

# Hipsburn Primary School

## Communication Policy and Procedures

September 2026



*Our aim is to ensure that every pupil regardless of background or starting point has access to a high-quality inclusive education that supports success and wellbeing*

## Introduction

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action co-ordinated - good communication promotes partnership and is integral to successful collaborative working. Communication includes not only the message, but also how that message is communicated.

## Key Objectives

All communications at Hipsburn should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents/carers, and stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, courteous, ethical and professional.
- Strive to be jargon free and easily understood by all.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time where applicable.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with our core values and School Improvement Plan.

## GENERAL COMMUNICATION

All staff employed by the school or contracted to work at the school are expected to abide by Northumberland County Council Employee Code of Conduct and Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings. Both documents are drawn to the attention of all staff at induction and are available from the Headteacher.

We aim to respond to any queries as soon as possible and within three working days; part-time staff may take longer to reply.

Where appropriate the response can be a two-stage process: (i) acknowledge receipt of the communication and indicate a likely timescale for response; (ii) an appropriate full reply within the indicated timescale and if required, setting out either conclusion of the matter or next steps.

Any sharing of information must be fully compliant with General Data Protection Regulations.

### Letters:

All letters should be on the most up to date school headed paper. Formal letters, e.g. those for communication with outside agencies should be written in Comic Sans size 12 font. Letters must be approved by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher before posting. Copies of letters must be held in the school office for reference.

Our written communication should be as accessible and inclusive as possible, therefore staff will make alternative arrangements as appropriate when requested (e.g. larger font for known visually impaired).

Communication must always be professional in nature and with a standard school letter 'signature':

|                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Name / Second Name<br>Leadership Role if applicable<br>Year X Teacher & X Subject Co-ordinator |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

E-mail:

The school gives all staff their own email account (@hipsburn.northumberland.sch.uk) to use for all school business. E-mail can be an efficient way of communicating and passing on information; however, it should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face contact and in each situation staff must consider whether it is the best way to communicate.

Emails can seem a more informal means of communication, but they are not, they are permanent records of any communication in just the same way as a letter and are subject to GDPR. Each comment made by email should be considered with the caution and foresight that would be used in a formal setting.

Staff should ensure that:

- Under no circumstances they engage in private /personal correspondence with a pupil; this includes texting and social networking.
- Under no circumstances they contact pupils or parents/carers using personal email accounts or text messaging.
- Under no circumstances they conduct any school business using personal email accounts or text messaging.
- Under no circumstances they conduct any private business using school email accounts, for example requests for personal sponsorship
- Consider carefully whether typing text in upper case is necessary - it is considered as the email equivalent of SHOUTING and should therefore be rarely, if ever, used.
- Ensure that communication is always of a professional nature, appropriately worded and respectful, and always signed off with a standard school email 'signature':
- 

|                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Name / Second Name<br>Leadership Role if applicable<br>Year X Teacher & X Subject Leader |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Hipsburn Primary School  
Lesbury  
Alnwick  
NE66 3PX

Tel: 01665 830210

**CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE:**

*The contents of this email and any attachments are intended solely for the addressee(s) and may contain confidential and/or privileged information and may be legally protected from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient of this message or their agent, or if this message has been addressed to you in error, please immediately alert the sender by replying to this email and then delete this message and any attachments from your inbox and deleted items folder. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, copying, or storage of this message or its attachments is strictly prohibited. Any views expressed by an individual within this email which do not constitute or record professional advice relating to the business of Hipsburn Primary School, do not necessarily reflect the views of the school.*

Each email message must have a descriptive heading to make it clear what the email is about and be clear about whether a response or action is required and the expected timescales for that response or action where appropriate.

After composing an email message, staff should check the content and consider the reaction it is likely to get before sending it. The speed at which email can be transmitted can pose its own problems – sometimes messages are sent without the thought and consideration afforded to a letter. Hasty messages, sent without proper consideration, and proof reading can cause unnecessary misunderstandings.

Staff are not in a position to be able to check emails during lesson times or break times and the school does not expect staff to send or check emails between 6:30p.m. and 6:30a.m. on weekdays, weekends or school holidays. Staff should therefore refrain from engaging in email messaging outside of the working day except in exceptional and justifiable circumstances. Staff should think about the impact on colleagues of sending messages outside of the core hours when the school building is open, and use the 'draft' function to compile an email and then send the message during working hours if necessary.

**Telephone calls:**

Telephone contacts to the office will be recorded on a messages pad and handed to the appropriate member of staff. Office staff will request the reason for the contact to help staff to be fully prepared.

If staff need to make a school business call, they should use the telephone in the school office or staff room. Staff should not make school business calls from their personal mobile phone, or give their personal mobile phone number as a school contact number.

Staff's use of mobile phones during their working school day should be during their breaks and in an appropriate place, which is not in the presence of pupils e.g. the staffroom. If staff are expecting an urgent phone call during the school day (e.g. due to illness of a family member), they should notify the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher so that appropriate measures can be agreed.

## Social Media Sites/Blogs:

We use the Hipsburn Website and Facebook to communicate pupils' achievements, subject information and generic educational information.

It is expected that staff will follow the principles within the school's Social Networking Policy (whether engaged in public or private spaces on such sites):

- If intending to use social networking sites for an activity on behalf of school, staff should ensure they have received approval from the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher prior to undertaking such activities.
- Communication between adults and pupils by whatever method should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Any digression must be reported to the Headteacher.
- All staff should review the social networking sites they participate in when joining the school, ensuring information available publicly about them is accurate and not inappropriate (e.g. photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school). Staff should be aware of the effect their actions may have on their image, as well as that of the school. Information that staff publish/post may be in the public domain for many years.
- Confidentiality needs to be considered at all times through ensuring staff do not release any confidential information about themselves, the school, its employees, pupils, partners, or other stakeholders within the community.
- Assigning any pupil as a 'friend' on their social networking page, or any former pupil up to the age of 18 is prohibited. Caution should be taken regarding becoming assigned as a 'friend' with children of school age at another setting or ex-students, especially where siblings continue to attend the school. Where there are legitimate family links with a pupil/ex pupil, staff should inform the Headteacher in writing so that a record of this information can be held on file.
- Staff who comment upon policies relating to school should highlight their connection to the school, making it clear that comments are their own personal views/opinions and not representative of those of the school, unless such comment has received prior written approval by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- When using social media sites and not engaged in school business, staff should refrain from using work-based e-mail contact address (such as @northumberland.gov.uk or @hipsburn.primary.northumberland.sch.uk) or the school logo unless prior written approval has been granted by a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.
- When commenting, uploading or posting links within social networking sites, remarks must never be derogatory, offensive, reflect negatively on your professionalism or that of colleagues or have

the potential to bring the school into disrepute. If staff become aware of such remarks made by others on social media platforms, they should refer these immediately to the Headteacher.

- There may be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and staff, e.g. where the parent/carer and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts should be made known to the Headteacher where there may be implications for the adult and their position within the school setting.
- All staff have a responsibility to report any unsuitable material of a safeguarding nature, relating to staff activities both on public and private spaces within a social networking site, to the Headteacher, who will determine the appropriate action inclusive of reporting to external agencies.

Breaches of the school's Social Networking Policy by staff could amount to misconduct or gross misconduct. Any member of staff who feels that a breach has occurred should inform the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher straight away.

## COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS & CARERS

Effective communications enable us to share our school values as well as keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents/carers play in supporting the school and their children. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents/carers, it is essential that relationships are professional. Staff will respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity, however, staff have responsibilities that extend beyond the classroom, and therefore they may be unable to respond on the day a query is made. Staff are not expected to respond to queries during their own personal / family time. If parents ask staff a question, for which there is not a straightforward, obvious answer, staff should provide a holding response to the effect that they will need to check and will get back to the parent as soon as possible – it is always better to give a holding response than to give an incorrect response or a response that may not be consistent with school policy.

### Letters:

Letters must be approved by the Headteacher before posting. Copies of class letters must be given to the school office for reference in order for them to be able to respond to any queries. Letters about individual pupils must be placed on individual pupil files.

Letters inviting parents/carers to attend school events should give at least two weeks' notice. Class teachers are responsible for preparing letters about class based activities, e.g. class trips or workshops. Office staff are responsible for sending emails.

At Hipsburn we use a white box for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children to ensure that they go home on the intended day, regardless of which member of staff is dismissing the children at the end of the day. This box is sent to the office each morning with

messages and monies from parents and carers. It contains a message book in which the teacher and/or the office staff can write any messages relating to pick-up at home time.

#### E-Mail:

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information; however, it should not replace face to face meetings or conversations. If a parent/carers communicates with the school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, it must be forwarded to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

All e-mails should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for spelling/technical errors and tone. Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents/carers using personal email addresses.

We aim to respond as soon as possible and within three working days. Part-time staff may take longer to reply.

#### Telephone calls:

Office staff will make a note of telephone messages and relay them to staff - learning will not be interrupted for staff to take or make calls. Office staff will request the reason for the call.

If a call is urgent, the message will be handed directly to the most appropriate member of staff. If the call / message is not urgent, a note will be placed in the relevant staff drawer in the staffroom (or a message will be emailed to staff).

We aim to respond to non urgent calls within three working days. Part-time staff may take longer to reply.

#### Tapestry:

Tapestry is used at Hipsburn Primary School for the following purpose:

- To give parents/carers regular updates about what their child is learning and doing in EYFS, therefore bringing them further into the life of the school.
- To support and encourage parents/carers to discuss their child's learning with them at home, therefore extending learning opportunities for children.
- To compile a record of progress in learning that teachers and children can use to reflect on what has been achieved and what next steps might be appropriate.

Class teachers have a secure log-in to Tapestry using their school email address and not their personal email address. This means any Tapestry notifications are sent to the iPad rather than the teacher's email address. Tapestry updates by teachers will only be sent during the school working day. All iPads must be left at school, ensuring no communication outside of school with parents and carers. If any member of staff receives a message on Tapestry that they do not think is appropriate they must not reply. This must be passed on to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in the first instance. When posting or commenting on Tapestry, staff must

remember they are the voice of the school and therefore if they are not sure what to post, they should not post anything before consulting with the headteacher. Any posts from parents need to be approved, however any comments not directly affecting a child's learning will not be responded to and instead passed on to the headteacher for action. The Headteacher will monitor postings and conversations on Tapestry half termly to ensure this policy is followed.

## Meetings:

We encourage parents/carers to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or wellbeing. In the first instance, parents/carers should contact their child's class teacher. If a parent/carer contacts school asking to speak to or meet with a member of staff, office staff will request the reason to help staff to be fully prepared. For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

### Routine meetings:

- prior to residential trips to inform parents/carers of planning, content and arrangements
- new Reception pupils to inform parents/carers about the Reception year at Hipsburn
- pupil progress consultations in the Autumn and Spring terms
- prior to statutory tests to inform parents/carers of arrangements
- SEN reviews with the SENCo

## Progress Reports:

At the end of each school year, a written report is sent to parents/carers about:

- achievements
- general progress
- attendance record

At KS2, it must also include:

- the results of any national curriculum tests taken, including the pupil's scaled score, and whether or not they met the expected standard
- teacher assessments in English writing and science
- where appropriate, a statement explaining why any national curriculum test has not been taken
- comparative information about the attainment of pupils of the same age in the school
- comparative information about the attainment in the core subjects of pupils of the same age nationally
- arrangements for discussing the report with the pupil's teacher

In addition, parents/carers have the opportunity to receive a Progress report in Autumn and Spring stating progress, attainment and attendance. When children have particular educational needs parents/carers will be invited to meet with staff more regularly. We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent/carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication.

#### School Website:

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. It also provides guidance on admissions for prospective pupils, statutory school policies and copies of newsletters and information guides. Each class has a page which details information about the topic they are learning, spellings and special events.

We will endeavour to ensure that key dates for the year are included on the website calendar and that class pages are updated termly. It is the responsibility of individual teachers to make sure that key dates and information relevant to their class or subject are provided to the Office Manager for inclusion on the school website and that any information is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

#### Home-school Communication:

In the first week of each half term, each class teacher will post a curriculum overview, for the topic that will be covered that half term, onto the school website. It will also be displayed in the class window.

All pupils are issued with a reading record that should be sent home every day, with the expectation that it will be returned to school every day after the child has read at home and the record has been signed and dated.

The school publishes a weekly newsletter with all relevant news and links. This is shared with all parents, carers, staff and governors. Staff are encouraged to contribute appropriate items to the newsletter, which should be e-mailed to the Office on an as and when basis.

#### INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN HIPSBURN

(developed in line with the DfE Managing Workload Toolkit)

## Staff Briefings:

Staff Briefings take place at 8:30 a.m. on Mondays, at which information and the week's events are shared with staff. A senior teacher minutes the Briefing, which are available in the Staffroom for staff who do not work on Mondays.

## Meetings:

There is an integrated programme of meetings, focused on developmental and administrative matters. Time is set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans - see Meetings Schedule in the staffroom (Appendix B)

## E-mail:

E-mail can be an efficient way of communicating with colleagues and passing on information; however, it should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face contact and staff must consider whether it is the best way to communicate in each situation.

Emails can seem a more informal means of communication, but they are permanent records of any communication. Each comment made to colleagues by email should be considered with the caution and foresight that would be used in a formal setting.

## Staff should ensure that:

- they refrain from sending emails between 6:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. on weekdays, at weekends or in school holidays, unless there is an urgent reason to do so. It is possible to set time delays on emails, so that an email can be written at a time most convenient for the sender, but not sent/delivered until 6:30 a.m. on a school day.
- obtain permission from the Headteacher before sending any standard group emails. It is important that the extent of circulation is considered and monitored, in order not to overburden staff with emails that are not directly relevant to them, especially staff who do not work full time. Please note that part time staff are not required to read or respond to emails on days that they are not working.

## COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS & OUTSIDE AGENCIES

### Joiners and Leavers:

We contact previous/future schools to discuss key information to aid transition.

### Visits from External Agencies:

See Working with Visitors and Outside Agencies (Appendix C)

### Safeguarding, including Child Protection:

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe, secure environment. We are in a unique position to identify and help our children. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these must be passed on to a Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with the Social Care team.

## COMMUNICATION POLICY & PROCEDURES MONITORING & REVIEW:

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed annually. Reviews will take into consideration all appropriate legislation and guidance for schools.

### Appendix A:

#### STAFF BEHAVIOUR POLICY / CODE OF CONDUCT

The statutory document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' states that schools must have a staff behaviour policy (sometimes called the staff code of conduct). The general expected behaviour of staff is outlined in the Council's Code of Conduct. In addition, the Social Networking Policy Guidance also applies, particularly where it may be possible to identify an individual as an employee of the County Council.

All staff should be made aware of the code of conduct and have it explained to them during induction.

The Safer Recruitment Consortium has published 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education'. This is non statutory, but covers all the required aspects of a staff behaviour policy.

At Hipsburn, all staff employed by the school or contracted to work at the school are expected to abide by the 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education'. This document serves as our staff behaviour policy / code of conduct. It is drawn to the attention of all staff at induction.

## UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES OF THE SAFER WORKING PRACTICE GUIDELINES

(developed in line with the DfE Managing Workload Toolkit)

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from a member of the senior management team, if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to care for children
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from teaching by the Teaching Regulation Agency
- Staff and school leaders should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this guidance is followed
- Staff should be aware of and understand the school's child protection policy, arrangements for managing allegations against staff, staff behaviour policy, whistle blowing procedure and the procedures of the relevant Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP).

The guidance for safer working practice applies to all adults working in Education and Early Years whatever their position, role or responsibilities.

## Appendix B:

### Hipsburn Primary School Meetings Schedule 2025/26

| Meeting:                              | Attended by:                                        | Time:                                                                 | Notes:                                                            |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General Business/<br>Briefing / Diary | All Staff                                           | Mondays 8.30 - 8.40 a.m.                                              | JJ to record points discussed in 'Briefings Book'                 |
| Staff Training *                      | Teachers and teaching assistants (when appropriate) | Wednesdays 3.30 - 4.30 p.m.<br>Termly overview displayed in staffroom | Person leading training to record and action any necessary points |
| HT/Chair of Gobs Briefings            | Allison Wort, Claire Vass & KM                      | Approximately fortnightly weekly at mutually convenient time          | AW to record and action any necessary points                      |
| Pupil Involvement                     | KS & School Council.<br>EC & Sports Committee.      | Termly during designated time                                         |                                                                   |
| EYFS                                  | EYFS Team                                           | Approximately fortnightly at mutually convenient time                 | JJ to record and action any necessary points                      |
| Finance Review                        | KM, AS, AW, CV & finance officer (LA)               | Twice yearly                                                          | AS to record and action any necessary points                      |
| Catering Review                       | KM, AS                                              | Termly at mutually convenient time                                    | AS to record and action any necessary points                      |
| Performance Management                | All staff with line managers or reviewers           | Termly meetings / opportunities for professional discussion           | Objectives & Review Outcomes formally recorded                    |
| School Governing Board                | All school governors                                | Half termly Governing Board meeting plus subcommittee meetings        | WB clerk to take and circulate formal minutes.                    |

\* A staff training plan will be distributed to staff at the beginning of each term. Staff training meetings take place on Wednesdays for approximately one hour unless otherwise agreed. This is to ensure that part-time staff have equal access to staff training. Content is related to priority areas within the School Improvement Plan (SIP), Performance Management, Quality Assurance and/or Health & Safety. Dunstanburgh class will be used for staff meetings unless the person leading the staff training confirms a different venue. The member of staff leading the training will provide staff with an agenda, any relevant notes and confirm the venue and time. They are also responsible for ensuring that any necessary points are recorded and actioned.

## Appendix C:

### EDUCATIONAL & OFF-SITE VISITS

We follow Northumberland Council Off-Site Visit guidance. Nigel Chopping is the Health and Safety Adviser for Educational/Offsite Visits, Corporate Health and Safety Team for Northumberland.

The Headteacher, as school Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) must approve all visits, or in their absence, The Deputy Headteacher. There is a clearly defined approval process for all off-site educational visits. All visits involving adventurous activities, visits to hazardous environments, trips abroad or residential visits must be approved by Northumberland County Council as part of the planning process. Notification of such visits must follow agreed timescales so that there is sufficient time to respond and changes to be made, if necessary. Effective risk assessments must be undertaken for each visit and supplemented with 'on-going' risk assessments during visits/activities. Generic risk assessments have been prepared for a wide range of activities and should be used when planning off-site visits.

### EDUCATIONAL & OFF-SITE VISITS POLICY

The Headteacher, Mr Kevin Moloney, is the named Educational Visits Co-ordinator. All staff should be familiar with Northumberland County Council and DfE guidance with regard off-site educational visits. By using Evolve risk assessments which are approved by Nigel Chopping we are accountable to the County.

Staffing ratio suggestion: under 8's one member of staff to 6 children, over 8's need one member of staff to 10-15 children.

'Pupil to staff ratios for school trips are not prescribed in law. Those planning trips, on the basis of risk assessment, should decide the ratios, taking into account the activity to be undertaken and the age and maturity of the pupils.' Health and Safety Executive

'Staffing ratios must reflect the needs of the group of children/young people and not simply the visit or activity. It is important to evaluate the composition of any group and give careful consideration to the needs of the individuals within that group. Only then can a realistic estimate be made of the requirements for staffing, staff expertise and resources to enable the objectives to be achieved.' Evolve Guidelines

A First Aid kit must be taken on all off site visits. This includes walks around the local area and swimming. The First Aider must also have a completed Parental Consent Form for each child.

- 1) Before confirming any school visits and informing pupils or parents/carers:
  - Consult the EVC about cost implications and staffing ratios;
  - Consult the Google Calendar about the suitability of the date and cover implications;
  - Complete your trip risk assessment on Evolve.
  - The EVC will then clarify any issues.

- 2) Discuss the Evolve and any related risk assessments with the EVC as soon as booking is confirmed, or at least 2 weeks before the visit. If the paperwork is not in place, or the EVC is not satisfied with the details, the visit will not be allowed to go ahead. If the EVC is satisfied, the Evolve form will be completed as permission for the trip to go ahead.
- 3) If you are using an external outdoor activities provider or tour operator, they must complete an Evolve form stating this prior to the visit as part of your risk assessment.
- 4) Inform the school office as soon as possible (but at least 2 weeks before the trip) if the visit will run over lunchtime and if packed lunches are required.
- 5) Letters to parents/carers should give full details of the visit (depart and return times, clothing, food, pocket money etc.). They should also include any additional Consent Forms and request packed lunches using the Google form sent with the letter.
- 6) All completed paperwork, (Evolve, letter to parents/itinerary, risk assessments and copies of all consent forms) must be given to the EVC before you leave school. The EVC must also be provided with the names of children who are going, the names of all adults going, all contact details and where any children not attending the trip will be based.
- 7) Ensure that all adults have a written list of the children in their group, the school phone number and the emergency contact number. They should be given a full briefing before the trip about our expectations i.e. count children regularly, expect good manners and standards of behaviour and to let the visit leader know if there is a problem.

## Appendix D:

### WORKING WITH VISITING SPEAKERS & OUTSIDE AGENCIES

We are committed to developing home/school links, links with the wider school community and links with outside agencies in order to raise pupil achievement, attendance and motivation.

We are also committed to safeguarding all of our pupils by having clear guidance on the management of visiting speakers in line with the Prevent Duty . . .

*"Specified authorities need to . . . [have] robust safeguarding policies in place to identify children at risk. These policies should set out clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers - whether invited by staff or by children themselves - are suitable and appropriately supervised.*

*(Prevent Duty Guidance in England and Wales HM Government)*

### WHY INVOLVE VISITING SPEAKERS AND OUTSIDE AGENCIES?

They may have specialised knowledge, a good network of contacts and access to useful resources. They may be able to help the school with policies and guidelines, planning curriculum areas, providing resources for classroom use, designing and running workshops for teachers, parents and governors or organising special focus events.

BUT - They may lack training/teaching skills, have limited time available to work in schools or even have a 'hidden agenda' which may not link to our school aims.

### BEFORE THE VISIT

- Check out the aims and objectives of the visiting speaker to ensure that they are consistent with Hipsburn' values statement and commitment to inclusion and equality. Although not always possible, it is useful to invite speakers from an established company, charity or other group whose aims are well-documented. Then discuss your proposed visit with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to obtain approval prior to approaching the speaker or inviting them into school. Information about the visiting speaker and the booking process should be recorded on the school proforma.
- Set aside time to meet with the visiting speaker to establish exactly what he/she is able to offer. Whatever the contribution of the visiting speaker (e.g. policy development, curriculum planning, staff development, working with pupils/ carers/governors) plan carefully, so that expertise is utilised in a manner appropriate to the needs of the school.
- Confirm the arrangements with the visiting speaker and ensure that they have a clear understanding of why they have been chosen. Ensure that they understand that their presentation will be brought to an early end, if the content proves unsuitable.
- Ensure that the speaker understands that they will be expected to talk with staff about the content of the presentation before the event; speakers and staff must allow time for this discussion, whether it is on the day or beforehand. Also ensure that the speaker understands that talks and presentations must not be used to raise funds, without the prior written permission of the Headteacher.
- Visiting speakers must arrive at reception in good time to sign in, and must bring suitable identification. Although viewing DBS certificates may be appropriate, most visiting speakers will

not be in 'regulated activity' and so will not necessarily have a DBS certificate to present. If the visiting speaker does not have DBS clearance, they must be supervised at all times and not left alone with pupils. Other appropriate checks must also be carried out on the suitability of the person, which may include internet searches and/or contacting other schools where the person has spoken previously.

In addition, a Risk Assessment may be necessary depending upon:

- the duration, frequency and nature of contact with children; and then
- what the school knows about the person, including formal or informal information;
- whether the person is well known to others in the school community who are likely to be aware of behaviour that could give cause for concern;
- whether the person has other employment, or undertakes voluntary activities where referees would advise on suitability;
- any other relevant information about the person or the work they are likely to do.

## DURING THE VISIT

Visiting speakers must:

- read and sign our Visitors' & Volunteers Code of Conduct, to ensure that they understand they must abide by the school's equality commitments; that there must be no statements which might cause offence to others, or otherwise undermine tolerance of other faiths or beliefs; and there must be no extremist material.
- sign in electronically and wear the red, visitor's badge provided throughout their time in school.
- have the support of a member of school staff at all times
- work in a place which is accessible to others and in which they can be observed working with pupils.
- follow the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding procedures as outlined in the Code of Conduct. Details of the Designated Safeguarding leads are on the back of the visitor's badge.

## AFTER THE VISIT

- Review and evaluate the partnership by providing feedback to the visiting speaker and asking for their comments and observations.
- After the presentation, an evaluation form should be completed which will include feedback from staff, note any contentious subject areas or comments, and state whether the speaker could be booked again in the future. Evolve also contains an optional evaluation form.

Ratified: Strategic Governors 27/1/21

Review: Strategic Governors 19/5/23

Review: Strategic Governors - Autumn Term 2025

