



St Mary Abbots
Church of England
Primary School

**Governor Visits
Policy**

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Governing Bodies have a responsibility to monitor and promote the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Visiting the classrooms is one way in which this can be achieved. Governors are an important and integral part of the school community and are welcome in school. They are expected to be involved in a formal way through their governorship and are also encouraged to be involved in an informal way.

2. Background

2.1 It is essential that Governors see classes at work and be familiar with the life of the school during the working day. This enables them to be good ambassadors of the school and increases their knowledge base, so that they can make wise decisions.

2.2 In order to support Governors in their role they should ensure that they undertake appropriate training.

2.3 Governors have no automatic right as individuals to visit the school and it is crucial that they and the staff understand the Governors' role - in particular that Governors do not have an inspectorial role and have no right to go into school without notice.

2.4 The Governing Body (GB) has all the powers in relation to schools (corporate) and a Governor has no individual powers at all. Everyone concerned should understand that Governors go into school primarily to learn and not to judge. Most visits occur because the GB has decided it can be an important way for Governors to understand the progress of activities and priorities on the School Improvement Plan (SIP). There will be other reasons however such as building Governor.

3. Formal Visits

3.1 Governors attached to the Curriculum Committee or with a specific area of responsibility should arrange an appointment to discuss how to proceed with the link arrangement.

3.2 Governors will always make an appointment with the Headteacher when they want to come into school, not just drop in.

3.3 The reason for the visit should be outlined e.g. curriculum area/learning walk etc.

3.4 The visit should promote both educational awareness and goodwill.

3.5 The visiting governor should be both sensitive and positive towards staff, pupils and the school environment.

3.6 Governors are not inspectors and will not make professional judgements about teaching and learning.

3.7 Governors should be aware of the need for confidentiality and be familiar with the Safeguarding Policy.

4. Objectives

4.1 To understand the way the school works, its context, achievements and difficulties.

4.2 To foster good relations with the Head teacher and staff

4.3 To gain knowledge that will help Governors make more effective decisions.

4.4 To gain or increase knowledge of the complexities of teaching SEN pupils and obtain a greater understanding of their needs.

4.5 To monitor curriculum areas in relation to the school improvement plan.

5. Frequency

5.1 Each Governor should aim to make at least visit per school year which could be visiting an assembly/class assembly or church service.

5.2 These should be arranged so that at least one visit takes place each term from a member of the Curriculum Committee or member of the Governing Body.

6. Reporting

6.1 Governors should agree the focus of the visit before every visit to the school. A report on each Governor Visit should be completed and given to the school (Appendix 1). This will be shared with:

- The classteacher
- The Head teacher
- The relevant Committee (if any)
- The full Governing Body.

6.2 In the unlikely event that there is any aspect of the visit that concerns you; please take it to the Headteacher first, not the class teacher.

7. Visit Guidelines

7.1 All visits will be conducted in accordance with the protocol for Governor visits. (See Code Of Conduct for Governors).

7.2 Agree in advance with the teacher your role in the classroom (observer, participation, involvement with pupils etc.)

7.3 Remember you are there in a supportive role

7.4 Remember to complete a visit form afterwards.

7.5 If you see something you don't understand or need clarification on, this should be discussed afterwards with the classteacher if at all possible or Headteacher if it is a matter related to Safeguarding.

PROTOCOL FOR GOVERNOR VISITS

Preparing for a visit:

- Check the agreed policy for governors' visits. Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Improvement Plan? What are the relevant school policies?
- Discuss an agenda with the Headteacher well in advance usually at a Curriculum Committee meeting or Safeguarding Committee meeting. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable.
- Complete the Governors' visit checklist, to guide governors' visits.
- Consider how you as a governor will integrate into the lesson
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing.
- Discuss with the Headteacher if any supporting information is available - Ofsted report, improvement plan, scheme of work.

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the Governing Body; it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the Governing Body.
- Be punctual. Keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be.
- Get involved with the children if the teacher has agreed that this would be appropriate.
- Remember it is a visit not an inspection.
- Observe discreetly. Remember that excessive note taking can be disconcerting and may make your visit look like an inspection. A Governor checklist is attached for preparation.

- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Be courteous, friendly not critical. Interact, don't interrupt.
- Remember why you are there. Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit.
- Listen to staff and pupils.

After

- Discuss what you have observed with the HT/Committee members afterwards. It may not be appropriate or timely to discuss with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider whether it has been achieved.
- Thank the teacher for supporting you in your role as a Governor. Be open, honest and positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind.
- Discuss your observations with the Headteacher/DHT. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board.
- Agree with the Headteacher how and when you will report on your visit to the Governing Body.
- Reflect: how did that go? Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learned more about the school? Have I helped the Governing Body fulfil its duties? Has it given me any ideas for future visits?

Reporting your visit

- Complete a report of Governor visit (Appendix 1) This should include a short summary 'as a lay governor' of what you learned during the visit and the overall impression that was made. This will be easier if the visit had a focus.
- It would be polite to circulate a draft to the Headteacher for them to check the accuracy and clarity. Be prepared to amend it. Aim to achieve a report that is agreed by those involved.

Circulate this prior to the next appropriate committee/Governing Body meeting.

GOVERNORS' VISIT FORM

Name of Governor:	Curriculum Area or Focus:	
Class/classes visited:		
Class teacher/KS:		
Objectives of visit: 1. 2. 3.		
Brief Notes:		
Signature of visiting governor(s):		Date: