

Governor Visits to School Policy

Hillcrest School



Approved by:	Date: [Date]
	Miss J Reid, Chair of Governors
Last reviewed on:	21/03/2019
Next review due by:	31/10/2019

Context

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least one visit per term during school time and governors will often monitor an area of the School Development Plan in pairs in accordance with an agreed timetable.

Visits enable Governors to:-

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff

Before making a visit Governors will

- Contact the Headteacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit linked to our School Development Plan
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
- Plan which classes will be visited
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Deputy Headteacher or subject-coordinator
- Deputy Headteacher and/or the subject coordinator ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit the Governor will remember to:-

- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering
- Be calm and enjoy the visit

After the visit the Governor will:-

- Remember to thank the teachers and children
 - Meet with the Headteacher, if she is available, to give a verbal report, and raise any issues that arose
 - Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus area.
 - The completed form should be given or emailed directly to the Headteacher and then, after any possible alterations, the form will be circulated to the governing body and staff
 - Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals should not be able to be identified, (using initials is acceptable).
- It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily.

The visit is not about:-

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Summary

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Headteacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body, which will contribute to continued school development.

Advice on conducting classroom visits**Rationale**

The Governing Body at Hillcrest has a responsibility to keep in touch with what is happening in the classroom. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

Objectives

The Governing Body should aim to:

- Inform their decision-making by having visited at least one lesson during the year.
- Be aware of the feelings of members of staff and the issues they face by having had a more lengthy discussion with at least one member of staff during the year.
- Read and keep up-to-date with school newsletters and other documents that are set out.
- Keep up-to-date with their nominated class, introduce themselves and spend time discussing the school with some of the children from the class.

Roles and Responsibilities

Some of our Governors are already linked to a particular subject. They are:

Link Governor for Leadership and Management, Finance and Site	Miss Reid
Link Governor for Safeguarding	Mrs McMahon
Link Governor for Teaching and Learning	Mr Dexter
Link Governor for Finance, Health & Safety	Mrs Lees
Governor linked to 16-19 Study Programme	Ms Cole

In addition to this, we aim to link most Governors to a subject they have a particular interest in. This does not mean that their visits should be exclusively geared to that subject. However, it is anticipated that at some point during the year they will take time to talk to the subject leader.

What to Avoid

It is important for all parties to note that governors' visits are not a form of inspection and do not involve governors making a judgement about teaching in any official capacity. That remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.

It might be wise for governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present. It can cause discomfort for everyone! They should also be aware of 'pursuing personal agendas' and make sure they fulfil the code of conduct as it is outlined here.

Please remember that members of staff are very busy people whose first priority must be the children. There may be times when arrangements have to be changed or alterations made. Please be sensitive to the circumstances and flexible in your expectations. No two days are ever the same.

Keep an open mind about what you see.

Education and classrooms have changed a great deal since we were at school and practice is very different. Don't expect to see the formal type of lesson you might remember from your own childhood.

By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.

Ground Rules

	Always	Never
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Arrange details of visit.-Agree purpose of visit -link to SDP-Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed.-Agree role within the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Turn up unannounced
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Keep to the role agreed-Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over-Please remember confidentiality-Stick to the times and purpose agreed-Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Assume a different role-Walk in with a clipboard-Interrupt the teacher-Distract the pupils from their task
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Thank the teacher and the pupils-Discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience-Feedback to the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Leave without acknowledgement-Break rules of confidentiality

Providing Feedback

The **Governors' visits report** pro forma should be completed as soon as possible after the visit.

The report should be copied to:

-The Headteacher

-The subject leader, if applicable

Then presented at the next Governing Board meeting

Policy Review

The policy should be reviewed every two years. The key questions should be:

- Has every Governor visited at least three sessions during the year?
- Has every Governor had a conversation with the subject leader they are linked to?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in this policy?
- Are the Governor visits effective and focused?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we further improve our policy and practice?

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and its effectiveness evaluated and amended in light of the findings of the evaluation.

Governors Visits to School

<u>Name:</u>		
Date of Visit		Time in school:
Focus Area:		
Overview and impression		
Observation of Focus Area		
Evidence Seen		
Impact: Progress v Areas to Develop		

Governor visits' monitoring and evaluation record

Date, time, length of visit		
Name of Governor Visiting		
Responsibility area		
Staff member(s)/Class involved		
Purpose of visit		
Area of Focus Every Child Matters	Area of Focus Post Ofsted Action Plan	Area of Focus School Development Plan
Outcome of Visit. (Effective v Non Effective)		
Impact on Focus Area		
Issues for the Governing Body		
Teachers / Head teachers comments		
Follow-up actions / suggested focus for future visits		
Signed Governor.....		
Signed Chair of Governor		
Signed Headteacher		