

Context

Planned visits to school can enhance the strategic decision making of the governing board and help support the working relationships between staff and governors. This model policy sets out the framework for a clear and consistent approach to support these visits which will provide a greater level of information and in depth knowledge at committee and full governing board meetings.

Governors should be prepared to sign into school on every visit, complying with DBS requirements and school policies on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and personal IT devices such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets.

Purpose

The type of visits as described in this policy are different to those which governors may undertake for such reasons as attending school-specific events, meetings or helping in school. Governors' visits help to develop their knowledge of the school and deepen their understanding of the impact of their decisions on the provision and should be planned through the Governing Board Development plan. The key questions for governors to consider in committees will be informed by such visits and through subsequent discussions with school leaders.

Consistency of approach

Clarification of a key focus with a clear purpose is crucial and some basic principles should be considered in the context of the visit.

- What are the key issues for action in this area?
- How well is the action plan going?
- Do they have the support/resource needed to carry it out?
- What may be seen in relation to impact at this point?
- What needs to be done next?

The Governing Board is committed to adopting a consistent approach to support these visits by:

- Determining that the visit is part of an agreed programme to support strategic decision making
- Clear identification of what the outcomes for the visit are
- Adoption of an agreed proforma for completion by governors (Appendix 1)
- Agreement, understanding and engagement of staff in the purpose of the visit

Effective Management

The Governing Board is committed to the effective management of visits through:

- Clear guidelines of what expectations there are for both staff and governors as to who will have responsibility for what before/during/after the visit :-
 - Identification of designated member of staff to meet with the governor (Headteacher/Deputy/Head of Department/Subject leader)
 - Opportunity for Q & A session - either during/after the scheduled visit has taken place
 - Information sharing – governor's completed proforma to be shared with staff member
 - Responsible person for dissemination of information
 - Identification of nominated person for the retention of completed proformas – available as part of published minutes

Equality and Fairness

Governors should take care to note that their visit is always only a 'snapshot' of the school at a particular point in time.

The Governing Board is committed to an equitable and fair approach to these visits through:

- Reinforcement of clarity of purpose
- Governors are not inspectors (even though they may be qualified to act as one in other contexts) and therefore they should not make written observations/comments about the quality of the teaching and learning which is beyond their remit
- Any concerns following the visit are raised with the Headteacher verbally
- Identification of individual staff or pupils by name is not permitted on any visit proforma as these reports must be made available for public inspection upon request.

Governors may also find this NGA document useful- '*Knowing your school: School visits, holding your school to account*' which is at <https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Good-governance/Effective-governance/NGA-Guidance-on-school-visits.aspx> which considers visits in greater detail.

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GOVERNOR FEEDBACK FORM

Name:

Date of visit:

Class/es visited:

Purpose of visit (agreed in advance)

Area of development linked to your Governing Board Development Plan

What were the key points from your visit?

What have you learnt that you believe will make a useful contribution to the governing board Development Plan?

How do you feel this visit has helped you to develop your role as a governor?

Are there any further points you wish to bring to the board's attention?

Thank you for making the visit – please copy this form to the Headteacher.

Signed

Date