responsible, receptive, discerning human beings with a sense of their own value. Our school is structured to nurture the social development of all the young people we work with, most of

whom experience significant disadvantages which compromise their ability to learn. We facilitate young people's learning, removing the barriers to their learning through a holistic, multi-agency approach and developing their ability to maintain good relationships with each other and with the members of staff, caring for and promoting the school and their community. We apply a multi agency approach involving external and internal support personalised to each child. Case studies of each child support our interventions and impact. Our vision for Stone Soup Learns Free School offers a broad and balanced curriculum delivered within a family environment using a pedagogic approach rooted in learning by doing, inspiring and motivating, where learning naturally involves exploration, curiosity, failing and learning from mistakes, and a host of associated affective responses. Our curriculum allows young people to develop their vocational skills, and be given the opportunity to work in real businesses, learning not just the skills associated with their vocational choices, but the long term life skills that are required for the workplace. It is our intention that all young people attending our free school will leave with the skills and motivation to become fully independent, contributing members of society.

Work experience is offered to all students and links with local businesses support our learners development in this area.

Core Values

- Respect: We believe that mutual respect allows us all the freedom to be open and honest and to support each other to success.
- Aspiration: To instill in all of our young people the belief that they can achieve, they can be successful that they can create unimagined futures for themselves.
- Positivity: To overcome these barriers to learning and to instil in our young people that it is not where you have been but where you are going to that is important

Ethos

The school will be underpinned by 7 key principles:

High expectations – Young people excluded from school generally have low expectations for themselves, and this has been reinforced by negative experiences at school. Our ethos is to inspire and raise these expectations, and channel this into high achievement

Respect – Good behaviour and high achievement starts with mutual respect. Our learners should be treated like young adults, and staff expect the same respect.

Respect leads to trusting relationships which in turn improve pupil behaviour and achievement, behaviour and attendance.

Individual Learning – No two young people are the same. Challenging behaviour often manifests itself when an assignment is pitched at the wrong level. High levels of

differentiation in teaching allow each young person to progress at a pace that is

suitable for them. Teaching is inspirational and enjoyable.

A different approach – Traditional school has not worked for many of these young people, so we approach their education differently. An integral part of learning is failure, learning how to recover, and evaluating what went wrong and how to do it differently. We believe in learning by doing, and supporting the students in developing skills in how to learn for themselves. Projects need to be real, and skills set into contexts showing why it is important that these skills are learnt.

Projects are often real and make use of the business links within the community. Currently these include, Art and photography projects through the Contemporary Art Gallery and Galleries of Justice. Music project with the Police, English, History and design project with the Castle Museum Trust, Performing Arts with Nottingham Forest Trust.

Flattened Hierarchy – The school is small so that all staff know all students. The school will have the feeling of a family, and this will be bolstered by high parental and community involvement. The school still remains small enough in number to provide a highly personalised approach to learning and support. We maintain good parental links via reporting, phone calls home and home visits and events developed with our school community in Mind.

Preparation for Independent Living – Our school will be preparation for life. Financial education, work skills and work experience will be core aspects of teaching. Progression to further learning and into employment will be a key principle of the school. Work experience is offered to each student and different ways to develop these opportunities are always being developed. Our success in this area is evidenced by the Gatsby benchmarks where we are 100% across every measure.

Personal Development – Our school aims to not only improve educational attainment, but to develop young people's life skills and to have an understanding of the world in which they

live. Challenging a young person's misconceptions of their immediate society is as important as basic skills achievement. This is an area that is very strong within the Academy and evidenced by the investment in staffing within the Engagement Team. Stone Soup Academy adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education and is updated to the Dfe guidance where appropriate. All staff are trained in all aspects of Safeguarding. The Academy has a Lead DSL which is the Principal and we have 7 and soon to be 8 specifically trained Deputy DSL.

Specific Safeguarding policies are available via the Stone Soup Academy website which is www.stonesoupacademy.org.uk

These include
Safeguarding
Whistleblowing

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023: The role of Academies and college staff informs; **All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which**

children can learn (KCSiE 2023 para 7).

The Principal and Chair of Governors are responsible for implementing this guidance and managing visitors to the school, which may include an assessment of the education value, the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and whether relevant checks will be required.

All staff are made aware of this guidance and that it applies to all visitors equally, including VIPs.

Types of visitor

There are several different types of legitimate visitors to a school:

- Visitors who attend the school in connection with children and who have a professional role i.e. social workers, educational psychologist, SEND officers, other support workers or health related professionals.
- Visitors who attend the school in connection with the building, grounds or equipment i.e. builders, contractors, maintenance staff or IT workers • VIPs – Very Important People
- Other legitimate visitors i.e. parents, parent helpers, school governors, referrers, PCSO & consultants

Visits should be planned to ensure they run smoothly taking into account the need to safeguard both children, the reputation of the school and the visitor. Where required, risk assessments should be undertaken. The Principal or senior leadership team should be aware of visits in advance.

3. Procedures for ALL visitors

Our Academy requires the following procedures to be

followed: • Wherever possible, visits to Academies should be

pre-arranged

- All visitors must report to reception first and not enter the school via any other entrance
- At reception, all visitors should explain the purpose of their visit and who has invited them, this should already be in the calendar.
- They should be ready to produce formal identification.
- *All visitors will be asked to sign the visitors' record book or equivalent such as an electronic recording system which may include a photograph of the visitor being taken.*
- If the visitor is part of a large group of visitors a separate register may be utilised
- A visitor's badge should be worn and displayed prominently.
- Visitors should wait in the reception area until they are met by an appropriate member of staff to be escorted to their destination.
- All visitors should be accompanied by a member of staff. Visitors should not be alone with students unless this is a legitimate part of their role for example a social worker seeing a child and the school has assured itself that the visitor has had the

appropriate DBS check (or the visitor's employers have confirmed that their staff have appropriate checks). The Academy also has CCTV and in some rooms this includes audio.

- If visitors find they are alone with students, they should report to a member of staff or reception. This should be explained to visitors.
- On departing the school, visitors should leave via reception, sign out of the building, return their visitor badge and be seen to leave the premises.
- School reception staff should check the signing in and out' records regularly to monitor compliance with these procedures.
- The Principal or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) along with the nominated Safeguarding Governor should also monitor compliance with the agreed specified visitor's policy procedures. Should any shortfalls be found these should be addressed as a matter of urgency, to ensure children and visitors to the school are kept safe.

4. Special categories of visitor

4.1 VIPs

A VIP is usually an external visitor of importance or influence who commands special treatment:

- Royalty and Royal Representatives
- Government (Members of Parliament, including government ministers and politicians)
- Diplomats and Senior Public Servants
- Chairpersons/ Chief Executives Officers of major companies and organisations • Senior Officers from Charitable Trusts
- Religious leaders
- Civic and local community leaders
- Notable academics, Olympians, Authors, high profile prize winners and those with celebrity status in particular areas such as sport, music, the arts, media including celebrities and who are likely to inspire others.

Important considerations for VIP visits

An invitation to a VIP should be made in advance with sufficient time to enable appropriate planning for a safe and successful visit recognising how the visit will be hosted and importantly who will be escorting and supervising the visitor at all times.

In general terms VIPs should be treated in a very similar way to any other visitor but a degree of common sense should prevail e.g. it is unlikely that the Queen or another senior member of the Royal Family would be expected to show, or wear ID. Members of their entourage though should be expected to follow normal procedures.

All VIPs and any entourage should be accompanied at all times by a member of

staff. **4.2 Nottinghamshire County Council staff**

Nottinghamshire County Council staff who visit Academies and who have

unsupervised contact with children will have had an appropriate DBS check conducted by their employing service. If the nature of their work requires it, the service will also have applied the requirements of the Childcare Disqualification regulations. In these circumstances the statutory guidance says:^{2 3}

Academies and colleges must obtain written notification from any agency, or third party organisation, that they have carried out the checks on an individual who will be working at the school or college that the school or college would otherwise perform. In respect of the enhanced DBS check, Academies and colleges must ensure that written notification confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business. Where the position requires a children's barred list check, this must be obtained by the agency or third party by obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information, prior to appointing the individual.'

This guidance can be regarded by as the 'written notification' required by the guidance.

Academies will, of course, need to see identification from visitors to confirm that they do indeed work for NCC. All Nottinghamshire County Council staff visiting Academies carry photo identification.

Nottinghamshire County Council provides written confirmation that all staff who visit school in a professional capacity have had the appropriate safer working checks completed by the council. The letter is available for Academies to download and retain with their Single Central Record (SCR).

4.3 Staff from other agencies

The same requirement as in 4.2 applies. If Academies, academies or colleges have 'written notification' from an agency that their staff have had all the appropriate pre employment checks that the school or college would otherwise be required to perform including a DBS 'Enhanced with barred list information' check, then it is not necessary for the visitor to produce individual evidence of these checks before being granted unsupervised contact with children.

4.4 Contractors

The statutory guidance says:⁴

Academies and colleges should ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school or college has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including barred list information) will be required. In considering whether the contact is regular, it is irrelevant whether the contractor works on a single site or across several sites.

Under no circumstances should a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity. Academies and colleges are responsible for determining the appropriate level of supervision

depending on the circumstances.

If an individual working at a school or college is self-employed, the school or college should consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

Academies and colleges should always check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school or college.

For building or maintenance contractors' Academies should establish a formal agreement regarding access to specific areas of the building. For many building projects physical separation – fencing off the work areas, will provide additional safeguards. Any DBS checks required should be completed before the contractor begins work in school.

4.5 Trainee teachers

The statutory guidance⁴ says:

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school or college, the school or college must ensure that all necessary checks are carried out. If these trainee teachers are engaging in regulated activity relating to children (which in most cases by the nature of the work, they will be), an enhanced DBS certificate (including children's barred list information) must be obtained.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks, Academies and colleges should obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that the school or college would otherwise be required to perform and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

There is no requirement for the school to record details of fee-funded trainees on the single central record.

As with other visitors who have been checked by an external organisation, the school should have 'written notification' that appropriate checks have been made and have been reviewed annually.

If tutors of trainee teachers do not have unsupervised contact with children, they will not require a DBS check. If they do have such contact, then it will be the responsibility of their institution to undertake the check and inform the school that appropriate checks have been made.

4.6 Governors

Governors should follow the same procedures as other visitors when coming into school. If they are to have unsupervised contact with children, they will require a barred list check in addition to the enhanced DBS check that is a requirement of

appointment for governors.

4.7 Parents and relatives

DfE KCSiE 2023 Part Three states: *Academies and colleges should not request DBS checks or barred list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day. Headteachers and principals should use their professional judgment about the need to escort or supervise such visitors.*

4.8 Ofsted

Ofsted need to confirm that all Ofsted staff who would visit a school have been through a DBS 'Enhanced with barred list information' check. They have also confirmed that all approved additional inspectors have also been through a DBS 'Enhanced with barred list information' check. Ofsted provide a list of all approved additional inspectors at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=additional+inspectors>

Academies can regard this note as constituting 'written notification' that Ofsted staff have been subject to relevant checks, as NCC holds the 'written notification' from Ofsted.

6. Raising awareness of visitor safety with children

Students should be reminded on a regular basis and especially prior to any VIP or celebrity visits that they should remain with a staff member and not wander off/ leave an area which is not supervised by a member of staff. They should also be reminded of any other relevant actions identified by a risk assessment relating to the visit.

7. Concerns related to a visitor

Students, staff, and parents should be made aware of who they should report concerns to or go to for help and advice if they have concerns about a visitor. This would normally be the Principal or another member of the school's senior leadership team, who should then report the concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. Further details can be found in Part Four Section One and Two of KCSiE 2023. Any issues regarding the suitability of visitors to the school should be noted by the designated person for safeguarding and promptly brought to the attention of the Principal. If the behaviour of a visitor causes safeguarding concerns the designated person for safeguarding should contact the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children in Education Officer (SCiEO) for advice and where the adult's behaviour has caused harm or risk to a child, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

8. Unknown, uninvited, or malicious visitors to the school

Any visitor to the school site who is not wearing an identity badge should be

challenged politely by staff and escorted to reception to sign the visitor's book and be issued with an identity badge. Failure to comply should result in them being asked to leave the site and the Principal or other senior person informed. In extreme circumstances or if the person refuses to leave, the police could be called.

Academies and colleges should use the advice and procedures described within:

- NCC and Police 'School Safe Alert Protocol', revised January 2019, can be found in the Safeguarding section of the Academies Portal and the NSCP website:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/1732518/school-safe-alert-guidance.pdf>

- Academies' Emergency Plans should include arrangements for responding to 'intruders' and 'lockdown arrangements' in the event of a 'malicious visitor.' Relevant guidance can be found at:

<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/Academies/information-for-Academies/school-emergency-planning/>

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Like all safeguarding policies Academies should monitor and evaluate its implementation and effectiveness on a regular basis.

10. Linked policies

This guidance should be read in conjunction with other related school policies:

- Child Protection Policy 2024/2025
 - [HR Safer Recruitment Guidance available on the school's portal](#)
 - School Employee Code of Conduct.
 - Healthy and Safety Policy
 - Whistle Blowing Policy
 - KCSiE 2023
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
 - [Coping with a School Emergency / School Emergency Plans](#)
Including all parts
KCSiE 2023 Part Four: Has two sections covering the two levels of allegation/concern: • Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
 - Academies
 - [Coping with a School Emergency / School Emergency Plans](#)
 - Access Policy