



Governors' Visits Policy

Visits to schools by those governing can be enormously useful in helping the Governors carry out their role. This role is largely strategic, not operational, and includes ensuring vision is turned into reality, ethos is embedded and progress is being made against the strategic plan.

Visiting the school in person provides a valuable insight into how the school operates as well as an opportunity to put other information in context. A well-planned programme of visits forms an important element of the governing body's strategic role.

Even those who are familiar with the school as staff or parents will find school visits important for developing their knowledge of the school from a governance perspective. They also help to build positive relationships with staff and demonstrate a commitment to the school.

Expectations for visits:

Every visit should have a clear, prearranged focus in order for time to be used productively. The focus should generally relate to the governing body's monitoring of the school strategy or to develop an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Visits should involve the member of staff responsible for the objective or target meeting with the member of the governing body in order to provide background information and context, showing the initiative in action, and if possible the opportunity for them to speak to children or other staff members who are affected by it.

During any visit to the school it is important to remember that the role of those governing is strategic, not operational.

The itinerary will follow from the focus of the visit. For most a meeting with the relevant member(s) of staff will be involved; for some, spending time in

the classroom talking to the children about their work or the resources they use may be an appropriate part of the visit. Sometimes a focus group of children or staff would be useful e.g. if the Governor wanted to explore attitudes to an attendance policy.

Most of the time school visits will have a key focus on the governing body's monitoring role, but there may be some occasions where this won't always be the case. For example, a new member of the governing body may 'tour' the school as part of their induction or those governing may attend a parents' evening as a means of engaging with parents. It can also be useful for members of the governing body to meet with School Council or to sit in on meetings.

It is important for those governing to avoid giving any impression that they are visiting to judge or inspect teachers' performance.

There may also be visits to school for less formal occasions such as school plays or celebration events. Governing body's may choose not to count these as formal visits but visiting governors should nevertheless follow the school visit's protocol as appropriate.

Regularity of visits:

The National Governance Association recommends that each individual board member visits the school at least once a year but no more than once a term. This keeps visits to a sustainable and pragmatic level and also ensures visits are spread out over the academic year.

A visit does not involve spending the whole day in school. A well-planned and utilised hour at the beginning or end of the school day can be sufficient for a productive visit and should be manageable for those with work or family responsibilities.

Individuals may also spend time in school in a non-governance capacity. Parent governors will visit the school in relation to their child's education, staff governors for their jobs, and other governing body members may volunteer in the schools in other ways such as listening to children read. It is important to keep these roles separate from that of governing and to be clear about when you are visiting in a governance capacity.

Protocol for visits (see Appendix B):

Governors do not have the right to visit the school unannounced and it is vital to plan school visits in advance, especially if they involve visiting classrooms. Visits should be part of a planned programme agreed by the whole governing body and linked to the school strategy.

Each member of staff who will be involved in the visit should also know the purpose of the visit and what to expect. This should be coordinated directly through the head teacher who will confirm details of the visit with the staff member themselves.

Governors should also be familiar with the school's Code of Conduct prior to any visit. Confidentiality must be adhered to. Comments should be limited to the head teacher with who the visit was arranged but not with other staff or with parents. Individual children or staff members should not be identified in school visit reports.

Governors must report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors and to follow Worth Primary School's safeguarding procedures.

Governors should be mindful that they are representing the whole governing body through their words and actions.

If visiting a classroom, the governor must arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning process, and follow the agreed purpose of the visit. Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom. At the end of the visit thank everyone concerned including the children.

Governors should avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.

Reviewing the visit

After each visit to the school, individuals should take time to reflect and consider anything they might do differently in future visits.

Following completion of the agreed monitoring programme the governor should report back to the governing body or committee as appropriate.

A 'Governor Visit Report' (see appendix A) should be completed after each visit. A draft should be shared with the head teacher and any other members

of staff involved in the visit and when agreed a final version will be included in the papers for discussion in the next governing body meeting.

Related documentation

Appendix A - Model Visit Report (page 5)

Appendix B- Protocol for visits (page 6)

Updated by Tracey Sandy: June 2018
Head of School

Next review: June 2019

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A
Governor Visit Report

Name:	Date:
Focus of visit (link to strategy and SDP)	
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at specific resources, having lunch etc	
What have I learned as a result of my visit? (relate this back to the focus of visit)	
Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have:	
Actions for the governing body to consider:	

Appendix B

Protocol for visits

Governors visit the school to enhance their understanding of the school's work and to help fulfil their responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the school.

We have an agreed schedule of governors' visits to the school, reflecting the priorities in the school development plan and the specific interests and responsibilities of governors, and we keep a file of visit reports.

	ALWAYS	NEVER
BEFORE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the visit at a governing body meeting • Arrange a mutually convenient time • Discuss the visit with the head teacher and ensure that any member of staff who will be involved in the visit understands the arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn up unannounced • Approach staff directly without the approval of the head teacher
DURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present yourself in a way which matches the professionalism expected of school staff • Only enter classrooms and other areas of the school following invitation by a member of staff • Keep to the role agreed • Be flexible- the education of the pupils is of overriding importance • Be courteous and professional throughout, including thanking members of staff before leaving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress inappropriately • Use a clipboard or take notes whilst visiting a classroom • Assume a different role to that agreed • Make assumptions • Check on the progress of individual children • Walk around the school unaccompanied
AFTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share any concerns with the chair and the Head teacher • Complete a short visit report form • Ensure that school visits is an agenda item at the governing body meetings and that any findings are discussed • Send a thank you email to those that contributed to the success of the visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make comments regarding the teacher's conduct of the lesson or individual students • Refer to individual teachers or pupils in the report form, even in a positive light • Gossip about the visit