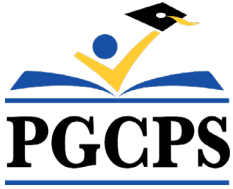


# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## SCHOOL VISITORS

0500  
Procedure No.  
July 1, 2024  
Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures governing visitors to Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) and offices
- II. **POLICY:** The Prince George’s County Board of Education (Board) is committed to providing a quality education to all students in a safe and secure environment. Its goal is to promote a culture where administrators, teachers, staff, and community members recognize and report any and all suspicious or improper behavior and where individuals are held accountable for ensuring the safety of students in our care. (Policy 0126)
- III. **BACKGROUND:** The Board is committed to providing a safe and orderly learning environment that reasonably ensures the safety and security of students, faculty and staff, visitors, and parents. A safe and supportive environment is an important foundation for student academic learning and success. Maryland law prohibits registered sexual offenders from knowingly entering the property of a public elementary or secondary school unless, the offender has received specific written permission from the principal of the school, the superintendent of schools or designee, or the Board of Education.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
  - A. *Classroom observation* – An observation by an individual, an advocate or group interested in observing a specific class or program pre-arranged with the principal through the Office of the Chief of School Support and Leadership.
  - B. *Classroom visit* – A pre-arranged visit with the principal in the classroom by the parents/guardians of current students or educational advocates of current students with disabilities.
  - C. *Conference* – A pre-arranged meeting by the parents/guardians of current students or advocates of current students with disabilities with the classroom teacher(s), principal and/or other staff.
  - D. *Registered Sexual Offender (“Registrant”)* – An individual who is required to register with Maryland’s public sex offender registry under Criminal Procedure Article, §§ 11-701, *et seq.*, Annotated Code of Maryland.
  - E. *Special Visitor* - a local dignitary, elected official, celebrity, etc., who has expressed an interest in visiting or observing a school, classroom, or program.



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## SCHOOL VISITORS

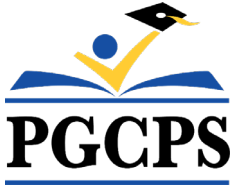
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- F. *Visitor* – Any person who has legitimate school business, to include, but not limited to parent-teacher conferences, pre-arranged classroom visits, classroom observation, attendance at other school events or appointments with school employees. Current students and PGCPS employees on official business are not considered visitors. Members of a school’s Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization (PTA/PTO), Parent Community Advisory Council (PCAC) members, etc. are **visitors** and must abide by this procedure.
- G. *Visitor Management System (VMS)* – computer-based program (software) utilized by front office staff to efficiently welcome, track and manage school visitors; enhances school security by reading the drivers’ licenses (or other approved state-issued ID), comparing information to the national sex offender database and alerting school administrators when necessary.
- H. *Volunteer* – A person assisting under the direction of a school administrator, teacher or other PGCPS employee to provide a variety of services (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, and/or chaperoning for the students) without financial remuneration from PGCPS and considered to be an important member of the school or site team.

### V. **PROCEDURES:**

#### A. **Pre-Screening of Visitors**

1. All visitors are required to enter a school building through the designated exterior electronic access entry doors equipped with a video intercom system.
2. All exterior doors must be locked. Staff members assigned to monitor the video intercom system are required to pre-screen visitors before granting them access to the school building.
  - a. Each visitor must state their complete name and purpose for their visit and show their government-issued photograph identification through the video intercom system.
  - b. The visitor shall be informed of the need to present their government-issued photograph identification card again to sign-in and obtain a visitor badge once in the main office.



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## SCHOOL VISITORS

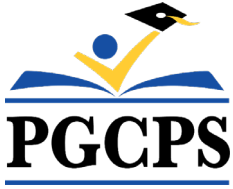
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- c. Visitors who do not present their government-issued photograph identification during pre-screening will not be permitted inside the school building or to remain on the school premises.
3. Once pre-screening is successfully completed, staff may grant the visitor access to the building by unlocking the door using the electronic entry system. Schools must have clearly visible signage directing visitors to the main office to complete the sign-in process.

### **B. Sign-In Process – Photo I.D. Required**

1. In an effort to increase the safety of our schools for students and staff, PGCPS utilizes an electronic Visitor Management System (VMS).
  - a. The VMS enables schools to instantly check all visitors against registered sexual offender databases in all 50 states as well as monitor visitor and volunteer hours.
  - b. The VMS enables schools to issue visitor badges with names, pictures, location or destination of the approved visit within the school, and the time and date the badge was issued printed on each badge for security purposes.
2. Upon arrival at the school and a successful pre-screening process, and prior to initiating any school-related business, each visitor is **required** to provide a their government-issued identification that includes the visitor's name, date of birth and photograph to the school office to be scanned or manually entered into the VMS.
3. Visitors must be escorted and/or accompanied by a PGCPS employee at all times throughout their visit.
4. Visitors are required to wear a visitor badge while at the school and to sign out at the school's main office via the electronic VMS at the conclusion of any designated school-related business.
  - a. PGCPS employees or substitutes who do not have an employee badge visible must have their identification scanned and wear the visitor badge while at the school.
  - b. Any person who does not have a visible visitor badge or PGCPS identification should be immediately escorted to the main office.



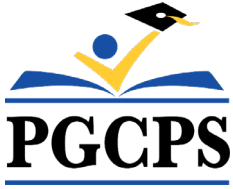
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5. All vendors and contractors not assigned to the particular school or facility will be scanned into the VMS each time they visit the school or facility.
6. On subsequent visits, staff may use the “**Find**” feature in the VMS to quickly locate visitors whose information has previously been entered into the VMS during a previous visit. Staff should type in the First Name and/or Last Name and then click “Find,” which retrieves the visitor’s profile and signs them in.
7. **Exceptions:**
  - a. **Law enforcement and other first responders** – If law enforcement and/or other first responders are responding to an emergency, they should bypass the sign-in process.
  - b. **Large groups for assemblies, performances, etc.** – If there is a large group of visitors entering the school building for honor roll assemblies, performances, etc. that are only located in one part of the building, visitors may be signed in using one of the following methods:
    - 1) **Manual Sign-In**
      - a) School personnel must check the identification card of each visitor and sign each in on a paper sign-in sheet as they enter the building and provide supervision to ensure visitors are restricted to the location of the event (*i.e.*, auditorium, cafeteria, gym). The sign-in sheet should capture the first name, last name and date of birth of each visitor in addition to the purpose of their visit.
      - b) Once the event is over, visitors must be directed out of the building. Any visitor remaining in the school beyond the end of the event must report to the main office and sign-in via the VMS.
      - c) Once the visitors have left the building, the principal shall designate staff to manually enter the names and dates of birth of the visitors into the VMS and maintain a copy of the paper sign in sheets for three years.



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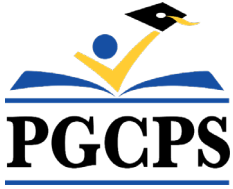
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### 2) Pre-Registration

- a) School personnel may request visitors to pre-register for the planned event/activity and use the “Batch Detail” function in the VMS to pre-print visitor badges. The VMS will conduct a search of the sex offender registry and print badges for all pre-registered visitors who do not appear on the offender list. Staff should print visitor badges for pre-registered visitors no more than 24 hours prior to the event. When the visitors arrive, school personnel shall quickly verify the photo identification of each visitor as they distribute the pre-printed visitor badges. Pre-registration is only allowed for visitors who have previously signed-in via the VMS in any PGCPS school/office.
- b) While running the batch, if one or more visitors are flagged with an offender or custom alert, staff should view the alerts and decide if the person is a match. If the person is a match, no badge is created and the visitor will not be signed in at the time designated in the Batch Detail.

### C. Registered Sexual Offenders on School Property

1. During the sign in process, if a Possible Offender Alert displays and a positive match is confirmed, a silent alert is immediately sent via email and/or text message to the principal and other individuals identified to receive Sex Offender Alert Notifications.
2. The principal may deny a Registrant’s request for permission to enter the school if he/she determines that the circumstances of the registration warrant denial of permission to enter the school. (See Attachments 1 and 2)
3. The principal of the school may grant written permission for a Registrant to enter that specific school under the following circumstances:
  - a. The Registrant is the parent/guardian of a PGCPS student enrolled at that school and wants to participate in a school related activity, view their child’s education records, or meet with a teacher or staff member. If the principal chooses to grant such permission, it must be in writing and include the following:



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

## SCHOOL VISITORS

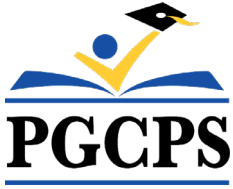
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- 1) The date and purpose for which permission has been granted.
  - 2) The location within the school, or on school grounds, where the visit is to take place.
  - 3) The name and contact information of the school staff member who the parent must notify upon entering school property.
  - 4) The name of the school staff member who will accompany the Registrant if he or she is entering the school property for the purpose of attending a performance, athletic event or other gathering that may include the presence of students.
- b. The principal may grant a visit-by-visit permission letter, or a year-long permission letter. (See Attachments 3 and 4)
4. If a student is a Registrant, please see Board Policy 5141 (Student Registered Sex Offenders – Entry on School Property).

### D. School Principal Responsibilities:

1. All PGCPS school sites must have at least one person designated to monitor the Airphone video intercom system. This employee shall be responsible for the pre-screening activities set forth above in section V.A.
2. All PGCPS school sites must have at least one person designated to monitor the VMS and visitor sign-in location, and to issue a visitor pass. This location will be in the main office or main entrance hallway.
3. Once a visitor's identification is scanned into the VMS, the system generates an electronic log and no physical sign-in sheet is required.
4. If the VMS is not operational and a paper visitor sign-in log is needed, it must include the visitor's full name and birthdate, the time the visitor signed in, where the visitor will be in the building, the purpose of the visit, and the time the visitor signed out. **Permission to visit the school may be rescinded if the visitor does not comply with the stated purpose of their visit or violates any policy or procedure.**
5. Schools shall maintain a copy of any paper sign-in sheet for large group gatherings for three (3) years.



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6. A standard school welcome sign must be placed on all exterior doors. The sign will instruct all visitors to report to the main office and present a government issued photo identification card.
  7. All exterior doors must be kept secure except designated building entrances where students access the facility from portable classrooms or from other outdoor activities, as appropriate.
- E. Visits are arranged as follows:

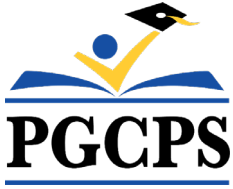
### **1. Classroom Visits and Conferences**

#### **a. Classroom Visits and Conferences by Parents/Guardians of Current Students**

- 1) The process to arrange a classroom visit or conference by parents/guardians of current students will be available from each school.
- 2) Such visits are at the discretion of the principal, but will not be permitted during testing.
- 3) Classroom visits and/or conferences by parents/guardians must be arranged at least 24 hours in advance.
- 4) Parents may be permitted to observe or participate in the evaluation process for infants, toddlers or students enrolled in early childhood programs or settings with special education or related services.
- 5) Classroom visits and conferences must be conducted in such a manner that the visits and/or conferences do not interfere with the classroom activities of any student in the class.
- 6) The principal may limit repeated or lengthy visits that may disrupt the educational environment.

#### **b. Classroom Visits in a Virtual Learning Environment by Parents/Guardians of Current Students**

- 1) Such visits are at the discretion of the principal, but may not be permitted during testing.



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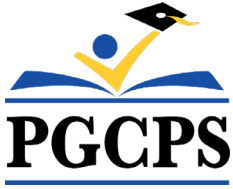
- 2) Classroom visits by parents/guardians must be arranged at least 24 hours in advance.
- 3) The principal reserves the right to limit the length of a virtual classroom visit to avoid disruption to the educational program, and normal operation of the class while also ensuring the safety, security, and privacy of students.
- 4) Google Chrome Remote Desktop (RD) should be used during a parent(s)/guardian(s) virtual classroom observation, in which the teacher and /or principal will share the one-time join code with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and then run the Zoom session. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will then join the session and watch the teacher's class. The parent(s)/guardian(s) is not permitted to participate in nor record the class session. When the teacher ends the RD session, the parent(s)/guardians(s) will no longer be able to watch the Zoom meeting. The principal/ designee will be present during the entire observation.
- 5) The principal may limit repeated visits that may disrupt the educational environment.

### **c. School Visits by Parents/Guardians of Prospective Students**

- 1) All schools are expected to welcome the opportunity to share the strength of their educational programs with parents/guardians of prospective students.
- 2) Each principal is responsible for establishing a process for school visits by parents/guardians of prospective students, which will include an opportunity at least once a month for parents/guardians of prospective students to visit the school and observe the educational program.
- 3) The process for parents/guardians of prospective students to arrange a school visit will be available from each school.

### **d. School Visits by School-aged Children Who Are Not Enrolled in the School**





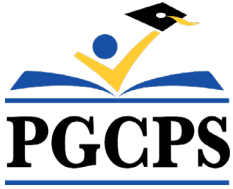
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- 1) Each principal is responsible for establishing a protocol regarding whether or not to allow school visits by school-aged children who are not enrolled in the school.
  - 2) The school-specific protocol will be established with consideration for the ages of the students and any possible disruption to the school day. Visits must be conducted in such a manner that the visit does not interfere with the classroom activities of any student in the school.
  - 3) In most cases, visits by school-aged children who are not enrolled in the school, if permitted by the school, should not be permitted for more than one school day.
- e. Classroom Visits and Conferences by Educational Advocates of Current Students**
- 1) The process to arrange a classroom visit or conference by educational advocates of current students will be available from each school.
  - 2) Such visits are at the discretion of the principal but will not be permitted during classroom/district and state testing or educational and related service evaluations (*e.g.*, speech and language assessments).
  - 3) Classroom visits and/or conferences by educational advocates must be arranged at least 24 hours in advance. Prior to the classroom visit, the parent's educational advocate must forward to the principal a signed release from the parent authorizing the advocate to observe the student in the educational setting.
  - 4) Classrooms visits may not last longer than one hour per visit and only two visits per quarter will be permitted to an educational advocate.
  - 5) Classroom visits and conferences must be conducted in such a manner that the visits and/or conferences do not interfere with the classroom activities of any student in the class.
  - 6) The principal/designee shall accompany the advocate during the classroom visit.
- f. Virtual Classroom Visits by Educational Advocates of Current Students**



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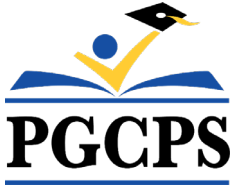
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- 1) Virtual classroom visits by educational advocates will not be allowed unless the privacy of the students can be maintained in a manner consistent with FERPA.
- 2) If a visit in a virtual classroom is permitted it must not be conducted during classroom/district and state testing or educational and related service evaluations (*e.g.*, speech and language assessments).
- 3) Virtual classroom visits must be arranged at least 24 hours in advance and cannot last longer than one hour per visit. Prior to the virtual classroom visit, the parent's educational advocate must forward to the principal a signed release from the parent authorizing the advocate to observe the student in the educational setting.
- 4) Only two visits per quarter will be permitted to an educational advocate.
- 5) Virtual classroom visits must be conducted in such a manner that the visits do not interfere with the educational program, the classroom activities of any student in the class, and the normal operation of the school while also ensuring the safety, security, and privacy of students.
- (6) Google Chrome Remote Desktop (RD) should be used during an advocate virtual classroom observation, in which the teacher and /or principal will share the one-time join code with the advocate and then run the Zoom session. The advocate will then join the session and watch the teacher's class. The advocate is not permitted to participate in nor record the class session. When the teacher ends the RD session, the advocate will no longer be able to watch the Zoom meeting. The principal/designee will be present during the entire observation.

## 2. Observations by Special Visitors

A special visitor(s) interested in observing a specific class or program must contact the Office of the Chief of School Support and Leadership and the Area Office to obtain approval for the observation. The Area Office may arrange for the observation or request that the individual make arrangements with the principal to observe the program.



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- F. 1. Subject to the exception below, requests by parents/guardians to have a tutor, counselor, psychologist, or attorney in their employ come to school to work with a student cannot be approved.
2. **Exception:** Community partnerships and agencies that provide mental health services to students through agreement with PGCPS’ Departments of Special Education and Student Services may have appropriate access to students at school for required services. These mental health professionals may include, but are not limited to: psychologists, counselors, social workers or behavior specialists.

### VI. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE:

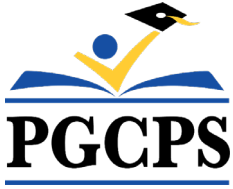
- A. In an effort to monitor compliance with this administrative procedure, monthly visitor data summary reports will be compiled using data from the electronic visitor management system by the Office of Government Relations, Compliance and Procedures and shared with the Chief of School Leadership and Support and the Superintendent.
- B. School principals must maintain a copy of any paper sign-in log used on any day the electronic VMS is not working properly on file for three (3) years.

### VII. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

- Maryland Code, Criminal Procedure Article, § 11-722
- Maryland Code, Education Article, § 26-102

### VIII. RELATED POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

- Board Policy 0106, Volunteer Services
- Board Policy 0126, Student Safety and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse
- Board Policy 5141, Student Registered Sex Offenders – Entry on School Property
- Administrative Procedure 2804.3, Safety and Security with Regard to Use of Exterior Doors
- Administrative Procedure 4215, Criminal History Checks, Employee Self-Reporting of Arrests, Criminal Charges, CPS Investigations and Findings & Incarceration
- Administrative Procedure 4216.6, Volunteer Services



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- IX. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THIS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE:** This administrative procedure originates with Safety and Security Service Department and School Support Division and will be updated as needed.
  - X. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** This administrative procedure cancels and supersedes Administrative Procedure 0500, dated August 27, 2018.
  - XI. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2024

Attachment 1 – Non-Parent/Guardian Ban Letter  
Attachment 2 – Parent/Guardian Ban Letter  
Attachment 3 – Visit-by-Visit Permission Letter  
Attachment 4 – One Year Permission Letter