

Enfield SACRE's Guidelines for Visitors in Schools.

These guidelines have been issued by Enfield SACRE and are for visitors from religious groups visiting county schools. They need to be used in conjunction with any visitors' policy that schools already have in place.

Throughout these guidelines the assumption is made that a teacher is **always** present at the time of the visit. It is also important to stress that religious education is about teaching about faiths not faith teaching and it is against the law for any evangelism to take place in the class room. The visitors are invited into schools to speak about their faith but it is important to stress the principles and aims of RE in Enfield.

Religious Education should therefore help pupils to:

- develop and extend knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world Faiths, and of ethical beliefs
- develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities and societies
- enhance and reflect on their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- grow in confidence in their own faith and respect those with a faith different from their own
- develop a positive attitude to living in a religiously diverse society
- develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues

Good preparation and realistic expectations are the key to successful visits

Before the Visit

It is helpful if the teacher

- Has met the visitors in order to plan the lesson/act of worship in the light of their language and communication skills, and their particular expertise;
- Has explained the role of RE in county schools and that it is teaching about a faith not faith teaching
- Has provided the visitor with a clear written brief, including the time allocated and with an idea of the number, age, gender balance, religious and cultural backgrounds, and ability of the class they are visiting (perhaps through a prior visit);

- Has given the visitors directions to the school, parking arrangements the school's telephone number, details of resources and equipment available to them, and offered hospitality and expenses;
- Has discussed classroom management with the visitor, for example furniture, carpets, tables for artefacts, use of television or video;
- Has ensured that the equipment is available and working
- Has encouraged the visitor to talk from their personal perspective of faith, and not necessarily on behalf of the religious community to which they belong (e.g. a visitor is able to say negative things about their own tradition that a teacher cannot);
- Has prepared the visitor for awkward questions from pupils;
- Is aware of the demands on the visitors (e.g. whether they have taken time off work in order to make the visit):
- Is well aware that visitors are never to be used in order to 'patch up' a lesson or subject;
- Has an alternative worship/lesson in case of an emergency

For the visitors it is helpful if they:

- Understand the role of RE in county schools
- That they have been invited into school as a representative of their faith
- Know where the school is, perhaps familiar with the school and class for example through a prior visit;
- Have a clear brief and are able to speak to it;
- Have prepared their material thoroughly
- Know where they stand in relation to other members of their community
- Arrive with plenty of time

3 It is helpful if the pupils:

- Have briefed a 'welcome' for the visitors and a 'host' / 'hostess' for the visit.
- Know the name of the visitors and can greet them with their correct name or title
- Know from which tradition they come and their background;
- Understand the purpose of the visit, and how it fits into the longer-term teaching;
- Have framed some questions for the visitor (e.g. arising from previous work);

During the visit

4. It is helpful if the visitors:

- are articulate and easily heard, use words and material at a level appropriate to the age ranges, and pause at various points;
- are realistic about how much material they can cover and avoid the temptation to try and cover the whole of their faith in one lesson;

- are 'pupil friendly' i.e. not patronising, aware of the cultural sensitivities of some pupils about touch, gestures or eye contact, are visible to all pupils, convey a sense of humour and use artefacts and visuals;
5. It is helpful if the teacher
- is the guardian of the relationship between class and visitor, and is ready to interpret or intervene if necessary
- 6 It is helpful if the pupils in the school or class
- are hospitable and well behaved, show proper respect and are grateful

After the Visit

7. It is helpful if the teacher
- offers feedback to the visitor on positive points of the visit, and those which might be developed or altered
- 8 It is helpful if the pupils
- follow up the visit appropriately, and relate it to longer –term education in the subject area;
 - are appreciative of the visit (perhaps through letters/ drawings sent to the visitors).

Acknowledgments and thanks:

We should like to thank Liz Wolverson, who gave us a copy of "Open the Door. Guidelines for worship and for the inspection of worship in voluntary and grant-maintained church schools," By David Barton, Alan Brown and Erica Brown published in 1994 by the Oxford Diocesan Education Service Ltd and The National Society (Church of England) for promoting Religious Education. The guidelines were originally written by the Education Department, from the Diocese of Chelmsford for use in their primary and secondary schools and it was intended to include visitors in school for collective worship and class lessons.

We should like to thank the National Society for giving us permission to use their publication. We have changed a few words and the order and any mistakes are ours. We welcome any suggestions for improvements. We also hope, at a later stage, to include an up to date list of contacts.

