

**Euston Street P.S.**

**& Nursery Unit**

**Access to Staff & Volunteers Policy**

**Commitment to keeping policies live**

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| **Date the plan came into effect** | November 2022 |
| **Who is responsible for this document** | Board of Governors, SLT |
| **Issued to** | Board, staff, parents |
| **Other related policies** | Visitors Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, Staff Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct |
| **Reviewed** | December 2022 |

**EUSTON STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Access to Staff and Volunteers Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy reflects the school mission, vision and values.

**Mission**

**‘Achieving Excellence Together’**

*‘To work together for excellence in: our learning; our school; our community; and our future’.*

Our purpose therefore is to be an excellent school. We continually strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this aim we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our School Development Plan.

**Vision**

In order to achieve excellence in each aspect of school life, our vision is:

*'To create a safe, happy learning community. A community where together, we inspire and equip our pupils so that they fulfil their potential, use their talents and follow their dreams now and always.’*

**Values**

We believe that our school is a place where the child is at the centre.

*‘We value kindness, integrity, hard work and mutual respect.'*

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil’s education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

**Introduction**

The purpose of this policy, as with all of our policies, is to support us as we strive for excellence in every area of school life. To achieve this, we must always have the right school **vision and values** and these must be at the heart of all that we do, including our engagement with parents and guardians.

This policy outlines the procedures that must be followed when dealing with an issue pertaining to parents, carers, outside bodies or individuals accessing staff and volunteers of Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit.

This policy operates in tangent with but not only, the Staff Code of Conduct, Staff Wellbeing, Visitor Policy and Pastoral Care Policies.

This policy has been developed following training by the Education Authority and in consultation with staff, parents and Governors.

**This policy aims to:**

* Define access to staff and volunteers in school;
* Identify the school procedures for accessing staff in school
* Identify the school procedures for acceptable conduct;
* Identify the school procedures for dealing with misconduct from visitors to school in relation to access to staff;

**Access to staff and volunteers in school**

The Board of Governors, principal and staff would like to acknowledge that in Euston Street Primary School & Nursery Unit we are fortunate to have parents and carers who are respectful, interested and keen to support the school in many different ways. We thank parents and carers for their co-operation and help and look forward to the continued strengthening of our home/school partnerships.

In recognising that the education of our children is a partnership between the home and school, the Board of Governors, the principal and the staff seek to allow parents and carers access to their child’s teacher and the principal at all reasonable times. Pupils have much to gain from the shared interest of parents and guardians with teachers. Each has an in-depth knowledge of the child in different contexts. The sharing of this information in a positive way can help the pupil to feel valued and to achieve his/her full potential. It is important that pupils feel secure within the working relationship between home and school.

As parental attitudes to school and the teacher/school staff directly influence the child, it is important that all exchanges between school and home are based on assumed respect for the other’s knowledge of, and concern for, the child’s welfare.

**Volunteers and outside agencies working in school**

We are fortunate to have several willing volunteers and other organisations who help out at times or work in school to support the learning of the children and the school community. This policy is fully applicable to any volunteers or other professionals working in school who are fulfilling responsibilities with the permission of and on behalf of the school.

**Access to staff procedures**

The principal, as the day-to-day manager of the school, will seek to ensure that all contact between staff and other visitors including parents and carers, is conducted in a manner that will promote the pastoral, educational and professional interests of everyone involved. It is understood that whilst important, informal short interactions at school doors for messages about lost coats or lunches etc. is not considered to impact pupil learning or staff time.

All contact should take place at a **reasonable time** and for a **reasonable duration**. A reasonable duration is less than 5 minutes unless it is a formal meeting such as parent teacher meetings held in October and February each year.

Reasonable times will be:

* Before school starts at 8:45 a.m. and not continue after this time as the staff will be trying to welcome, settle and then teach pupils;
* After 3 p.m. when pupils have left school but not interrupting an afterschool activity or staff meeting;
* As arranged by mutual consent through **phone call, letters, emails or through Seesaw;**
* Parent teacher consultations in October and or February or as arranged;
* At school events but not interrupting another staff responsibility or the welfare or safety of the pupils.

If a parent is requesting a meeting at any other time this should be done via an appointment arranged through the school office or through mutual consent with the staff member.

**Entering school**

Parents are asked to report to reception upon entering school and before visiting any classroom. For school safeguarding reasons, parents, carers and or family members are requested not to come into school via any door unless previously arranged with the staff members. This will enable us to comply with safeguarding as well as health and safety requirements by ensuring that the office is aware of who is on site should there be a need to evacuate the building; it will also ensure that the teacher is available to meet at that time.

It is important that any queries relating to a pupil are directed to the class teachers in the first instance, as they are best placed to address any concern, query or issue. Classroom Assistants are often not aware of all the details and factors pertaining to a pupil or a situation, and misunderstandings and confusion can arise because of parents only receiving partial information.

**Conduct**

The means of expressing this working relationship are diverse but parents and guardians will appreciate that some guidelines are necessary as each teacher has responsibility for a large group of children and school is a busy environment.

Whilst the school operate an Open Door policy, all parents and carers are expected to recognise that staff are:

* Not available during teaching and learning time 8:45 a.m. - 3 p.m. as this may have impact on the pupils learning and wellbeing;
* Not available during meetings and after school activities on various days during the week as this can have impact on staff development or pupil development;
* Not available without some understanding of the reason for a meeting;

Contact between parents/guardians and teachers are encouraged and will include:

* Casual or informal exchanges of information made for routine housekeeping purposes e.g. dental appointments, illness, lost property, etc. Many of these can be communicated electronically via the school app or email or at drop off/pick up and do not require the parent to speak directly to a member of staff or arrange a meeting (There are also First Day Absence and Request to leave early forms available from the school office);
* meetings to discuss the pupil’s academic progress or wellbeing; and
* more sensitive, wider issues that are causing concern to either party;
* Concerns or complaints.

In such circumstances an appointment may be made and the issues clarified in advance to enable the parent/guardian and the teacher to make appropriate preparation.

It is essential that any conversations between school and parents/carers are carried out in a manner which is **polite, courteous** and **mutually respectful.** Staff conduct will remain courteous, respectful and professional at all times.

Children often take the behaviour and speech of adults as an example and parents are requested to be aware of speaking negatively about the school or a particular teacher in a negative manner as this can have longer, damaging consequences to the pupil’s general and developing concept and attitude towards school, teachers and authority.

We would ask that any discussions that may occur at home on issues causing concern do not happen in the presence of the child.

**Misconduct**

If parents demand an unreasonable level of contact with staff this may impact on: pupil learning; pupil wellbeing; staff wellbeing and or; their ability to carry out their professional teaching duties. In this circumstance, parents will be written to, first by the school Principal and then possibly by the Board of Governors, to request that all future meetings are scheduled through a mutually agreed appointment.

If this schedule is not followed, it may be necessary to for the school to assert that the parent meet only with the school Principal at a mutually agreed time.

Any treatment of school staff in an abusive manner (either verbal, physical or written including electronic communication) will not be tolerated. On the advice of the Education Authority – Belfast Region, the school has put in place arrangements for addressing the most serious situations where the approach of a parent/guardian might amount to harassment or intimidation of staff in the workplace. In a first instance the Board of Governors will write to the parents requesting a meeting to try and resolve the matter. Failing a resolution in this instance, there is a legal option for school to revoke permission for parents/relatives or other adults to enter the school grounds if their behaviour is deemed to be offensive, aggressive, threatening, abusive (verbal or physical) or intimidating.

There are also mechanisms in place for parents to avail of, should they believe that they have received such treatment from school staff.

Thankfully such situations are very rare in the school system and, we believe, are extremely unlikely to occur in the context of this school.

Euston Street Primary School

Euston Street Belfast BT6 9AG

Tel: 02890457089

Email: info@eustonstreet.belfast.ni.sch.uk

Principal: Mr John Armstrong B.Ed. (Hons) M.Ed.(Dist) PQH

Vice-Principal: Mr Fulton B.Ed. (Hons) PQH

APPENDIX 3

Date:

Dear

With reference to your recent access to staff in school, your behaviour has not reflected the school’s expectations of appropriate interaction between parents and teachers as outlined in the school’s Access to Staff and Volunteers Policy. Unfortunately, we have been unable to resolve this matter as hoped.

In light of these circumstances, I now give you notice of the intention to revoke your licence to enter school premises.

In future you should not come onto the school premises without an appointment arranged through me. If granted permission to enter school, you should refrain from any behaviour that might be considered by the staff as inappropriate or offensive. Should you fail to comply with the above I will liaise with the Education Authority to seek an injunction excluding you from coming within the school gates.

You have the right to comment on this letter and the school’s intention to revoke your licence.

Any response should be in writing within 2 weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Armstrong Principal



Mr. Young Chairperson



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Euston Street Belfast BT6 9AG

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Principal: Mr John Armstrong B.Ed. (Hons) M.Ed.(Dist) PQH

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APPENDIX 1

Date:

Dear

Thank you for contacting school with your concerns.

However, you have been demanding meetings with the school staff on too regular a basis. This is now believed to be impacting on staff ability to complete their workload requirements as outlined in the school’s Access to Staff and Volunteers Policy.

Considering these circumstances, I now request that you please make appointments through the school office if you wish to access school staff.

If you continue to demand meetings that have not been agreed by mutual consent it may be necessary to only permit meetings with the school principal through appointment. It is hoped that this would not be necessary.

Should this demand then continue still, the school may be required to revoke your licence to enter school premises. Again, it is hoped that this would not be necessary.

You have the right to comment on this letter with the school principal.

Any response should be through an appointment or in writing within 2 weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Armstrong Principal



Mr. Young Chairperson



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APPENDIX 2

Date:

Dear

With reference to your recent access to staff in school, the school believe that your conduct was unacceptable, and the Chairperson of the Board would now request a meeting with you to try and resolve the matter. Your behaviour has not reflected the school’s expectations of appropriate interaction between parents and teachers as outlined in the school’s Access to Staff and Volunteers Policy.

Should the matter not be resolved, or you do not attend the meeting when requested, the school now give notice of the intention to revoke your licence to enter school premises.

In future you should not come onto the school premises without an appointment arranged through me. If granted permission to enter school, you should refrain from any behaviour that might be considered by the staff as inappropriate or offensive. Should you fail to comply with the above I will liaise with the Education Authority to seek an injunction excluding you from coming within the school gates.

You have the right to comment on this letter and the school’s intention to revoke your licence.

Any response should be in writing within 2 weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Armstrong Principal



Mr. Young Chairperson

