

FOI Request - School Visits/Meetings with MPs or MSPs - 101003200069

PROTOCOL AND POLICY FOR VISITS BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OR MEMBERS OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT TO EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE ESTABLISHMENTS PROTOCOL FOR PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS AND REFERENDA

The following protocols and policy must be followed in the event of:

1. An invitation to an MP or an MSP to visit an establishment or a request by an MP or an MSP to visit an establishment.

2. The period immediately pre any election for Local Government, Scottish Parliament or Westminster Parliament or prior to any referendum.

1. Any invitation to an MP/MSP to visit an educational establishment should be referred to the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) (for the attention of the Head of Schools and Curriculum Development) prior to any such invitation being issued by any member of staff. It is highly likely that in most cases the request to invite will be approved but we must ensure fair and equitable treatment to all political groupings and avoid any potentially embarrassing situations. Similarly any establishment manager who receives a request from an MP or an MSP to visit their establishment should also in the first instance refer this to the Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) (for the attention of the Head of Schools and Curriculum Development) for consideration.

2. Parliamentary and Local Government Elections – In the immediate pre-election period it is important that the Council as a whole and service departments individually act to ensure that an even handed approach is adopted towards all political parties and groupings.

Therefore when a Council establishment is approached by a parliamentary candidate and/or their political representative or a local government candidate, requesting a visit then the candidate or their political representative will require to submit in writing to the relevant Director, their request including the proposed schedule and the names of those proposing to attend.

Where the Director deems that the request is reasonable, the establishment manager will be informed but the final decision regarding approval of requests considered reasonable by the Director will remain with the establishment manager.

In deciding whether to accede to a request, the establishment manager will take full account of:

- (a) The potential disruption to services
- (b) The impact upon clients and pupils
- (c) All photograph/filming must be outwith school premises and may not involve staff. In all other circumstances the media protocols must be followed.
- (d) The recognition that agreeing to an initial request may generate further requests which could not reasonably be refused.

The Council is confident that candidates will recognise these protocols are necessary safeguards and no way intended to be obstructive to the democratic process.