



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

May 2016

To be reviewed May 2020

Aims of the policy

- To help governors feel confident about visiting their school.
- To be clear about roles and responsibilities of governors when undertaking visits.
- To understand how visits fit with expectations.

Purpose of the visits

All visits need a clear purpose, which might include:

- learning more about the work and organisation of the school
- keeping up to date with developments in particular areas
- offering visible support with aspects of the school's activities
- reviewing progress on the school development plan
- assisting in the fulfillment of a specialist Governor role
- assisting the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duty
- assisting the governing body in making informed decisions

It is crucially important to make clear in advance the status of a formal visit to school, when undertaken on behalf of the governing body.

As well as the purpose of the visit it is also important to understand what the visit is not for.

- Governors are not inspectors or advisers; it is not their job to assess the professional competence of individual teachers or make judgements about pupil's work
- Governors must not pursue issues that relate to the day to day management of the school as this is the responsibility of the Head Teacher.
- Governors should not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible preconceived ideas.

Frequency of visits

Governors are expected to make a formal visit to school at least every two years. Governors may also be visiting school on an informal basis.

Before the visit

- Agree a date and aims of the visit with the Head Teacher
- Clarify the purpose of the visit; its link to the School Improvement Plan
- Discuss a visit plan with the Head Teacher well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable for the purpose identified,
- If the visit is to involve any member of staff, then that member of staff must be fully involved in the planning of the visit,
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare any questions for staff in advance. The staff may be able to guide you on this. Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?
- Discuss with the Head Teacher if any supporting information is available - OFSTED report, development plan, performance data,
- Ensure that you are familiar with health and safety procedures including what to do in the event of a fire.

During the visit

- Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.

- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and your role in the classroom.
- Look relaxed. Blend in. Avoid being conspicuous. Get involved if the teacher has agreed that this would be appropriate.
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection – don't take a clipboard!
- Observe discreetly. Remember that note taking can be disconcerting.
- Don't distract the teacher from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Be courteous, not critical. Be quick to praise,
- Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit.
- Remember that teaching and learning will have changed since your days at school

After the visit

- give some time or thought to reflection
- take the time to talk to staff in order to ask questions and to clarify any issue you are unclear about.
- thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a governor;
- make notes as soon as possible after your visit while it is still fresh in your mind;
- discuss your experiences with the Head Teacher,
- write up your report and circulate a draft to the Head Teacher and any staff involved within 2 weeks of the visit,
- be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved before presenting it to the Governing body.
- present your report to the next meeting of the full governing body. If the visit is a subject-link visit, governors will be asked to give a verbal report to the governing body meeting.
- if appropriate prepare a report to go into the school newsletter

Note

Kirklees has an information sheet, Visiting Your School. This sheet is on Onehub with the other Governor Information sheets.

Agreed Protocol for Governor Visits to School

Governors visit our school to enhance their understanding of the school's work, to help them discharge their responsibilities ensuring informed decisions making takes place. We have an agreed schedule of governors' visits to the school, reflecting the priorities in the school improvement plan and the specific interests and responsibilities of governors, and we keep a file of visit reports.

	Always	Never
Before	<p>Agree purpose of visit; related to School Improvement Plan</p> <p>Agree how much time (a timetable is a good idea)</p> <p>Agree when you will discuss the visit with the Head Teacher and teachers involved</p> <p>Consider practicalities (time of arrival, who to report to, how to make notes, breaks and lunch)</p> <p>Find out how each teacher wants you to contribute within the lesson</p>	<p>Turn up unannounced</p>
During	<p>Introduce yourself to staff and pupils</p> <p>Note and praise the positive</p> <p>Ask questions to increase understanding</p> <p>Remain focused on the purpose of the visit</p>	<p>Arrive with preconceived ideas</p> <p>Interrupt the teacher</p> <p>Make professional judgements about staff expertise (governors are not inspectors)</p> <p>Pursue your own agenda/ focus on the progress of your own child or children known to you.</p> <p>Monopolise the children's or the staff's time</p>