



# St Francis National School

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## Use of Outside Specialists (Coaches/Tutors/Visiting Speakers etc.)

*In reading this policy, it should be noted that the term "Parent(s)" also includes Guardians and should be interpreted as such.*

### Introduction

- St Francis NS is a community where pupils, parents and teachers collaborate and work in partnership for our children. When parents decide to send their child to our school they are entering a very important relationship.
- In keeping the school's mission statement and ethos, our school is democratically run. This means that management committees (*The Board of Management, Staff sub-Committees, Parent Association Committee, Pupil Committees eg. Green School and The Student Council*) that are democratically elected run it, and the involvement of all parents is sought and encouraged.
- Teachers, while trained and experienced in delivering the curriculum in class, may utilise the expertise of outside coaches/tutors, who have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for the children.
- Respect for the professional role of the teacher and the statutory responsibilities of the principal, Patron and the Board of Management is always sought.
- Outside Coaches/Tutors are invited to become involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example:
  1. In PE lessons, helping the class teacher to deliver specialised coaching in Gaelic Football, Hurling, Basketball, Tennis, Rugby, Soccer, Irish Dancing, etc.
  2. In Drama lessons, helping the class teacher to prepare for school performances and local competitions.
  3. In making the optimum use of our ICT resources, helping the class teacher to prepare lessons in ICT skills and coding.
  4. In helping the class teacher to deliver specialised lessons

eg. in Relationships and Sexuality, Storytelling, Movement/Mindfulness, Social Environmental & Scientific Education (SESE) (eg. Newgrange Falconry visit, Heritage in Schools Specialists) etc.

### **Benefits of Outside Coach/Tutor Involvement**

- Children benefit from greater diversity in the classroom.
- Children profit from specialised knowledge.
- A Specialist's skills may support and complement work already taking place.
- Specialist involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.
- A wide range of activities are facilitated. This can be interesting and fun, and can lead to a broader and more holistic education.
- Specialist involvement in the Curriculum allows children to see that school is an extension of the outside community and environment.
- Specialist skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.
- Specialist Involvement provides the opportunity to foster stronger community/school links.

### **How Specialists are selected**

- Teachers are, first of all, invited to consider their own skills, interests and time available.
- Where gaps in our expertise are identified, or where a specific goal is planned, appropriate Specialists are identified. References from other schools and organisations, Vetting Disclosure and where necessary, evidence of insurance cover is sought.
- Specialists will work in conjunction with the teachers in a planned and coordinated way.
- The class teacher retains **ultimate responsibility** for pupil management and for the teaching and learning involved.
- Specialists, like teachers, will be considered mandated persons under current Child Protection Legislation.

**Please note that an appendix to this document contains guidelines for Specialist involvement in the school.**

**Communication**

This policy will be available in the Plean Scoile and on the school website.

**Responsibility for Review:**

All members of staff, Parent Association, BoM.

**Timeframe for Review:**

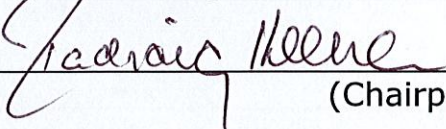
This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as required to meet the needs of the school.

**Next review:** December 2027

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Ratified by the Board of Management on 23/4/2024 (Date)

Signed:  (Chairperson, Board of Management)

## Appendix

### Guidelines for the Involvement of Outside Specialists

- Specialists invited to work with school staff during school time agree to undergo Garda Vetting as a matter of course.
- Specialists come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose.
- The happiness, welfare and safety of our children are our primary concern. A child's personal history and academic achievements are **strictly confidential**. Any doubts about issues of confidentiality **must** be discussed with the teacher.
- Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline remains the responsibility of the teacher.
- All work will be supervised by the teacher.
- Specialists who participate in activities which may include their own child should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child. Where practical Specialists will be asked to work in a class other than their child's class.
- Specialists coming into the classroom must consult with the teacher before inviting other Specialists/individuals to participate.
- In the interests of safety, toddlers and younger children not enrolled in the school cannot be accommodated during a classroom activity.
- The highest standard of behaviour and language is expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.
- Fees payable will be met from Contribution Card funds or by the Parent Association by prior arrangement. Children are not charged for these activities.
- In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks, Specialists will meet with the teacher to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group, has something similar already been done etc.). The teacher has the final say in the event that they feel it is falling short of its original aims and objectives.
- The school ethos must be adhered to consequently, respect for all the partners in education - children, teachers and Specialists - must be upheld at all times.