

901 Visitor Guidelines

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to inform the school community and the general public of the position of the School Board on visitors to Stonebridge World School.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The School Board encourages interest on the part of parents and community members in school programs and student activities. The Board welcomes visits to the school by parents and community members provided the visits are consistent with the education, health, and safety of students and employees and are conducted within the procedures and requirements established by the School District.

The School Board believes in maintaining a school environment that is safe for students and employees and free of activity that may be disruptive to the learning process or employee working environment.

III. RESPONSIBILITY

The School District administration shall make the board aware of visitor procedures which will be communicated to the school community and general public. These procedures will be reviewed periodically.

IV. VISITOR LIMITATIONS

A. An individual or group may be denied permission or such permission may be revoked to visit the school property if the visitor does not comply with School District procedures and regulations or if the visit is not in the best interests of students, employees or the School District.

B. An individual or group who enters school property without complying with the procedures and requirements may be guilty of criminal trespass and thus subject to criminal trespass and thus subject to criminal penalty. Such persons may be detained by the Executive Director or a person designated by the Executive Director in a reasonable manner for a reasonable period of time pending the arrival of a police officer.

V. VISITS TO THE SCHOOL

The Board of Education and staff of the School District welcome members of the community and other interested persons to periodically, and subject to the considerations set out below, visit the schools of the District. School improvements often come from suggestions originating in such visits.

The Executive Director is authorized to establish such regulations as will:

- A. Encourage visitors to observe the schools.
- B. Provide the appropriate hospitality for visitors.
- C. Channel expressions of approval as well as constructive criticism to the Board.

- D. Ensure that such visits will enhance the effect of the educational program rather than hinder it.
Board of Education members who visit school of their own volition have no more authority than any other citizen.

VI. INTERACTION BETWEEN SCHOOL STAFF AND THE PUBLIC

The District is in the business of providing services to its students, their parents, and other citizens. A reasonable and expected part of that service is responding to requests for information within the access and time constraints imposed by the Minnesota Government Data Practices ACT and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). School District staff are expected to respond to requests for information and assistance in a timely and professional manner.

Every employee is the school system’s point of contact with the public. The Board encourages every employee to assume responsibility for the public image of the school system. Good relationships benefit the school system and ultimately each member.

Similarly, each and every staff member should be treated with respect and dignity by parents and members of the public.

VII. SCHOOL VISITOR PROCEDURES AND EXPECTATIONS

Parents, citizens, alumni, and other visitors are welcome and encouraged to visit our schools. Stonebridge World School recognizes that partnerships with the community are necessary for students to succeed in our school, and visits are an appropriate vehicle and enhance that partnership.

However, the School Board and Executive Director of the school reserve the right to decline to give permission for or to withdraw permission for parents, citizens, alumni, and other members of the public to visit the schools of the District if such action is deemed necessary to ensure the physical or emotional safety of the students of the District or to prevent disruption of the District’s educational programs.

Visitors must come to the office in compliance with the building’s school visitor procedures. See parent handbook for periodically reviewed and updated procedures. All visitors must have a badge and be properly checked into the building to enter.

VIII. TEACHER MEETINGS

Parents are invited and encouraged to visit the school. We ask, however, to meet before or after school hours. Teachers are unable to take phone calls during the school day. If a parent needs to speak with a child’s teacher, they can call the main office and be directed to their voicemail. The teacher will respond when available, within 24 hours.

In the event of an emergency that requires that parents have immediate contact with their student, parents may either call or go to the office to:

- A. Explain the circumstances of the emergency; and
- B. Request that their student be called to the office to meet with them and/or talk to them on the telephone.

The Executive Director is given the discretion, where circumstances so dictate and on a case-by-case basis, to adopt and enforce more restrictive rules to govern visits to the school.

In the event that a staff member is confronted in a face-to-face or telephone conversation with unacceptable or disrespectful behavior, the following steps should be taken:

- A. The offending person should be informed orally and in as calm and professional a manner as the circumstances allow that their conduct is unacceptable and why this procedure may be given, or mailed, to the person.
- B. The offering person should be told that if the behavior continues, the discussion will be terminated.
- C. The offending person should be informed that a memorandum of the incident will be prepared, provided to the Executive Director and maintained in the files of the district.
- D. If the behavior continues, the conversation should be terminated.

If the conduct occurs in the context of an e-mail, facsimile transmissions, letters, notes, or other documentary form of communication, steps A through C can be carried out by a similar form of communication or by telephone. In either case, copies of the offending communication and staff person's response to it should be attached to the memorandum of the incident.

Staff members are encouraged to request the advice and assistance of the Executive Director or designee in responding to such a situation.

Unacceptable and disrespectful behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Inappropriately raised voice, shouting, or yelling toward a staff member;
- Obscene or foul language, whether directed at the staff member or toward another person;
- Insulting the staff person's intelligence, judgment, or professionalism;
- Threats, the intimidation of violence or behavior which reasonably can be expected to intimidate a staff member; and

- Un-permitted and unwelcome touching of any nature, regardless of the degree of force used.

In applying this Policy, staff members must always be aware that there is an important distinction between declining to be treated in an unacceptable or disrespectful manner and, on the other hand, refusing to carry out a legitimate request for information or assistance. The former is not a reason for the latter. Timelines created by a statute or a district policy for making a response to an otherwise legitimate request must be observed even while the issue of unacceptable or disrespectful conduct is being addressed.

Adapted from Hopkins Public Schools Visitors to School District Buildings and Community Relations Policy

Approved: March 22, 2017