

## **GOVERNORS VISIT POLICY**

**November 2016**

**Responsibility:** Anya Salisbury and Marian Reid

**Review Date:** November 2018



### **Introduction**

Well-planned visits can add immeasurably to governors' awareness of the school and Children's Centre, its staff and its pupils. Conversely, visits by governors, if not carefully planned and agreed, can lead to awkwardness and even suspicion between governors and teachers. Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school but they do need to be able to visit to develop their understanding of how the school works enabling them to better fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school. Please refer to the DfE Governance Handbook which is in the secure section of the governors website. This policy recognises the varying degrees of commitment individual governors are able to give and establishes the framework for visits.

### **Why visit?**

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Visiting the school is one of the ways in which this can be achieved. A template linked to the aide memoir is included in this policy and should be completed as a written record following a visit to the school. This should then be e-mailed to the Clerk of Governors at [ntagart\\_clerk@btinternet.com](mailto:ntagart_clerk@btinternet.com) and will be distributed to all Governors.

Our school has agreed that:

- all Governors should sign the Governors Visiting Log when visiting the school, indicating the purpose of their agreed visit.
- individual governors will be linked to a class and will meet with the class teacher to discuss and gain an understanding of their subject leader role and the curriculum area(s) that they lead.
- individual governors are identified to monitor the targets in the School Development Plan. Those Governors are expected to meet with the member of staff leading that developmental area at least once a school year, which would normally involve some form of school and/or classroom visit. A written report should be submitted two weeks before the full governor's meeting in the Spring Term. (See later guidance and template)
- OFSTED assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This depends on governors assessing performance data in the context of an understanding of what happens in the classroom.
- When there is a particular need, such as joining in staff training sessions and interviews or meetings with non-school personnel the purpose(s) and attendees of such visits would normally be agreed when arranged and therefore fall outside the scope of this policy.

### **Governor visits are not:**

- a form of inspection in terms of making judgements about the expertise of the teacher. This is a task for the Headteacher and/or other education professionals,
- to check and monitor the progress of their own children. This should correctly be pursued through the parent/teacher relationship,
- for pursuing personal agendas or arriving with inflexible, pre-conceived ideas,
- to monopolize teachers' time and disrupt the normal activities of the school.

### **Ground Rules for Visits**

The following ground rules, or protocols, have been established in order to maximise the effectiveness of any visits. The protocols should be used according to need and consequently, not all will apply in every situation. A School Visits Aide Memoire is provided as part of this policy.

	Always	Never
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agree purpose of visit to allow teaching staff time to prepare</li> <li>• arrange details of visit</li> <li>• agree level of confidentiality</li> <li>• prepare in advance, e.g. by reading relevant material</li> <li>• agree how/who to give any post-visit feedback <sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• turn up unannounced</li> </ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the context of the lesson/class being observed</li> <li>• observe and support any class guidelines or rules</li> <li>• fulfil agreed purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• walk in with a clipboard</li> <li>• interrupt the teacher or distract the children</li> <li>• expect to speak to everybody and to see everything</li> </ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• thank the teacher/staff and, where appropriate, the pupils</li> <li>• discuss the visit with the teacher</li> <li>• consider how to improve the effectiveness of future visits</li> <li>• follow up on agreed actions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leave without a word</li> </ul>

### **Policy Review**

It is recommended that this policy be reviewed biannually by the headteacher and the Chair of Governors, or nominated deputies, to ensure that the policy remains effective. Suggested areas for review include:

- whether there has been a reasonable distribution of visits during the previous two years, across subjects, between classes, year groups and teachers;
- are the visits achieving the benefits, for staff and governors, that were anticipated;
- consideration of how to make the policy and practice even better.

### **Potential Benefits for Governors**

- to recognise and celebrate successes
- to develop working relationships with the staff
- to recognise different teaching styles
- to understand the environment in which teachers work
- to see policies and the work of the school in action
- to be informed in order to make better decisions
- to support the school by understanding resource constraints.

### **Potential Benefits for Teachers**

- to ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- to get to know the governors
- to understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- to have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- to highlight the need for particular resources

***Please use the above aide memoir to help you plan and record your governor monitoring visit. It is important that you have read the Policy for Governor Visits prior to visiting.***

<sup>1</sup> ***Giving Feedback***

*It is recommended that feedback be delivered verbally or in writing, depending on the focus and length of visit. Feedback given to the teacher will normally take the form of positive comments and questions; suggestions and concerns should be discussed with the head teacher. Feedback may be given to the Governing Body or appropriate committee, if relevant and agreed in advance.*

## SCHOOL VISIT AIDE MEMOIRE

### What is the purpose of my visit?

- Who/what has prompted my decision to visit?
- Is the reason for the visit specific or general?
- What are my expectations, and those of others?
- How can my visit benefit the teacher and/or school?

### How shall I carry it out?

- What particular area(s) of the school am I interested in?
- What particular activities am I interested in?
- What particular age-groups am I interested in?
- Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?
- Can I arrange the visit to avoid any extra work by the school?
- What questions should I ask, and to whom?

### Did it achieve my aim?

- To what extent did I address the reasons for my visit?
- Which of my questions did I answer?
- To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations?
- What difficulties did I meet and why?

### Is there any follow up?

- Have I recorded my experiences?
- Did I give feedback, as agreed, to the head and staff?
- Have I prepared a short verbal/written report for the next governors' meeting?
- How can I build on this for the next visit?

As part of your monitoring you should consider how well we promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and whether there are opportunities provided for them to develop their self esteem and confidence.

## Defining Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Pupils' **spiritual** development is shown by their:

- ✚ beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values
- ✚ sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
- ✚ use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- ✚ willingness to reflect on their experiences

Pupils' **moral** development is shown by their:

- ✚ ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and their readiness to apply this understanding in their own lives
- ✚ understanding of the consequences of their actions
- ✚ interest in investigating, and offering reasoned views about, moral and ethical issues.

Pupils' **social** development is shown by their:

- ✚ use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- ✚ willingness to participate in a variety of social settings, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- ✚ interest in, and understanding of, the way communities and societies function at a variety of levels.

Pupils' **cultural** development is shown by their:

- ✚ understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage
- ✚ willingness to participate in, and respond to, for example, artistic, musical, sporting, mathematical, technological, scientific and cultural opportunities
- ✚ interest in exploring, understanding of, and respect for cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

Finally your visit should also provide opportunity to observe and feedback to governors, evidence of the behavior and safety of pupils within school.

# RECORD OF GOVERNOR VISITS

Governor:

Date:

## The Focus of My Visit

## My Visit (bullet points)

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## Social, Moral, Spiritual And Cultural (SMSC) Development

## Behaviour and Safety