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Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB)

CÉIM ÉILE

Visiting Speaker and Guest Policy

**Version** 1

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Contents

[Rationale 4](#_Toc140230424)

[Definitions 4](#_Toc140230425)

[Types of Visitors 4](#_Toc140230426)

[General Requirements for Visitors 5](#_Toc140230427)

[Parents as Visitors 5](#_Toc140230428)

[Guest Speakers 6](#_Toc140230429)

[Contractors/owners and employees of other businesses 6](#_Toc140230430)

[Special Situations 6](#_Toc140230431)

[Centre Policies 7](#_Toc140230432)

[Communication, involvement and dissemination 7](#_Toc140230433)

[Evaluation 7](#_Toc140230434)

[Review and Development 8](#_Toc140230435)

[Appendices 9](#_Toc140230436)

[Appendix 1 9](#_Toc140230437)

[Circular 0023/2010 To Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Coordinators 9](#_Toc140230438)

[of all Post-Primary Centres 9](#_Toc140230439)

[Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Relationships and Sexuality Education 9](#_Toc140230440)

[(RSE) 9](#_Toc140230441)

[Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Centres 9](#_Toc140230442)

[Appendix 2 13](#_Toc140230443)

[Circular No. 0043/2018 13](#_Toc140230444)

[Circular to Management Authorities of all Post Primary 13](#_Toc140230445)

[Centres: Secondary, Community and Comprehensive and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards 13](#_Toc140230446)

[Best practice guidance for post primary centres in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills’ Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 13](#_Toc140230447)

[Dalton Tattan 19](#_Toc140230448)

[Appendix 3 20](#_Toc140230449)

[Checklist: Use of Programmes and/or External Facilitators 20](#_Toc140230450)

[Appendix 4 22](#_Toc140230451)

[GUEST SPEAKER CHECK LIST 22](#_Toc140230452)

[Before the visit 22](#_Toc140230453)

[Preparing the Visitor 22](#_Toc140230454)

[Preparing the Visit 22](#_Toc140230455)

[During the visit 23](#_Toc140230456)

[After the visit 23](#_Toc140230457)

[Evaluation 23](#_Toc140230458)

**Céim Eile**

**Visiting Speaker and Guest Policy**

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Príomh Oifigeach Feidhmiúcháin: Bernadette Cullen

# Rationale

This policy is to provide guidelines for all visitors to the centre and in doing so, provide a safe and secure environment for our learners and staff. This policy also establishes protocols and procedures that effectively monitor and manage visitors without compromising the open and inviting nature of the centre. This policy has been devised with Circular No. 0043/2018 and 0023/2010 in mind. This policy is underpinned by our core values of respect, care, equality, community and academic excellence.

# Definitions

Visitors to the centre are defined as all people other than staff members and learners. Parents/guardians who regularly drop and collect learners to and from centre would not be regarded as visitors.

# Types of Visitors

Our centre has a variety of regular, planned, and unplanned visitors to the centre. Such visitors may include:

1. Parents
2. Department of Education officials
3. Guest speakers
4. Paid coaches and instructors
5. Contractors/owners and employees of other businesses
6. Any other persons who arrive on the centre premises (other than learners and staff members). This list is not exhaustive.

The centre coordinator shall have the authority to determine which visits are permitted as well as the discretion to set any appropriate conditions on the nature and extent of such visits. In exercising this discretion, the coordinator shall consider the purpose of the visit, the impact of the visitor’s presence and the relationship of any visitor to the learners. Centre personnel shall seek to assure that parents and other visitors are courteously received and that sincere efforts are made to provide them with the information as may be needed to foster a cooperative relationship between home, centre and community.

# General Requirements for Visitors

1. All visitors shall report to the centre office and sign the visitor book when arriving or leaving the centre premises.
2. All visitors (except parents/guardians and those briefly visiting the centre as is the case with deliveries and enquiries) shall be requested to wear an appropriate form of identification when on centre premises.
3. Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorisation from the coordinator in advance. At the discretion of the coordinator, such prior authorisation may be required.
4. All centre visitors must comply at all times with Board of Management and Department of Education policies, administrative rules and centre regulations, including Circular 0023/2010 and 0043/2018. This circular deals specifically with visitors in relation to Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Wellbeing. (Appendix 1 & 2).
5. Visitors should be familiar with this policy. The organising teacher can direct visitors to the centre website to access this policy.

# Parents as Visitors

* Parents wishing to conference with teachers or administrators are required to make arrangements in advance. Parents must direct queries toward their child’s year head in the first instance. Parents can contact the centre office to make an appointment.
* Parents who visit the premises during the centre day to collect learners for external appointments are required to report to the centre office and sign their child out and also back in if the student returns to centre before the end of the centre day.

# Guest Speakers

* Guest speakers may be invited to the centre when approved by the Coordinator and the Board of Management and where it has been deemed that the use of such a speaker will bring specific knowledge and expertise to enrich the planned curriculum.
* If the visitor is involved in wellbeing/wellbeing promotion the student support team must be presented with the Appendix of Circular No. 0043/2018 entitled Checklist: Use of Programmes and/or External Facilitators and the team must be satisfied that all requirements are met.
* It is the responsibility of the organising teacher to ensure that the speaker has valid Garda Vetting.
* Guest speakers should be accompanied by a member of staff at all times during their visit unless alternative arrangements have been authorised by management.
* A checklist for the organisation of guest speakers is appended to this document. (Appendix 3).
* Please also see General Requirements for Visitors above.

# Contractors/owners and employees of other businesses

Contractors and businesses who may regularly have staff on the premises during the centre day will be required to provide Garda clearance reports for same. Contractors/businesses who may occasionally visit the premises during the centre day must be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.

# Special Situations

Parents are requested to make the centre aware of visiting rights of parent(s) should any special conditions prevail. Documentary evidence may be required.

Centre Management has the authority to exclude from the centre premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the centre premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.

# Centre Policies

Other centre policies may be particularly relevant to this policy. Please see our Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy.

# Communication, involvement and dissemination

This policy was written by the SPHE/RSE team.

# Evaluation

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all of our centre policies. Specifically important to this policy are:

* Learner feedback
* Staff feedback
* Parental feedback

# Review and Development

We are also committed to the review and development of our centre policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and also to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

# Appendices

# Appendix 1

# Circular 0023/2010 To Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Coordinators

# of all Post-Primary Centres

# Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Relationships and Sexuality Education

# (RSE)

# Best Practice Guidelines for Post-Primary Centres

**INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Education and Science wishes to advise management authorities of the necessity to adhere to best practice guidelines in the mandatory implementation of SPHE/RSE in the junior cycle and RSE in the senior cycle.

National and international research has consistently shown that the qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with learners and that s/he can have a powerful impact on influencing learners’ attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education.

The SPHE/RSE programme should have a substantial skills development element and should not merely be information based. Such skills are developed over time and founded on an ongoing relationship based on trust, understanding and mutual respect.

Young people flourish in an environment where there is a whole-centre approach to the holistic growth of learners and where there is a shared belief in their potential for development, learning and wellbeing.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF CENTRES**

***The Education Act (1998)* states that:**

*A recognised centre shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of learners and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the centre.*

Centre management, coordinators and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and most appropriate social, personal and health education for their learners. They also have a duty to protect learners in their care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes.

**VISITORS TO POST-PRIMARY CENTRES: GUIDELINES**

If centres wish to enhance or supplement SPHE/RSE by inviting visitors to the classroom precise criteria must apply. Outside facilitators who contribute to the SPHE/RSE programme can play a valuable role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned, comprehensive and established SPHE/RSE programme. Any such visitor or visiting group should adhere to the guidelines of good practice as set out in the SPHE Handbook Section 7 and which are condensed herewith:

* Visitors to the classroom or centre, particularly those engaging directly with learners, should be aware of relevant centre policies including the centre’s child protection policy, RSE policy and substance misuse policy. Any such visit must be carefully planned in advance in line with the relevant whole-centre SPHE/RSE programme(s) and policies.
* Talks/programmes delivered by outside agencies or speakers must be consistent with and complementary to the centre’s ethos and SPHE/RSE programme. Visits should be planned, researched and implemented in partnership with centre personnel.
* Relevant teachers need to liaise with and be involved with all visitors and external agencies working with the centre and the whole staff needs to be made aware of same.
* It is strongly recommended that parents should be consulted and made aware of any such visiting people or agencies to classrooms / centres.
* The centre’s SPHE/RSE coordinator may also help in the process of whole centre planning and coordination to support the effective implementation of SPHE/RSE.
* It is of the utmost importance that classroom teachers remain in the classroom with the learners and retain a central role in delivery of the core subject matter of the SPHE/RSE programme. The presence of the classroom teacher should ensure that the centre follows appropriate procedures for dealing with any issue(s) that may arise as a result of the external input(s).
* All programmes and events delivered by visitors and external agencies must use appropriate, evidence-based methodologies with clear educational outcomes. Such

programmes are best delivered by those specifically qualified to work with the young people for whom the programmes are designed.

* All programmes, talks, interventions and events should be evaluated by learners and teachers in terms of the subject matter, messages, structure, methodology and proposed learning outcomes.

**PLEASE NOTE**

Research findings indicate that the following teaching approaches have limited effect and are counterproductive to the effective implementation of SPHE. In light of this, centres are advised to avoid the following approaches:

**Scare tactics**

Information that induces fear, and exaggerates negative consequences, is inappropriate and counterproductive.

**Sensationalist interventions**

Interventions that glamorise or portray risky behaviour in an exciting way are inappropriate and can encourage inappropriate risk taking.

**Testimonials**

Stories focused on previous dangerous lifestyles can encourage the behavior they were designed to prevent by creating heroes/heroines of individuals who give testimony.

**Information only interventions**

Programmes which are based on information alone are very limited in the learning outcomes they can achieve and can in fact be counter productive in influencing values, attitudes and behaviour.

**Information that is not age appropriate**

Giving information to learners about behaviours they are unlikely to engage in can be counterproductive in influencing values, attitudes and behaviour.

**Once off/short term interventions**

Short-term interventions, whether planned or in reaction to a crisis, are ineffective.

**Normalising young people’s risky behaviour**

Giving the impression to young people, directly or indirectly, that all their peers will engage/are engaging in risky behaviours could put pressure on them to do things they would not otherwise do.

**Didactic approach**

Didactic approaches which are solely directive in nature are ineffective in the successful implementation of SPHE/RSE.

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Information, advice and support is available from the SPHE Support Service which is a partnership between the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Health and Children, and the Health Service Executive, in association with Marino Institute of Education.

SPHE Support Service Tel: (01) 805-7718

(Post-Primary) Fax: (01) 853-5113

Marino Institute of Education Email: [sphe@mie.ie](mailto:sphe@mie.ie)

Griffith Avenue Website[: www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie/) Dublin 9.

Please bring this circular to the attention of teachers and members of the centre board of management. This circular may also be accessed at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie/) [und](http://www.education.ie/)er Education Personnel/Circulars.

Alan Wall Coordinator Officer

Teacher Education Section March 2010

## Appendix 2

## Circular No. 0043/2018

## Circular to Management Authorities of all Post Primary

## Centres: Secondary, Community and Comprehensive and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards

## Best practice guidance for post primary centres in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills’ Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice

*This circular supersedes* [*Circular 0023/2010*](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Archived-Circulars/cl0023_2010.pdf)

**Introduction**

The Department of Education and Skills has developed a Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice which recognises the unique position of centres in promoting the wellbeing of learners. **This policy requires that a Wellbeing Promotion Process is developed and implemented throu~~gh~~ th~~e~~ use of the Centre Self-Evaluation (SSE) process, in all centres by 2023.**

Centre management, coordinators and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and the most appropriate education in order to promote the wellbeing of their learners. They also have a duty to protect learners in their care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes. The Department therefore wishes to advise management authorities of the necessity to adhere to best practice when implementing the [*Wellbeing Policy Statement*](https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf)[*and Framework for Practice.*](https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf)

This circular offers best practice guidance in selecting wellbeing promotion programmes and/or external facilitators (both once-off speakers and those delivering programmes over a period of time), to support

the implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process including, in particular, the selection for social, personal and health education (SPHE), and relationships and sexuality education (RSE) curricula. The advice provided in this circular applies with effect from the date of issue.

**Responsibility of Centres**

The Education Act (1998) states that:

#### A recognised centre shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of learners and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the centre.

Centres are in a unique position to promote wellbeing, and social and emotional learning, and should ensure a whole centre approach to wellbeing promotion and early intervention when considering appropriate use of external supports and services. Learners flourish where there is a whole centre approach to supporting their growth and where there is a shared belief in their potential for development, learning and wellbeing. Boards of management, centre leaders and centre staff are responsible for providing an environment that nurtures and supports learners and play a central role in providing leadership and direction for the implementation of a comprehensive and integrated approach to wellbeing promotion.

The Department’s [*Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* a](http://intranet/Info/cserv/GI/Documents/eLetterhead/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf)ssists centres in ensuring that wellbeing promotion is embedded within the centre’s existing practice. The centre’s review and development process using the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* provides guidance and practical resources to assist in the further enhancement of whole centre approaches to wellbeing promotion in the areas of:

* + culture and environment
  + curriculum (teaching and learning)
  + policy and planning
  + relationships and partnerships

To ensure effective implementation of a whole centre approach the centre needs a structure such as a student support team which has wellbeing promotion as part of its responsibility.

It is essential that centre managers and all staff continue to develop their competence and confidence in the promotion of wellbeing. **The qualified classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with learners and she/he can have a powerful impact on influencing learners’ attitudes, values, and behaviour in all aspects of wellbeing education.** This can be achieved through accessing continuing professional development (CPD) which includes the sharing of expertise and learning and having opportunities to model and engage in collaborative working. The curricular elements of wellbeing promotion should be delivered by staff who are trained for this purpose having completed relevant CPD.

When a need is identified through the implementation of the Wellbeing Promotion Process and centres choose to select a programme or external speaker, it is important that best practice guidance as outlined in this circular is followed.

**Supporting the Centre’s Self-Evaluation Wellbeing Promotion Process with Programmes and/or External Facilitators**

Use of programmes and/or external facilitators can play a role in supplementing, complementing and supporting a planned comprehensive approach to wellbeing promotion. Programmes and/or external facilitators are most likely to be effective when they:

* + are part of a whole centre approach and address an identified need
  + are delivered to class groups with the involvement of centre staff and the appropriate involvement of parents/carers
  + enhance protective factors which predispose learners to positive outcomes in the face of adversity such as: facilitating supportive adult pupil relationships, strengthening life skills, helping learners believe in their capacity to overcome hardship and building a sense of mastery over life circumstances
  + adopt a planned implementation process, for example, incorporate needs analysis, use evidence informed programmes and track and evaluate outcomes for learners
  + are implemented and used in a centre in a sustained way over a number of years in order to bring about lasting effects and benefits.

**Guidance for Engaging External Facilitators**

When engaging external facilitators centres are advised to consider the following best practice criteria:

* + External facilitators supplement, complement or support an identified component of the

centre’s Wellbeing Promotion Process.

* + External facilitators are approved by the coordinator and board of management in consultation with the relevant teaching staff. All materials proposed for use by the external facilitator must also be agreed in advance by the coordinator and the board.

All external facilitators are compliant with the centre’s child protection policy and other

relevant centre policies and procedures.

* + The centre authority satisfies itself, having regard to its own legal advice if required, that it has met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for such external facilitators.
  + Programmes used are delivered by facilitators who are qualified to work within the specific area of content and with the learners for whom the programmes are designed.
  + Relevant centre staff liaise with facilitators in advance of the delivery.
  + **External facilitators always work under the guidance and supervision of the relevant classroom teacher who remains in the classroom with the learners at all times and retains a central role in the delivery of the subject matter.** Absence of the teacher may undermine the integrity of the curriculum, and the credibility and professionalism of the teacher. It may also compromise the safety of the learners.
  + Relevant centre staff are informed of the details of the programme being provided by external facilitators.
  + Parents/carers are consulted and made aware in advance of the content of the programmes provided by external facilitators.
  + External facilitators and programmes are evaluated by learners and teachers with regard to the subject matter, messages communicated, methodology and proposed learning outcome.

**Appraisal of Appropriate Use of External Facilitators**

When appraising appropriate use of external facilitators, centres should consider the following best practice criteria:

Facilitators supply comprehensive information to the centre about their organisation, programme content and programme methodology.

* + Facilitators demonstrate an understanding of the Department’s *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* and appropriate educational training and qualifications.
  + Facilitators demonstrate skills in facilitating and managing groups and learners.
  + Facilitators demonstrate an understanding of the general organisation and structure of centres.
  + Facilitators show an understanding of the role of centre management, centre support structures, roles of support staff and other relevant support services in the event of a challenging situation arising.

**Appraisal of Appropriate Use of Programmes**

When appraising the appropriate use of programmes, centres should consider the following best practice criteria:

* + The programme or input supports/complements the whole centre Wellbeing Promotion Process which includes the social personal and health education, physical education and civic, social and political education curricula.
  + Consideration is given to the programme’s sustainability and whether the programme will

bring about lasting effects or if its benefits will end on the completion of the programme.

* + The programme is appropriate for the educational stage of the learners, and includes evidence informed content and methodology with clear educational outcomes.
  + The programme content is appropriate for the age, gender and cultural background of learners.
  + The programme does not focus on a single topic or use shock tactics, and does not directly or indirectly raise an unhealthy awareness of, for example, topics such as suicide\*, self-harm or eating disorders.
* The programme and its outcomes have been independently evaluated and/or informed by research and evidence.
* The programme does not place an unreasonable onus on learners to take an unduly high level of responsibility for the wellbeing of their peers.

\*Centres can be increasingly concerned about suicide prevention and may consider offering suicide related programmes provided by external agencies or individuals. In particular, in the aftermath of a suicide tragedy, there may be an impetus to introduce suicide prevention programmes to the centre. This could be at a time when the students are particularly vulnerable and may require a very different and specialised support or intervention. Such decisions should be taken in close consultation with those involved in coordinated responses from the relevant services such as the National Educational Psychological Service, the Health Service Executive’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and others in the community.

Programmes that aim to reduce suicidal behaviour among young people may have positive outcomes for some students but unintended negative consequences for others. Safety and appropriate support of all students is paramount and particular consideration should be given to:

* the potential risks of delivering the proposed programme
* any vulnerabilities that exist within the group of students
* how any programme on suicide awareness/mental health promotion ensures safety and support for the audience during and after the delivery of the programme

The checklist (Appendix) provides guidance for centres when using external programmes or engaging

external facilitators to support the implementation of the centre’s Wellbeing Promotion Process.

**Further information**

Teachers who require information, advice, guidance and support should contact the relevant Department of Education and Skills support services in order to meet their professional development needs. The local Health Service Executive’s Health Promotion personnel are also available to provide information, guidance and support.

### Dalton Tattan

**Assistant Secretary Department of Education and Skills July 2018**

Please bring this circular to the attention of teachers and members of the centre board of management.

This circular may also be accessed at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie/) [u](http://www.education.ie/)nder [www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and](http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and%20Forms) [Forms](http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and%20Forms)

## Appendix 3

## Checklist: Use of Programmes and/or External Facilitators

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Engaging External Facilitators in the Centre:*** | | ✓ | 🗴 |
| 1. | The facilitators have the necessary training/qualifications and expertise to deliver the agreed programme or training. |  |  |
| 2. | At least one member of the centre team is available to facilitate planning, joint delivery and evaluation of the programme or external input |  |  |
| 3. | Facilitators are suitably qualified to work with the profile of learners in the centre |  |  |
| 4. | Facilitators delivering the programme or input have a written child protection policy and a safeguarding statement |  |  |
| 5. | The centre is satisfied that it has met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for the external facilitators |  |  |
| ***When considering a Programme:*** | | ✓ | 🗴 |
| 6. | A need has been identified through the centre’s Wellbeing Promotion Process that could be  addressed by using a specific programme |  |  |
| 7. | The programme is consistent with the centre’s whole centre approach to wellbeing  promotion |  |  |
| 8. | The Board of Management has approved the delivery of the programme |  |  |
| 9. | The chosen programme is informed by research and/or evidence |  |  |
| 10. | The programme uses evidence based/informed methodologies and promotes active learning |  |  |
| 11. | All relevant staff members have been informed about the proposed programme. |  |  |
| 12. | The programme is suitable to meet the needs of the targeted cohort of learners. |  |  |
| 13. | In the selection of programmes, the opinions of parents/carers and learners have been ascertained |  |  |
| 14. | An evaluation form will be completed by learners and staff |  |  |
| 15. | The impact of the programme will be monitored |  |  |
| 16. | The programme delivery is sustainable over time within the centre |  |  |
| 17. | Consideration has been given to the possible vulnerabilities of learners and the minimising of any potential negative impact of the programme |  |  |
| 18. | Supports are available for the learners during and after the programme delivery |  |  |

## Appendix 4

## GUEST SPEAKER CHECK LIST

This checklist will be used by staff in centre to support them through the stages of involving a visitor in the classroom.

### Before the visit

* Why is this visitor being asked into centre?
* The facilitators have the necessary training/qualifications and expertise to deliver the agreed programme or training
  + Does the visitor come with any recommendations?
  + Has the centre used this visitor before?
  + What experience has this visitor of working with this age group?
  + At least one member of the centre team is available to facilitate planning, joint delivery and evaluation of the programme or external input
* Facilitators delivering the programme or input have a written child protection policy and a safeguarding statement
* Have parents been informed of the session (if appropriate)?
* The centre is satisfied that it has met any vetting obligations that arise under the Vetting Act and in line with Circular 0031/2016, for the external facilitators
* The Coordinator and the Board of Management has approved the speaker/programme

### Preparing the Visitor

* Has the visitor identified the intended learning outcomes for their input?
* Have the resources and materials been reviewed for appropriateness and the maturity of the pupils?
* Is the visitor aware of the aims of their visit?
* Has the visitor been made aware of the centre ethos?
* Is the visitor aware of the ability and maturity level of the young people they will be working with?
* Will the visitor make a pre visit to the centre?
* Has the visitor been made aware of the relevant centre policies?
* Is the visitor aware of any risks to health and safety?

### Preparing the Visit

* What arrangements will be made to welcome the visitor to the centre and introduce them to the class?
* Is the size of the group appropriate to the activity and learning purpose?
* Is this visit part of a planned programme with preparation beforehand and follow up afterwards?
* How will the group be prepared for the visitor?
* What resources will be needed for the session?

### 

### During the visit

* Will the centre be able to respond appropriately to questions or incidents that may arise after the visitor has left?
* How will the teacher support the visitor in this work?
* Will a member of the centre staff be present during the session?

### After the visit

* How will the outcome of the evaluation inform future work?
* Is there opportunity for feedback and discussion about the impact of the visitor’s session?

### Evaluation

The teacher and visitor may evaluate the session. The following questions can be used as prompts:

* What was the young people’s response to the session(s)?
* Have the learning outcomes been achieved?
* What went particularly well in the session(s)?
* Which parts (if any) of the session were not successful?
* Were the resources and materials used appropriate?
* In what ways do you think that the session(s) could be improved?
* Are there any issues from this session that you think need addressing further?

Pupil evaluations may be carried out to inform future planning and will focus upon:

* What pupils have learnt in the sessions
* What they like about the sessions
* What they didn’t like about the sessions
* What else they would like to know about.