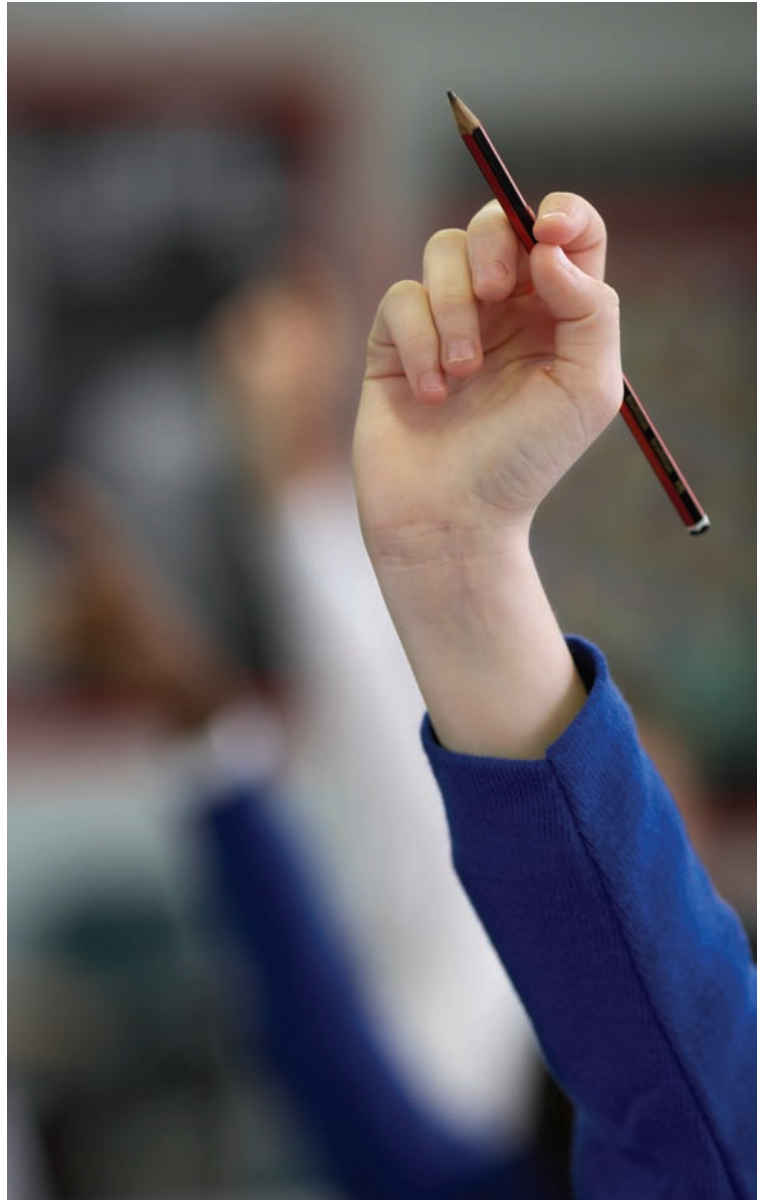


The involvement of visitors in schools



Introduction

Visitors in schools have a valuable role to play and can contribute to many parts of the whole curriculum. They can give pupils access to outside experience and expertise, and can provide a link with the wider community. They can also give pupils the opportunity to see the range of professionals they may meet outside the school.

Schools often welcome this support from a number of outside agencies including the local council, religious communities, health support agencies, emergency services, artists, sports coaches, volunteers, and voluntary organisations.

The involvement of visitors is most beneficial where:

- the school and the visitors are clear about their roles, school policies and the broader programme of which they are a part
- the teacher is clear about which learning outcomes are being met through the involvement of the visitors in the school
- the visitors should complement rather than replace the work of the teacher.

This booklet has been written by the Shropshire Schools for Health Partnership to encourage the effective involvement of visitors in all parts of school life.

Preparation by the teacher

To help ensure that the involvement of the visitor complements the work of the teacher and is effective and worthwhile for the pupils, it is important to prepare for the visit. The following guidelines aim to help teachers prepare in advance for visitors' involvement in school. A teacher may also have additional information that they would want to discuss with the visitor depending on the topic.

1. Identify which pupil learning outcomes are to be met or reinforced by the involvement of the visitor.
2. Ask about the experience and skills of the visitor, their way of working with pupils, any professional checks e.g. CRB and code of conduct that they may work within, any relevant qualifications and training they have had, or any organisations to which their agency is affiliated, and their reason for supporting the teaching of this age group.
3. Become clear about philosophy and aims of the visitor's organisation.
4. Seek approval from the Headteacher or appropriate senior manager before arranging with the visitor to come on the school site.
5. Agree with the visitor your roles and responsibilities during the session. Think about how working with the visitor might contribute to your own professional development.
6. Agree with the visitor and note the following, as appropriate:
 - the number of sessions
 - the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and plan of the session
 - the style of working with the pupils
 - any preliminary work that you will carry out with the pupils beforehand to prepare for the visitor session(s). Ensure that the visitor receives any feedback from this work that may be useful in helping them to plan their session(s). Questions for the visitor, prepared beforehand and agreed by the pupils, can be particularly useful
 - the intended teaching materials to be used, and have sight of these
 - how you will follow up the session(s)
 - visitors use of ICT should be in line with SITTS 'Schools' Information and ICT Security Policy'
 - any resources needed by the visitor, such as an overhead projector, flipchart paper, or felt pens etc
 - how the session(s) will be evaluated by the pupils, visitor, teacher/school.

7. Provide the visitor with the following information:
 - the number, ages, gender, ethnicity, and special needs of the pupils, and any other information about the pupils that is relevant and appropriate to the visitor
 - the size and layout of the room(s) available
 - the timing of the session(s) including any break-times
 - where the visitor's session(s) fits into the broader programme of work on which the pupils will be working, including the learning outcomes
 - the arrangements for the visitor to sign in and out at a reception point, collection of visitor pass and being accompanied to a class as appropriate.
8. In line with DCSF policy guidance it is strongly recommended that a teacher remains present during the visitor's involvement with the pupils. Any exceptions to this should be agreed with the Headteacher beforehand, as it is they who have the ultimate responsibility for the welfare of the pupils, for ensuring that the appropriate visitor/agency safeguarding checks have been carried out and for responding to parental concerns.
9. Discuss with the visitor the implications of relevant documents such as the school's mission statement and aims, school policies on Teaching and Learning, Drug Education, Confidentiality, Child Protection, Behaviour and anti-bullying. Any Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is required to be in line with the Governors' agreed RSE policy.
10. Adequate supervision needs to be maintained while the visitor is on site. Any problems encountered by visitors, pupils or teacher with regard to visitors' input, should be reported to the Headteacher so that the appropriate action can be taken.
11. Further guidance regarding visitors can be found in the Council's Health and Safety Guidance on the Shropshire Learning Gateway (www.shropshirelg.net) under: Services – Human Resources – Health and Safety – Health and Safety Policy – Visitors.
12. Keep a record of visitors for administrative purposes and Health and Safety. This can often be maintained by reception. A typical record may include the following:
 - name of the visitor, name and address of their employer/organisation and contact point in case of emergency, letter to confirm appropriate safeguarding checks have been made by the agency
 - details of visitor's vehicle parked on site
 - date and time of arrival and departure
 - person or area to be visited, class(es) to be visited and identity of person responsible for the visitor
 - confirmation that relevant emergency procedures have been explained
 - details of visitor's additional needs, eg children or visitors with disabilities.

Prior to a visit, it is recommended as good practice to provide the visitor with a guidance sheet or leaflet, supported by the back page of this document.

Guidance for Visitors to the School

It is important for the smooth running of a session that some preparation is carried out before the visit. The following statements are intended to help you, as a visitor, to prepare in advance for your time in the school. Remember that you may want to find out additional information.

Initial preparation

1. Provide school with general letter from manager to confirm safeguarding checks in relation to you/your colleagues as appropriate have been made. Provide school with evidence of your identity .
2. Find out which teacher will be with you during the sessions. In line with DCSF guidance it is strongly recommended that a teacher is present at all times, and that any exceptions to this should be agreed with the Headteacher in advance. The Headteacher has legal responsibility for the welfare of the pupils, for ensuring that the safeguarding checks have been carried out as appropriate and for following up parental concerns.
3. Find out how you can access documents including the school's mission statement and aims, relevant school policies, for example Relationships and Sex Education, Drug Education, Behaviour. Your input will need to be in line with the school's most recent written policy, which has been agreed by the Governing Body.
4. Familiarise yourself with the school's policy on confidentiality and classroom disclosures. Share with the school your own agency's procedures on child protection and code of conduct. Consider how these will influence your approach to sensitive issues which will ensure the protection of vulnerable individuals. When your visit entails teaching or working with a class, your practice needs to be in line with the school's policy, including that for child protection, health and safety etc.

Preparation for working with teacher(s) and pupil(s)

5. Be clear about who your session(s) will be for. Find out any information appropriate to your session(s) such as the numbers of pupils, the ages, special needs, gender balance, literacy levels and pupils for whom English is an additional language.
6. Agree with the teacher:
 - the aims
 - learning outcomes
 - plan of your session(s)
 - teaching materials
 - objectives
 - style of working with pupils
7. Agree what the roles and responsibilities will be of you and the teacher during the session(s).
8. Ask how pupils will be prepared for your session(s), and how will your session(s) be followed up in future lessons once your contribution has finished. Ask how session(s) will be evaluated, for example:
 - questionnaire
 - verbal feedback
 - de-brief after the session with the teacher
 - and by whom (pupils, teacher and/or visitor)?
9. Decide what resources and equipment you will need, and what will be available to you at the school.
10. Agree with the teacher how the pupils will address you during the session(s).

Finally

11. Ask about the practical arrangements such as the car parking availability, where you will be met in the school, whether you need a map of the school site, timing and length of the session(s), the venue, times of breaks, size and layout of the room, emergency procedures.

Review date: 2010

Permission is given to schools to copy and distribute this section to visitors.

If you can read this but know someone who can't, please contact us on
01743 254443 so we can provide this information in a more suitable format.