VISITOR POLICY

A welcoming, safe and secure environment

ORGANISATION	SKAPE North East Ltd	POLICY REFERENCE	P22
UPDATED	10 November 2026	NEXT SCHEDULED REVIEW	10 November 2028
POLICY OWNER	Centre Manager- Linda James (Acting Centre Manager)	RELATED DOCUMENT	Visitor Information

01 INTRODUCTION

SKAPE assures all visitors a warm, friendly and professional welcome, whatever the purpose of their visit. SKAPE has a duty of care for the health, safety, security and wellbeing of students and staff. All visitors must follow this policy, the Visitor Information in Appendix 1 and instructions from staff. Visitors who do not comply may be required to leave.

02 SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to visitors to SKAPE's premises at Whessoe Road, Darlington, DL3 0QT, during provision hours and other SKAPE activities, and to visitors involved in supervised off-site activities where relevant. It covers parents/carers, volunteers, school and local authority representatives, advisers, inspectors, visiting professionals and speakers, maintenance and other contractors, and transport providers.

03 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim is to safeguard students in SKAPE's care and provide a safe environment in which they can benefit from educational experiences. The objectives are to establish a clear protocol for admitting, supervising and recording visitors that is understood by staff, visitors and parents/carers and supports SKAPE's safeguarding arrangements.

04 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Centre Manager: coordinate, implement and review this policy; ensure staff understand admission and departure arrangements; authorise any exceptions to routine escort arrangements following appropriate checks and risk assessment.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): advise on visitor suitability, checks and supervision; respond to safeguarding concerns and liaise with the commissioning school or local authority's DSL as appropriate.
- Staff admitting visitors: confirm identity, purpose and host; complete the signing-in process, issue a visitor badge and explain the Visitor Information before allowing access beyond reception.
- Host staff member: take responsibility for the visitor during their visit, ensure agreed supervision and access restrictions are followed, and oversee safe departure.
- All staff: remain alert to unfamiliar or unbadged visitors, report concerns promptly and follow emergency procedures.
- Visitors: provide requested identification, sign in and out, wear their visitor badge visibly, follow staff instructions and report concerns without delay.

05 ARRANGING VISITS AND SAFEGUARDING CHECKS

Visits should be arranged in advance wherever possible. Staff must establish the visitor's identity, organisation, purpose, host and intended contact with students. An unplanned visitor must wait in reception while staff confirm that

the visit can proceed. Access may be declined or delayed if identity, purpose or safeguarding arrangements cannot be established.

The Centre Manager or DSL will determine the checks and supervision appropriate to the role and activity, in line with the Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment policies and current Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance. A visitor badge or an entry on an approved visitor list is not evidence that someone is authorised to work alone with students.

- Professional visitors: check identity and obtain assurance of appropriate checks for the activity. Where the employer confirms that appropriate checks have been completed, do not routinely ask to see the DBS certificate as well.
- Parents/carers and other ordinary visitors: DBS checks are not required simply because they visit the centre. Arrange appropriate supervision and access restrictions.
- Contractors, agency workers and volunteers: confirm the checks required for the actual role before work begins. Where a role is regulated activity, supervision alone does not remove the need for the applicable checks. An unchecked visitor must not be permitted to undertake regulated activity.
- DBS and barred list checks must only be requested where legally eligible and required for the role. A DBS certificate has no official expiry date; any SKAPE renewal arrangements must follow the Safer Recruitment Policy and applicable commissioning requirements.

Regular visitors may be recorded on an approved visitor list, with the role, relevant check assurances and authorised access or supervision arrangements kept up to date. Required checks will be recorded in SKAPE's appropriate safeguarding/recruitment records. Do not routinely retain copies of DBS certificates in the visitor register. Approved visitors must still follow the same signing-in, badge and departure arrangements as other visitors.

06 ARRIVAL AND ACCESS THROUGH THE AUTOMATIC DOORS

- Visitors must use the main entrance for routine arrival and departure and contact a member of staff on arrival. Staff will meet them and confirm their identity, purpose and host before admitting them beyond reception.
- The main entrance has two sets of double automatic doors. Once students are inside, the automatic operation of the internal doors is switched off and these doors are controlled by staff.
- Staff will open the internal doors for authorised routine entry and exit and ensure they are secure afterwards. Visitors must not force the doors, tailgate or admit anyone else.
- The visitor must sign the reception visitor register before moving further into the centre, recording their name, organisation where applicable, host or purpose, and arrival time.
- Staff will issue a visitor badge, which must be worn visibly throughout the visit, and ensure the visitor reads the Visitor Information. Staff will explain relevant safeguarding, emergency and access arrangements, including any adjustments needed to make this information accessible.

07 SUPERVISION AND CONDUCT DURING THE VISIT

The host will meet the visitor in reception or arrange a staff escort. Visitors must remain in areas relevant to their visit and must not move around the site unescorted unless specifically authorised by the Centre Manager following appropriate checks and an assessment of the activity and risks. Students must not be used to escort visitors through controlled areas.

- Visitors must only interact with students where relevant to their authorised role and must not be alone with students unless this has been expressly agreed and the required checks and arrangements are in place.
- Visitors must ask staff which visitor or staff toilet to use and follow all restricted-area instructions.
- Smoking and vaping are not permitted. Visitors must use respectful language and behaviour and follow SKAPE's expectations for conduct.
- Mobile phones and other devices may only be used where necessary for the visit and with staff permission. Bluetooth must be disabled in accordance with the Visitor Information, unless staff authorise a necessary accessibility or work-related exception.

- Visitors must not photograph, record or share images or information about students without express permission and all required consent. Staff must explain any restrictions; for some students, photography must never be permitted.
- Equipment must not be left unattended. Visitors must respect confidentiality and must not access student records or information outside their authorised role.

08 SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Visitors must report any safeguarding concern, disclosure or observation immediately to the DSL or Centre Manager. If neither is available, they must tell another member of staff straight away so that the concern can be escalated without delay. Visitors must not investigate concerns themselves or promise confidentiality.

SKAPE will follow its Safeguarding Policy in collaboration with the student's commissioning school or local authority and their safeguarding arrangements. The commissioner retains its overarching safeguarding responsibilities; SKAPE remains responsible for safeguarding students while they are in its care. The DSL will liaise promptly with the commissioner's DSL or relevant safeguarding lead and share information appropriately. Concerns about staff or other adults must follow the relevant safeguarding, allegations or whistleblowing procedure, including an alternative reporting route where the concern involves the Centre Manager or DSL.

09 EMERGENCIES ACCIDENTS AND LOCKDOWN

- Fire or evacuation: leave promptly by the nearest safe designated fire exit, following displayed instructions and staff directions. Do not wait at routine staff-controlled entrance doors if another safe escape route is required. Report to staff at the current assembly point so that everyone can be accounted for. Do not re-enter until authorised.
- Visitors working with students must support staff instructions for evacuation and tell staff who they were working with so that registers can be checked.
- Lockdown: follow staff instructions and the current Lockdown Procedure. Staff will direct students and visitors to the designated safe area where safe to do so. Front automatic doors will be locked where safe and in accordance with the procedure, while emergency escape arrangements are maintained. Do not leave the safe area or open doors until authorised.
- Accident or illness: alert staff immediately so that a first aider can be summoned. Call 999 immediately in a life-threatening emergency and follow the operator's instructions. Staff will follow the First Aid Policy and Accident Reporting Procedure.

10 DEPARTURE

Visitors must return to reception, sign out with their departure time and return their visitor badge. A member of staff will open the internal automatic doors for routine departure and ensure they are secure afterwards. The host must alert reception or the Centre Manager if a visitor leaves unexpectedly or cannot be accounted for.

11 UNIDENTIFIED VISITORS AND BREACHES

Any visitor without a visible visitor badge should be politely approached by staff, where safe, to establish their identity and purpose and directed to reception. Staff must not assume that an unfamiliar adult is authorised because they appear confident or are known to a student.

If the person refuses to comply, staff must inform the Centre Manager or another senior member of staff immediately. They may be asked to leave and escorted where safe. Staff must protect students, avoid confrontation and call the police on 999 if there is immediate danger. Any breach or concern must be recorded and reviewed, with safeguarding or other external reporting undertaken where appropriate.

12 RECORDS RELATED POLICIES AND REVIEW

Visitor records must be kept securely, protected from access by other visitors, and stored securely outside provision hours. Access and retention must follow SKAPE's GDPR and Confidentiality policies. Records must be available to authorised staff for emergency accounting and legitimate safeguarding purposes.

Read alongside the Visitor Information, Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Health and Safety Policy, emergency evacuation and Lockdown procedures, First Aid Policy, Accident Reporting Procedure, Employee Code of Conduct, Online Safety, Confidentiality, GDPR, Complaints and Whistleblowing policies.

This policy has regard to KCSIE 2026, particularly its visitor, contractor and volunteer provisions, and applicable safeguarding, health and safety and data protection duties. Relevant requirements will be followed in line with SKAPE's legal responsibilities and commissioning arrangements. Reference: DfE, Keeping children safe in education 2026 (www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2).

The Centre Manager will review this policy at least every two years, or sooner following changes to premises, safeguarding guidance, commissioning arrangements or visitor procedures. The Visitor Information and staff practice must be updated together where arrangements change.

13 DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

DATE	CHANGE	APPROVAL	REV.
09/09/2023	Initial policy written	K. Watson	01
01/09/2024	Policy review	K. Watson	02
10/11/2026	SKAPE branding and structure updated; aligned with Visitor Information and current visitor arrangements, including automatic doors, visitor badges, safeguarding checks and emergency procedures. Standard Visitor Information sheet included as Appendix 1.	L. James	03

Welcome to SKAPE

Information for all visitors to our education centre



Whessoe Road, Darlington

DL3 0QT

The safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of our students, staff and visitors are a priority.

Please read these arrangements and follow staff instructions throughout your visit.

ENTERING AND LEAVING THE BUILDING

- The main entrance has two sets of double automatic doors.
- Once students are inside, automatic operation of the INTERNAL doors is switched off. The internal doors are then staff-controlled.
- For routine entry or exit after this point, please contact a member of SKAPE staff, who will open the internal doors for you.
- Do not force the doors, allow anyone to follow you in, or admit another visitor yourself.
- All visitors must use the main entrance for normal arrival and departure. Emergency evacuation arrangements are different; see the next page.

SIGNING IN AND VISITOR IDENTIFICATION

- Report to reception on arrival. Sign the visitor register with your name, organisation and who you are visiting; sign out before departure.
- Wear the visitor badge issued to you where it can be seen at all times. Return it to reception when leaving.
- Be prepared to present identification and any relevant safeguarding or DBS information requested by staff.

MOVING AROUND THE SITE

- Remain in the areas relevant to your visit and do not move around the centre unescorted unless specifically authorised.
- Ask a member of staff where to find the appropriate visitor or staff toilet.
- Smoking and vaping are not permitted on site. Respectful language and behaviour are expected at all times.

Staying safe during your visit

Please follow these requirements whenever you are on the SKAPE premises.

FIRE ALARM AND EVACUATION

- If the fire alarm sounds, stop what you are doing and leave promptly by the nearest safe designated fire exit. Follow the posted evacuation instructions and staff directions.
- The staff-controlled entrance doors are for NORMAL access only. Do not wait for a member of staff to operate those doors during an emergency: use the designated safe escape route.
- Go to the current designated fire assembly point shown on SKAPE's on-site evacuation information, and report to a member of staff so that you can be accounted for.
- If you are working with students, support them to evacuate safely and inform staff so that student registers can be checked. Do not re-enter until authorised.

SAFEGUARDING AND STUDENT CONTACT

- Do not interact with students unless it is relevant to the purpose of your visit or a staff member has authorised it.
- Do not arrange to be alone with a student unless this has been agreed in advance and the necessary checks and safeguarding arrangements are in place.
- Report any concerns, disclosures or observations relating to a student to Linda James, Centre Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or immediately to another member of staff if Linda is unavailable.
- Visitors working in a professional capacity must remain within their authorised role and comply with SKAPE safeguarding procedures.

PHONES, PHOTOGRAPHY AND EQUIPMENT

- Use mobile phones or other devices only where necessary for your visit and with staff permission.
- Do not photograph, film, record or share images of students without explicit permission and all required consents. Some students must not be photographed.
- Do not leave equipment unattended. Keep Bluetooth disabled on mobile devices while on site, in line with the existing visitor rules.

Before leaving

Please sign out, return your badge, and ask a member of staff to open the internal door where required.

SKAPE may ask any visitor who does not follow these arrangements to leave the premises.