

# Governors' Visits Policy and Code of Practice

## 1. Governors Visit School:

- to demonstrate their friendship and commitment to the school and support for the Head of School staff and students.
- to enable them to make better informed contributions to the processes of policy making and strategic planning for the school.

**Governors visit the school to learn about it – we are not there to make judgements.**

## 2. Through Visiting, Governors Seek To:

- develop a greater understanding of the school
- gain an understanding of a particular curriculum area or year group
- monitor progress towards specific targets from the School Evaluation & Development Plan (SEDP)
- build up relationships with staff and students
- evaluate the resources and environment of the school
- give visible support to the activities of the school
- be aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning

## 3. Frequency and Duration of Visits

Core subjects (Maths, English and Science) should, if possible, be visited twice a year, as should areas that are highlighted in the current SEDP. Governors should also have regard to the LT/Gov link roles schedule. If time allows, it would also be desirable for further subjects, staff meetings and INSET training to be visited. The duration of each visit will depend on its purpose and the time the governor has available. Governors with responsibility for other areas should make a visit to the school in relation to these areas at least once a year, although a visit is not usually for a full day.

## 4. Focus of the Visit

This should, where possible, be related to the SEDP. Governors may wish to see classes being taught; or they may wish to look at the work of a whole department; or they may have chosen to review the implementation of a particular school policy (in which case they may not be in a classroom at all).

## 5. Arranging the Visit

a) Governors should go through their LT link, cc'ing Vicki Wilson, (HoS PA), to find a mutually suitable time to visit the school. Governors should confirm the visit with their departmental contact the day before the visit. Parent governors should avoid being in the same class as their child.

b) Governors should use the Google Form in the Governors Folder in Google Drive. If they are to visit classes, they should be provided with information which gives context for the lesson and its main purpose. If visiting for other reasons, they should ask for relevant background information to help you understand what the school is trying to achieve in the area in question.

c) Governors can expect Subject Leaders to have notified class teachers when governors will be present in a lesson and to have reassured them about the governor's role. The Subject Leaders will arrange for someone to be available to guide the governor from reception, ensure they know where they are going and are escorted if necessary throughout their visit.

d) If the governor will be in school for registration periods, break or lunchtime, they should agree appropriate arrangements with the Subject Leader. Registration may offer a good opportunity to talk to some students or visit an assembly. The Subject Leader\_or other staff may be willing to make themselves available during part of break or lunchtime to review the governor's experiences and answer questions. Governors should however respect the entitlement of staff to some time off duty during the school day.

e) Governors should remember the importance of taking a balanced view of their experience during a visit. They should not take what one teacher or student says as the only opinion, but try to talk to several people, remembering that even a visit for a whole day is still only a brief snapshot in the life of the school.

## **6. Governor Conduct During the Visit**

### **a) Arrival in school**

Governors are visitors to the school. They must sign in at reception and wear a visitor or governor badge whilst on the school premises. They should be punctual throughout the visit.

### **b) Conduct in the classroom**

If the visit involves being in a lesson, the following points should be observed:

- i. Governors should introduce themselves to the teacher of each lesson they attend, if another member of staff has not already done so. If possible, they should talk briefly with the teacher before the start of the lesson, both to clarify the purpose of the visit – **to watch and learn, not to criticise or judge** – and to be given a little background to the lesson about to be taught.
- ii. The governor should ask the teacher where to sit and how they can be involved in the lesson (if at all).
- iii. The governor should explain to the teacher before the lesson begins that they may wish to make some notes or jot down questions they may want to ask later.
- iv. It is very important that the teacher introduces the governor to the students and lets them know why the governor is attending the class.

### **c) At the end of the lesson**

Governors may wish, if at all possible, to spend a little time with the teacher after the lesson to discuss any queries they may have. They should certainly express their appreciation of the opportunity to visit the lesson.

**INDIVIDUAL GOVERNORS MUST NOT AT ANY TIME MAKE PROMISES ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

## **7. Reporting Back**

a) The Google Form will automatically populate a google sheet which can be accessed via the google drive. Governors should advise the PA to the HoS and clerk to the LGB by email when a visit has taken place. Governors may share the report with the member of staff for comment, if appropriate.

b) If the visit has given rise to any unresolved concern, the governor should speak in confidence to the Chair of Governors and/or HoS.

## **8. Guidance for Staff**

The **Annex** to this policy contains advice to be provided to staff about the purpose and conduct of visits by governors in which they may be involved.

## **9. Review and Evaluation**

a) Governors' visits will be an agenda item at each full Governing Body meeting at which governors can flag visits and uploaded reports.

b) At the end of the summer term full governors meeting, there will be time for reflection on the year's programme of visits and for consideration of any amendment needed to this Policy.

Tring School Governing Body

## **ANNEX**

### **Staff Guide to Governor Visits**

#### **1. Governors visit school:**

- to demonstrate their friendship and commitment to the school and support for the Head of School and the staff.
- to enable them to make better informed contributions to the processes of policy making and strategic planning for the school.

**Governors visit the school to learn about it – they are not there to make judgements.**

#### **2. Through visiting, governors seek to:**

- develop a greater understanding of the school.
- learn at first hand how the National Curriculum is being implemented.
- extend their knowledge of the purposes of the school plan.
- build up relationships with staff and students.
- evaluate the resources and environment of the school.
- give visible support to the activities of the school.
- be aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning.

#### **3. Preparation for visits**

a) Subject Leaders will notify class teachers when a governor is to be present in their lessons and remind them about the governor's role. Someone from the department should be available to meet the governor from reception, ensure they know where they are going and are escorted if necessary throughout their visit.

b) Please try to ensure that the governor is provided with information which gives context for the lesson and its main purpose, agendas and other helpful documentation.

#### **4. During the visit**

a) Governors will introduce themselves to the teacher of each lesson they attend, if another member of staff has not already done so.

b) If it is possible, the governor will hope to talk briefly with the teacher before the start of the lesson to clarify the purpose of the visit – **to watch and learn, not to criticise or judge** – and to be given a little background to the lesson about to be taught.

c) The teacher should advise the governor where they should sit and how they can be involved in the lesson (if at all).

d) The governor may explain that they would like to make some notes, including jotting down any question to ask later.

e) It is very important that the teacher introduces the governor to the students and lets them know why the governor is attending the class.

#### **4. After the visit**

a) It will be of help to the governor, if this is feasible, for the teacher to spend a moment or two after the lesson to discuss any question which has arisen during the visit to the class.

b) The governor will complete a google visit form and may share this with the teacher before sharing it with the governing body. It is a chance to discuss the visit and any arising implications for the school or the governing body.

c) If a teacher is concerned about a governor's visit, this should be discussed with the HoS.