

Meltham CE (C) School



Governor Visit Policy

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1.0 Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to define the purpose of governor visits to school
- to provide guidance on how a visit should be conducted
- to provide a framework for a report following a visit

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the governing body to decide on the frequency and focus of each governor visit to school. It is the responsibility of the visiting governor to comply with this policy in the way the visit is conducted and how the findings are reported.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Purpose of Governors' Visits to School

A school visit provides an opportunity for a governor to familiarise themselves with the school and to develop a knowledge and understanding of how the school operates at a strategic level. This is essential to inform questioning and decision-making, to monitor progress of current objectives outlined in a school development plan (SDP) and to allow planning of future improvements and development.

A governor visit to school is reported using the agreed format (Appendix 4.1). The report allows the knowledge and information gained to be shared with other governors and members of the school community, enabling the governing body to fulfill its responsibilities.

Where possible, formal governor school visits are scheduled to take place once each half term, and the current visit schedule is in Appendix 4.2. The purpose of each visit is decided by the governing body and should reflect the priorities in the School Development Plan only.

A governor does not have a personal right to be in the school and governors are not appointed to visit the school on behalf of the governing body. Each visit is a fact-finding and learning experience for the governor. As the head teacher is responsible in law for the day-to-day management of the school, each visit is arranged with the head teacher and should never cause disruption to the education of the children.

Governors' visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection and they will not make judgements about the professional expertise of members of staff, especially with regard to the quality of teaching and learning. Judgements around professional expertise and teaching and learning are expressly the responsibility of the head teacher.

A governor's school visit is not about:

- Checking on the progress of a governor's own or known children
- Monopolising staff time
- Arriving with inflexible or pre-conceived ideas
- Pursuing personal agendas or issues

3.2 Before the visit

Before a school visit governors are advised to read the Kirklees Information Leaflet : Governor Visits to Schools (Appendix 4.3) and comply with the guidance given. Each visit is arranged in advance with the head teacher and any other staff who may be involved. Preparation for the visit may include:

- Clarifying the purpose of the visit and any links to the school development plan
- Confirmation of the date, time and any administrative arrangements
- Discussion of the agenda or itinerary with the head teacher and other staff.
- Gathering any relevant supporting information such as performance data, behavioural data or information about new strategies
- Preparation of questions or particular points to be observed in relation to the purpose of the visit.

Very rarely situations may arise which cause the teacher to ask the visiting governor to withdraw from the classroom (for example extreme child behaviour requiring positive handling, disclosure of inappropriate information by a child or a medical incident). In addition, the head teacher may require governors to amend their schedule in response to a teacher's emotional wellbeing. If this

occurs the governor will immediately comply with the teacher or the head teacher's wishes.

3.3 During the visit

Governors follow guidelines issued by Kirklees (Appendix 4.3) in order to take full advantage of the opportunity offered by a visit to school. These can be summarised as follows:

- Be prepared, organised and punctual
- Follow the administrative and safety procedures in the school
- Report to the school office to sign in on arrival
- Fulfill the agreed purpose of the visit
- Observe school or classroom guidelines
- Jot down any discussion points
- Don't interrupt or the teaching or distract or talk to the teacher while he or she is teaching
- Remember visits are not inspections and be mindful of staff wellbeing and mental health
- Thank the teacher, support staff and pupils for allowing you to visit.

Depending on the focus and purpose of the visit these points may be relevant when visiting the school:

- The class or group visited - number, gender split, number of SEND registered or in receipt of an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), amount of support, any issues specific to the group
- The general behaviour - pupil attitudes to the school, to staff and learning, the atmosphere in the classroom, the use of class support
- The Teaching and Learning Strategy employed - the structure of the lesson, for example learning objectives, input (teaching), discussion, question and answer, practical tasks, on-going teaching points, plenary/summary
- The impact of any policies, especially any new policies or initiatives
- The content of the curriculum
- Extra-curricular activities
- School facilities and the general environment, accessibility for all,
- Resources - adequate or not, allocation of budget
- Any responses or comments from children

3.4 After the visit

Before leaving the school, if possible the governor will see the head teacher or deputy head teacher for a brief discussion and if necessary, raise any immediate concerns.

As soon as possible after a visit, governors record their observations and any discussions which took place with the teacher, support staff and pupils and use these to produce a report in the agreed format (Appendix 4.1) of no more than one side of A4. It is good practice for the report

to be sent to the head teacher, ideally by email, within two weeks of the visit.

The draft report is then circulated by the head teacher to any other staff involved for their comments to be added. When the report has been discussed and agreed by all involved it is circulated to other members of the governing body and filed on the school server.

A governor visit report may be shared at a meeting of the governing body or one of its committees, in which case the report will be attached to the agenda for the meeting and the governor will present a summary at the meeting.

Governors should be fully aware of issues relating to confidentiality and ensure that individual children are not identifiable from the feedback.

