



## Governor School Visits Policy

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### 1. Aims

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose, so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved. This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the school. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. When they do so, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting the school and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

## 2. Guidance and scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the [maintained schools governance guide](#) (section 3.3.3).

### Occasional visits (e.g. learning walks)

Governors will visit the school on an occasional basis as such visits enable governors to:

- Fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school
- Observe whether the school is implementing its policies and improvement plans
- Observe how its policies and improvement plans are working in practice

Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish.

### Focused visits (e.g. formal monitoring visits)

Governors will also take part in focused governor monitoring visits, which should be:

- In line with school improvement plan (SDP) priorities
- For a specific purpose linked to the governing board's responsibilities, such as safeguarding
- Pre-arranged with the headteacher

### Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school

## 3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the Governing Body's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

New Governors will be accompanied by their mentor for their first visit and up to a year if required

There are 2 types of visits:

- Formal monitoring visits, where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member
- Learning walks, where governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

Governors will carry out school visits according to the following schedule:

Governors	Frequency and purpose	School staff
Health & Safety SEN Safeguarding	Termly 1:1 monitoring visits	Corresponding leads
SDP	December/March/June - Monitoring Visit	Relevant staff
	April Data Monitoring Visit to share the report with June C&S meeting	Phase leaders
All Governors	At least one visit to school per year relating to their specific governor role	Corresponding leads

#### 4. Before a visit

Before a visit governors will:

- Notify the headteacher and the chair before scheduling a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of courtesy
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff in order to avoid friction and ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the chair, the headteacher and/or relevant member of staff ahead of the visit
- Send questions in advance to the staff member, ideally at least a week before the meeting, so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Make the school of any accessibility requirements they may have.

Before a visit staff will:

- Commit to attending the arranged meeting
- Come with prepared to answer the questions received in advance of the meeting.

#### 5. During a visit

During a visit governors should conduct themselves appropriately in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

During a visit governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the headteacher ahead of the visit
- Always wear a visitor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them

- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors after the visit
- Governors should report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as per the Safeguarding policy.

## 6. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable [using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) or Appendix B (learning walk), as appropriate. In completing the report, governors will ensure to:

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role
- Once complete, governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:
  - A more experienced governor for feedback, usually their mentor – if they've been in place for less than 1 year]
  - The relevant staff member, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
  - The headteacher, as a courtesy
  - The chair of the governing board or the relevant committee, as agreed

## **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the FGB. Any amendments will be presented at a meeting of the full governing body.

## **8. Equality Review**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

## **9. Links with other policies**

- Governors code of conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: plan the visit	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.	
Relevant school objective or priority This might be taken from the school development plan (SDP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.	
Questions to ask Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SDP or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.	

Part 2: in the meeting
<p>What is the school doing within this area of focus?</p> <p><i>Tips:</i> <i>Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'</i> <i>Do not be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with</i> <i>Remember you are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them – you remain an observer</i> <i>When writing the report, use neutral language and do not name individual teachers and pupils</i></p>

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

*Remember:*

*Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area*

*Where a positive impact has not been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*

*Add any further evidence you would like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact*

What successes stood out and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors

## Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk

Learning walks are where you will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: plan the walk	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
<p>Agreed focus</p> <p><i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.</i></p>	
<p>Relevant school objective or priority</p> <p><i>This might be taken from the SDP objectives or the school's overarching vision.</i></p>	
<p>Questions to ask</p> <p><i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SDP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i></p> <p><i>Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i></p>	<p>Visit The Key <a href="#">governors' question bank</a> for questions specific to the purpose of your visit.</p>

Part 2: on the walk
<p>General notes from discussions with staff</p> <p><i>Tips:</i></p> <p><i>Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me...'</i></p> <p><i>Do not be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with</i></p>

*Remember you are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them*

*When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers*

General notes from discussions with pupils

*Remember:*

*Do not ask them for pupils' views on a specific teacher*

*Do not record pupils' names*

General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

*Note:*

*Whether the governors' vision of the school is replicated on the ground*

*Any issues with the school site you see e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources*

What stood out as a success on the learning walk and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors