



COMPASSION, ACCEPTANCE, RESPONSIBILITY, FORGIVENESS, TRUST

# Governor Visits Protocol

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## Protocol for Governors' Visits

### Governor Visits to School

#### Introduction

Governing Bodies have a statutory duty to promote high standards of educational achievement at their school and they must monitor the school performance to that end. Governors cannot do this unless they know the school well. One way in which Governors can acquire up to date knowledge is to make periodic visits to the school, in addition to attending governor's meetings and school functions.

There are two types of "Governor Visit" the formal and informal. The informal visits may involve Governors offering to help run a stall at a major fundraising event, attending Worship or a Eucharist or watching school events such as Christmas productions or Sports day. All these are valuable; helping to establish good working relationships with the staff and pupils. However they should not be regarded as an alternative to the formal visit.

The cycle of formal visits should be identified at the full Governing Body meetings and they will usually relate to the priorities identified on the School Improvement Plan. The formal visit should usually last a half a day at most, in which individual Governors act as the representative at the Governing Body, with the expectation that they will subsequently report back. As the Governing Body has adopted the circle Model the reports are representative of a committee and therefore need to be detailed. Some formal visits may be allocated to specific Governors with designated responsibilities, for example Special Educational Needs, Safeguarding, Finance Premises, Maths and English.

#### The Rationale for Governors Visiting School

- ◆ To enable Governors to fulfil their statutory duties and responsibilities
- ◆ To enable Governors to be better informed at Governors' Meetings and to be able to make an informed contribution to the strategic work of the school
- ◆ To gain a better understanding of particular areas of school provision
- ◆ To understand more about the deployment of school resources
- ◆ To be better informed about the implementation of the school's policies

- ◆ To get to know staff better
- ◆ To talk to the staff and pupils about their experiences in school
- ◆ To listen to the voice of the child
- ◆ To be able to demonstrate that the Governing Body of the school take their responsibilities seriously

It is worth remembering that "Governors are not there as inspectors or to pass judgements on the work of individual teachers and much will depend upon the sensitivity of the governors to the feelings of the teaching staff about being observed." (A Guide for Governors)

### **Pupil's Expectations**

Pupils are happy to be interviewed in order to gain their perception of the value of governor's visits to school. The children view the visits and being spoken to as a positive way to improve the school.

### **Preparing to Visit**

Governors, who are planning on making a visit to school, whether it is formal or informal, need to have made prior arrangements with the Headteacher.

They need to be clear about the purpose of the visit and what they will be focussing on. The length of the visit will be agreed before-hand, and any agreed, additional information that may be useful will have been circulated before-hand.

It is important that everyone involved in the visit is prepared for it, and that all teachers are aware of the purpose. The Headteacher will approach the teachers concerned before the visit takes place.

### **Follow up to the Visit**

At the end of their time in school the Headteacher will try to meet with Governors to discuss the visit.

All formal visits should be reported back to the full Governing Body. When reporting back it is important to remember that Governor visit should relate to their responsibilities as governors. It is the Headteacher's job to manage the school, in accordance with the aims and objectives and policies approved by the Governing Body. To judge the quality of teaching and learning in the school requires specialist skill, and Governors are not in a position to make those judgments based on short occasional visits. When Governors use visits to gain information to help in them in their role, they do so as observers and not as inspectors.

The report should be written. A **detailed** written report serves better than an oral report in that it helps to clarify the issues for discussion or suggestions for further action. However as a written report, like other papers from the Governing Body, it is open to public inspection, **it should avoid naming individuals.**

It should not be tabled at the meeting, but given to the Clerk in time for distribution with the agenda. The report should also be discussed with the Head teacher and/or the Chair of Governors in advance of the meeting.

### **Governors' Lesson Observations**

Although not all the visits by Governors will involve lesson observations, a great deal of time will be spent in classrooms. As well as watching the teaching and learning that takes place, there will also be the opportunity to move around and talk to the pupils about their work, as well as to look at the classroom environment i.e. displays, resources, books labelled equipment etc. At the end of the lesson, time will be arranged for the Governor and teacher to talk about the lesson and address any questions.

When carrying out lesson observations it is important that all Governors are aware that there are children with special needs in every classroom and teachers use a variety of appropriate strategies for dealing with the behaviour.

### **Monitoring the Effectiveness of Governor Visits**

All Governors are accountable to the Governing Body for the formal visit that the individual has made on their behalf. The visit will always contribute to the relationship between the Governing Body and the staff. Reflecting on a visit can make subsequent visits more effective. Governors should always ask themselves:

Were the objectives for the visit clear?

Were they realised and if not why not?

What if anything could have been done to make the visit more useful?

Did you require any additional information to enable you to place the visit in context?

**All Governors are welcome to visit the school, in the belief that they will help to keep the Governing Body better informed about the work of the staff, pupils, and parents. It is our intention that this policy should support the development of a good working relationship with the Governing Body and the staff, so that we all work together on planning how best to support the aims and objectives of the school.**

Governors may also wish to meet with a group of pupils as part of their monitoring to discuss an agreed topic or focus. The area is usually selected by the Headteacher and is linked to a school improvement priority. If Governors request it, the Headteacher, or a member of staff, can help to prepare a list of questions relating to this focus for governors to use when they meet with the children. Governors are asked to prepare a written report when they complete this activity. (In line with the Kent proforma)

## **Protocol for Visiting Governors**

### **Before the Visit**

In discussion with the Headteacher, Governors will identify a particular area of responsibility or interest which will be the focus of their monitoring visits, for example:

- A Strategic School Development Plan priority
- Safeguarding
- Special Educational Needs
- Curriculum areas including English and Maths
- Premises and Health and Safety
- Finance

**Governors will always make prior arrangements for the visit, with both the Headteacher and the teachers/staff involved.**

### **Aims of the Visit**

The main aims of the visit will be:

- To gain a deeper understanding of the school in order to inform the GB decision making process
- To gain a deeper understanding of the responsibilities of a governor
- To get to know the staff and develop a supportive relationship
- To get to know the school and to get to know the children
- To focus on their particular area of responsibility or on an agreed aspect of the strategic school development plan
- To monitor the performance of the school and triangulate the information provided in reports from the senior leadership team, Ofsted, external consultants
- To observe the impact of school improvement strategies

### **During the Visit**

Governors will respect confidentiality at all times but will also have due regard for safeguarding policy and procedures

Governors will remember that they are not visiting the school in an inspectoral role

Governors will comply with and observe any school rules and/or routines



**After the visit**

Governors will thank the relevant school staff

Governors will discuss their school visit with the Headteacher

Governors will respect rules of confidentiality at all times

Governors will complete the relevant pro-forma for their visit

Governors will circulate and present the report to other members of the Governing Body at their next full meeting

Ratified by governors on .....