



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

VISIT POLICY & PROTOCOLS 2017-2018

Introduction

Governing boards have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school, its management and the curriculum. The main vehicle for this monitoring is through the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team acting as a critical friend to provide support and challenge to inform debate on statutory duties. Other forms include written reviews, statistical information and the Head teacher's report. Ofsted expect Governors to know a vast amount of information about the school. A Governors visit to the school is essential in fulfilling these expectations.

Approach to Visits

The core work of the school is learning & teaching. In order to experience the work of the school Governors need to visit the classrooms. Each department has a nominated link governor and visits will foster a greater understanding between teachers, management and governors.

The Governing body as a whole is committed to making the minimum commitment of the equivalent of one day's visit per term to spend in the classroom and teaching spaces. It is important that a flexible approach is adopted for those governors who cannot visit the school during the day, so that they are not made to feel marginalised or that they are failing to fulfil their role in the visit process or sharing of information.

Governors should not observe a lesson if there is a conflict of interest, e.g. parent governor observing their own child's lesson.

The purpose of visits:

- recognise and celebrate success
- develop relationships with the staff
- get to know the students
- recognise different learning and teaching styles
- understand the environment in which teachers and other staff and students work
- see policies and schemes of work in action
- inform discussion with the Head teacher, SLT and fellow Governors

The Governor's visit is not:

- about making judgements about the expertise of the teacher
- to check on the progress of their own children or the children of others
- to pursue personal agendas
- to monopolise the teachers' time
- an inspection
- a departmental review

Protocols for school visits

Before the visit Governors will:

- Contact the head teacher or Senior team to agree a date and time for the visit
- Arrange details of the visit, which classes will be visited and focus of visit
- Ensure staff involved in the visit are aware of and have been consulted on the timing and purpose of the visit
- Agree the level of confidentiality

During the visit:

- Sign in at Reception and wear an identity badge
- Ensure that you are aware of health and safety procedures including what to do in the event of a fire
- Ensure the class teacher is aware and comfortable that you may take notes on the area of focus.
- Agree your role within the lesson – observer or interacting with students
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Question should be noted until an appropriate time for discussion and not interrupt teaching

After the visit:

- Remember to thank the teacher and students when appropriate
- Share observations with the member of staff concerned at a convenient time, which may be in person, via email or telephone.
- Gain permission from the staff involved to use their identity in your report. Remember that student's names should not be printed.

Non classroom visits

These will take the form of, for example, Health and Safety audits and the basic rules above are applicable but will be modified to fit the purpose of the visit.

Examples of foci for visits

- Observation of a group of students working on a task
- Noting the relative numbers of questions and responses to the teacher to groups of children e.g. PP and non-PP
- Observation of a specific feature of school work, for example DEaR
- Shadowing a student to all lessons for one day
- Participation in an internal review
- Participation in an external review
- Participating in a Health and Safety review
- Meeting with key staff about a specific area of the school's work e.g. SEND

Examples of foci for meeting with Head of Faculty/Key Stage

- Discussion of student standards
- Discussion of progress
- Preparation for internal/external review
- Planning
- Teaching and Learning

Examples of Student Tracking

- Following a child in a particular course of study

- Following a child in a particular year group
- Following a child with special needs

Feedback form

The purpose of the form is to enable the Governor to ensure that the objectives of the visit are met and that everyone involved obtains the greatest benefit from the visit. The completed form, and other relevant notes, will be kept on file as evidence of the visit. The information should be shared with the class teacher observed as stated above.

It is then expected that the visiting Governor will have a general discussion about the visit with the Head of Department and the Head teacher, or deputy. Normally feedback will be oral on the day and a draft written observation will be sent to the Head teacher before being submitted to the appropriate committee.