

“The Summit is what drives us, but the climb itself is what matters”



THE SUMMIT FEDERATION

Executive Headteacher: Mr. Damien Bond

Governor School Visits Policy

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Method of Communication (e.g Website, Noticeboard, etc) Website and Cloud System			

RATIONALE

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their own school's performance. The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection. This knowledge can be attained in a number of ways including the Executive Headteacher's Report to Governors, published data and through establishing relationships with staff.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their schools is to visit during the school day and see it at work. The Governing Body has appointed link governors to facilitate the liaison between the governing body and specific subject/curriculum areas or aspects of the work of the schools.

The role of a link governor is a source of support to the schools and a source of information for the governing body. An integral part of the link governor role is to view lessons in particular subject/curriculum areas and to learn about the general running of the schools. A visit may be linked to an aspect of the Development Plan. It is not an inspection but a fact finding and observational opportunity.

The policy includes a sample Governors' Visits record form and feedback form which will help guide discussion on the issues raised and also provide a formal record for OfSTED of the Governors' structured involvement in the work and life of the schools. It should not, however, form part of any other evidence base e.g. a member of staff's performance management.

AIM

This policy aims to provide a framework for governor visits, which will allow the governor to fulfil their role without disrupting the work of the schools and in a manner that will support both staff and learners.

Through Governor visits we aim to:

- Ensure that visits to the schools are consistent and follow an agreed procedure
- Improve governor knowledge of the ethos of the schools and awareness of the work on the curriculum
- Assist the whole governing body in fulfilling its statutory role
- Improve governor understanding of the needs of the schools and the priorities for the Development Plan
- Support the school's monitoring and evaluation process
- Improve governor links with staff, pupils and parents
- Help governors to be better able to support our school's communities
- Highlight resource needs

VISIT PROTOCOLS

- Governors should respect confidentiality at all times. Governors will see/hear personal information relating to children and their progress and they should ensure this information is not shared outside of school.
- All visits will be by prior arrangement with the Executive Headteacher who will arrange the visit with the staff concerned. Governors visits are always welcomed, however, governors should be aware that it is not always convenient to have visitors in school, for example, during test week.
- Governors and the Executive Headteacher will have agreed the objective(s) of the visit prior to the visit. A Governor Record Form (Appendix I) will be completed prior to the visit.
- Most visits take place in the classroom and staff will have prepared a programme for the governor. This may include working with a small group of pupils, observing pupils at work, speaking to pupils about their work, observing displays, hearing a child read and looking at a pupil's workbook with the pupil.
- Governors should arrive before the beginning of a lesson to enable the teacher to introduce them to the class and explain the reason for their visit.
- During the visit governors should be discreet so as not to disrupt the lesson in progress. Governors are welcome to join in and help out but should not monopolise the teacher's time.
- Following the visit, feedback will be given to the member of staff and the Executive Headteacher verbally and using the Governor Visit Feedback Form (Appendix II). This will identify any follow-up actions that may be necessary.
- A Governor Visit Record Form (Appendix I) and a Governor Visit Feedback Form (Appendix II) should be presented to the Executive Headteacher and the Chair of Governors at least two weeks prior to the next governing body meeting for inclusion as an agenda item.
- Feedback on the visit should also be presented to the relevant committee as appropriate.
- If possible, all governors should visit at least once each year during the school day. Curriculum link governors should ideally visit more frequently.
- All governors will be offered an introductory visit to the schools soon after their appointment as part of the new governor induction process.
- Governors are welcome to informally visit the schools during the day but should give prior notice to the Executive Headteacher (e.g. drop ins, assembly visits, etc.)
- Specific invitations for governor visits will be sent out for certain occasions
- Governors are welcome to attend school events, e.g. Sports Day, Carol Service, etc.

FOCUS

All visits will have a pre-agreed focus, even if it is a 'getting to know the school' visit. All staff will be informed of the visit and will know the purpose of the visit in advance.

Visits will focus on aspects of the Development Plan and on carrying out the work of the governing body, e.g. SEN, Health and Safety, curriculum link governor roles.

Visits may have a particular emphasis on one year group or on one aspect of the delivery of the curriculum. Suggestions for the focus of governor visits should be brought to a whole governing body meeting.

Governor visits ARE NOT about:

- Making judgements about the quality of the teaching
- Making judgements about the operational management
- Governors checking the progress of their own children
- Pursuing personal agendas
- Monopolising staff time during a lesson
- Arriving with inflexible, pre-conceived ideas
- Interrupting, giving ideas or suggestions during teaching time

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed every three years.
- Governors and staff are encouraged to give their opinions on the effectiveness and success of Governor visits at any time.
- Reviews will consider:
 - Are we doing what we set out to do?
 - Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in the policy?
 - Are we better-informed and enabled to make sensible decisions?
 - Are we communicating effectively with staff?
 - Do the staff feel affirmed and valued?
 - Have there been any unexpected benefits?
 - How can we make the policy and practice even better?

APPENDICES

Appendix I - Governor Visit Record Form

Appendix II- Governor Visit Feedback Form

Appendix III- School Visits, an Aide Memoire

Appendix I

RECORD OF GOVERNOR VISIT



Governor's Name	Date of Visit
Focus of Visit	
Objective (s) of Visit	
Link with School Development Plan	
Areas/classes	
Staff Involved in Visit	
Sources of information: <i>e.g.: Executive Headteacher, class teacher, display work, pupils' workbooks, talking to pupils, looking at resources</i>	
Signed (Governor):	Date:
Date received and discussed with Executive Headteacher:	
Date received by the Governing Body:	

FEEDBACK FROM GOVERNOR VISIT



Governor's Name	Date of Visit
Class	
Time spent in class	
Objective (s) of Visit	
Notes of Visit	
<p>Three positive outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 	
<p>Two questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 	
Suggestions for Actions and Governor Discussion:	
Signed (Governor):	Date:
Date received and discussed with Executive Headteacher/Staff Member:	
Date received by the Governing Body:	

SCHOOL VISITS - AN AIDE MEMOIRE

What is the purpose of the visit?

- What/who has prompted my decision to visit?
- Is the reason specific or general?
- What are my expectations of the visit?
- How will my visit benefit staff?
- How will my visit benefit governors?
- Have I completed the Record of Governor Visit Form?

How shall I carry the visit out?

- What particular aspects of school life am I interested in?
- What particular age groups am I interested in?
- Are there any questions that can be answered during my observation?
- What questions shall I ask?
- Who shall I ask?

What shall I do during the visit?

- Observe
- Talk to children
- Help out if requested by the teacher
- 'Get a feel' for the classroom ethos
- Look at displays
- Look through children's workbooks

Did I achieve my aim?

- To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?
- Which of my questions did I answer?
- To what extent did I fulfill my expectations of the visit?
- What further questions did my visit prompt?

Is there any follow up?

- Have I recorded my experiences?
- Have I completed the Governor Visit Feedback Form?
- Have I fed back to the Headteacher/ Staff member?
- Am I ready to feedback at the next Governor meeting?
- Do I want to make a further visit?
- Do I need to follow up any actions?