Principal’s Office

**Protocol for Senior External Visitors**

**Principles**

1. If a senior visitor is being invited to the College, it is important that proper protocol is observed and that an appropriate member of College staff meets guests and hosts visits.
2. In general, external visitors should be met and hosted by a member of College staff of equivalent standing. For example, a Chief Executive of a company, funding body or major school/college should be met by the Principal. Similarly, the Principal should meet other Vice-Chancellors, senior government heads, Chairs of Councils (local and county) and dignitaries such as Lord Lieutenant or High Sheriff. Division heads, research council programme managers and heads of smaller schools and colleges should be met by an appropriate individual such as Vice-Principal/Dean, Registrar, Head of Department.
3. Precise arrangements and the duration of meeting and hosting will be event specific. The remaining sections set out operational guidelines for planning and managing meetings with senior external visitors.

**Who Should Attend?**

1. The senior officers of the College have diaries that are complex because of the large number of appointments they have in any week and the need for them to react quickly to issues which emerge within and outside the College. Therefore any requirement for a senior officer to attend an event (meeting, reception, lecture etc.) needs to be booked with **as much notice as possible**.
2. For the most senior visitors, where a future change of date is likely to be difficult or represent poor protocol, proposed **dates must be agreed in advance** with the Principal’s Office before the individual or his/her organisation is contacted.
3. If a senior external visitor is **attending the College**, a representative of the College of equivalent status should be in attendance for at least part of the event. For example, if a government minister or senior civil servant is visiting the College, arrangements should be made for the Principal or other appropriate senior officer to, as a minimum, greet the visitor.
4. The number of senior officers invited to an event should be **agreed in advance and proportional** to the scale of the event. For example, a small event or might require a single senior officer, whilst a large event might require the full senior team. An early decision should be made as to the number of senior officers required at an event and agreed made with the Principal’s Office. The Principal’s Office will then identify an appropriate senior officer or officers who would be available to attend. Formal invitations should be issued only after the senior officer guest list has been agreed. ‘Mass mailing’ of invitations to all senior officers should be avoided as this can often lead to too many senior officers attending an event, with result that they are unavailable to cover other events.
5. When requesting attendance of a senior officer, a brief description of the event should be provided; which includes:
* name and purpose of the event
* location of the event, including any specific requirements to be provided by the Principal’s Office if located in a senior officer’s own room
* proposed travel arrangements, if not located on the campus
* expected attendees (either names or type of attend if specific individuals not identified)
* an outline of the role to be played by the senior officer(s), including when and where any speech or welcome is to be made
* any other requirements, such as dress code, matters of protocol etc.
1. If more than one senior officer is to be present, the most senior officer should normally take the lead role.
2. If a senior officer is to play an important part in the event, such as make a speech, the timing and order of the event and his/her participation must be agreed in advance of the publishing of a programme or issue of invitations.
3. Where the desired senior officer is not available, the Principal’s Office will suggest an alternative.

**Diary Dates**

1. The Principal’s Office will normally hold dates in diaries for up to one week, unless a longer period has been agreed at the time for reserving the date. Dates held beyond one week (or the agreed date) will be released by the office once the *hold date* has passed. It is the responsibility of the event organiser to extend the *hold date* if the agreed period is to be exceeded.
2. If a date is being held and is no longer required, the Principal’s Office must be notified as soon as possible so that the date can be released and booked for other events.
3. Confirmation of a date should be made as soon as possible.
4. When a date is reserved or confirmed, the start and end time of the senior officer’s attendance must be specified. It is not possible to hold an entire day if only a small proportion of the day is required.

**Event Requirements**

1. When an event has been confirmed, the Principal’s Office must be notified of the details of the event or already previously notified arrangements confirmed.
2. Discussions should take place, in advance of an event, as to how a senior officer will be expected to participate in the event and to ascertain their requirements. For example, different officers have different preferences when delivering a speech, welcome etc….where they stand, will there be a lectern and so on.

**Briefing**

1. A full briefing should be provided for each senior officer attending an event. Briefings should be provided 5 working days prior to the event (or departure if the event requires travel or is part of a wider trip). Where appropriate updates should be issued, such as changes to the invitee acceptance list. Tickets, passes and other documents should also be issued in advance.
2. **Advance delivery of all briefings and materials is essential** as senior officers may not be in the College immediately prior to an event.