

GOVERNOR MONITORING VISITS

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1. Introduction

The Governing Board has 3 core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Monitoring visits form part of Governor's monitoring activity and are an essential source of evidence for the Governing Board enabling both better challenge of information presented by the school and informed contribution to discussions with Ofsted Inspectors.

The Department for Education (DfE) Governance Handbook (October 2020) states "... many boards find that visiting their school(s), particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school, its staff and students. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, the board can see for themselves whether the school is implementing their policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice ..."

2. Roles

The Governing Board believes that its corporate responsibility should be shared equally amongst all Governors. Specific monitoring roles will be agreed/confirmed by the Governing Board at the first meeting of the academic year. Roles may alter, depending upon school priorities but should always include the statutory areas and monitoring of the effectiveness of leaders in improving the curriculum and therefore outcomes for pupils.

The monitoring roles in place for the 2022/2023 academic year are:

- Additional funding to include Pupil Premium/PE and Sports Premium *Finance committee.*
- LAC/PLAC and SEND *Graeme White*
- Safeguarding *Diane Farrer*
- Quality of Education SIP *Debbie Slack and Alan Fletcher*
- Behaviour and Attitudes and Personal Development *Diane Farrer and Terri Gooch*
- Early Years *Edward Gunn and Lauren Gill*

3. Visits

Governors do not have the right to visit the school unannounced.

Formal visits should be arranged with the Headteacher, with adequate notice and agreed with the relevant member of staff. Visits should not clash with important events or busy periods in school life.

Formal visits are likely to be linked to a specific issue or governor monitoring activity. Informal visits may be linked to a special event. Both formal and informal visits should take place with regard for this policy.

Governors should be mindful that visits to school are not about:

- inspection or investigation
- making judgements about the professional expertise of the Teacher
- checking on own child
- pursuing a personal agenda
- arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas
- monopolising staff time

Governors must maintain confidentiality at all times in relation to visits.

3.1 Formal Visits

Formal monitoring visits are important to support Governors understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governor monitoring is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar and all formal visits will be detailed on the Annual Programme of Monitoring Visits. Visits provide an opportunity for Governors to evaluate policies in action, increase their understanding and develop a first-hand knowledge of the school to enable them to ask informed questions during Governing Board meetings.

It is an expectation of the Governing Board that all Governors complete at least one formal monitoring visit per year in relation to each area of responsibility. *r*

Formal monitoring visits will have a clear focus, mirror the school improvement plan priorities and enable the Governing Board to have a clear view of their link area. All monitoring visits will consider safeguarding and the work of the school in meeting the needs of all pupils.

Typically, visits will be linked to one of the school's strategic priorities but may also be linked to/suggest information about:

- a particular subject, key stage or class
- attendance
- behaviour
- health and safety

- impact on the school of any changes e.g. reduced classes in a key stage
- safeguarding
- SEND
- the condition and maintenance of the premises
- the use of additional funding such as Pupil Premium or PE/Sports Premium
- the use made of the buildings or the site
- use of resources

Following the visit, a written report will be produced on the agreed template and shared with the Headteacher, Chair and member of staff. Once approved all monitoring reports will be uploaded to GovernorHub for consideration by the Governing Board at the next appropriate termly meeting, to allow the knowledge gained from the visit to be shared with all Governors. It is an expectation that other Governors will have reviewed the report and where appropriate, discuss the content in an appropriate forum.

3.2 Informal Visits

Informal visits are those on a more personal basis but must always be with the knowledge and approval of the Headteacher.

Visits may include:

- assisting at a school function or on a school trip
- attendance at assemblies/celebration events
- Chair's regular visit to meet the Headteacher
- tour of the school for new Governors as part of induction
- volunteering in school or in a class on a regular basis

3.3 Virtual Visits

Where appropriate monitoring can be undertaken virtually. The Annual Programme of Monitoring Visits must document where a visit is to be conducted virtually.

Virtual visits should be planned in the same way as in person visits.

4. Safeguarding

It is important that all Governors have regard for Safeguarding expectations as part of any visit to school. Governors should consider how pupils are kept safe, made aware of the risks they face (age appropriate) both in the real and virtual worlds through the curriculum.

The following should be considered:

- *are agreed procedures and practices followed e.g. sign in procedures*
- *are staff practicing policies*
- *do pupils and staff appear confident and safe in their interactions*

- *how is information shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to keep all staff and Governors safeguarding knowledge up to date – is it relevant, current and meets the needs of all groups*
- *are the school grounds and indoor spaces risk assessed in providing pupils with a secure environment to learn and thrive*

5. Protocol for Visits

In addition to the Governing Board's Code of Conduct, the following agreed protocol must be observed during all visits to the school:

5.1 Before the Visit

- familiarise yourself with the Governor Monitoring Visits Policy
- contact the Headteacher and/or member of staff to agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- contact the member of staff to clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations during the visit.
- ask for any specific documentation to be made available in advance of your meeting
- prepare questions and submit to member of staff in advance.

5.2 During the visit

- remember you are making the visit on behalf of the Governing Board, **it is not appropriate to make judgements or promises on behalf of the Governing Board**
- arrive on time with your i.d. and any paperwork for the visit.
- wait in the Reception area to be collected by the member of staff
- decide how you will be introduced and what your role in the school/classroom will be.
- act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the Teacher
- don't distract the Teacher during a lesson but be prepared to talk and show interest
- be courteous and 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
- adhere to all safeguarding practices
- be calm and enjoy the visit but do not go beyond the agreed timescale

5.3 After the Visit

- thank the member of staff for allowing you to conduct your visit
- discuss your observations with the member of staff and use the opportunity to seek clarification on issues you may be unclear about

- speak to the Headteacher or DSL immediately following your visit with any safeguarding or Health and Safety concerns
- say goodbye to the Headteacher
- complete a written report of your visit using the agreed template and send to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the member of staff for approval
- reflect on your visit – how did it go? has the visit enhanced relationships/ Have I learned more about the school? what has been the impact and what is next?
- upload the agreed report to GovernorHub for consideration at the next termly meeting

6. Review

This policy should be reviewed annually by the Governing Board.