

GOVERNOR SCHOOL VISITS POLICY

RATIONALE

The School 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. Ofsted assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school 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 aspect of the work of the school.

The role of a link governor is a source of support to the school and a source of information for the governing body. An integral part of the link governor role is to see the work of a subject/curriculum area and to learn about the general running of the school. It is not an inspection but a fact finding and observational opportunity.

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

Governor visits help staff to:

- Understand better the roles and responsibilities of governors
- Get to know the governors
- Share their knowledge about learning and teaching to help governors understand
- Highlight the need for certain resources
- Rationale for requiring certain resources

Protocols for visits:

Before the visit you should:

- Discuss the date, time and duration of the visit with the Head of School who will arrange the visit with the staff concerned
- Discuss the purpose of the visit, **which should link to the Improvement Plan**
- Feedback, either verbal or written, to be given to the member of staff and the Head of School following the visit.
- Think about preparing questions for staff prior to the visit based on information previously presented.

The Governing Body is a corporate body and **every governor should visit the school as a representative of that body, not as an individual.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body is responsible for ensuring this policy meets the needs of Aspire and is regularly reviewed and monitored for its effectiveness. The Head of School is responsible for ensuring all staff, learners and parents are aware of the policy and that the policy is fully implemented.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

The governors will review this policy bi-annually and report back to the Local Governing Bodies. The review 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?

Have we developed a further method of direct communication 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?

During the visit governors should:

- Be punctual
- Follow all the school's security procedures
- Be aware of safeguarding and confidentiality issues when interacting with staff, children and parents
- Get involved with the students if appropriate
- Observe discreetly
- Ask questions sparingly when it is appropriate; avoid distracting staff from their primary role by asking too many questions
- Be courteous, not critical
- Avoid getting drawn in to any discussion on personal or staff grievances
- Remember it is a visit, not an inspection
- Not lose sight of the purpose of the visit
- Thank staff and/or students at the end of the visit

After the visit, governors should:

- Discuss what you have observed, including any concerns, with the Head of School, member of SLT or other appropriate member of staff, if you wish.
- Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about
- Thank staff for supporting you in your role as a Governor. Be open, honest and positive
- Reflect on how the visit went. Has the visit enhanced relationships? Have I learned more about the School? Have I helped the governing body fulfil its duties?
- Draft a short-written report using the *pro forma* as soon as possible, while the visit is still fresh in your mind

Informal visits may be:

- The chair making regular visits to see the Head of School
- To lend a hand with a school event
- To get information from the office relating to committee meetings
- To act as a volunteer helper
- To speak to a teacher/staff member about your own child
- To attend a school function or educational visit

Governor visits during a pandemic (Covid 19)

- Governors to attend meetings via Teams
- Visits to be re-scheduled or conducted via Teams

Related Guidance

Governance Handbook
School Governance Regulations 2014

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Governor Visit procedures

Appendix 2 - Record of Governor's Visit

Date approved:	28th February 2023
Review Date:	March 2025
Signed Executive Headteacher:	C Taylor
Signed Chair of Committee:	J Baumber

Governor Visit Objectives

To establish and develop effective relationships with the staff
To have a greater understanding of learners' needs
To recognise and celebrate success
To monitor the implementation of the Improvement Plan
To increase their first hand knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions
To understand the environment in which staff work and teachers teach
To see policies and schemes of work in practice
To find out what resources are used and what resources are needed
To show support and encouragement to staff and learners
To demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process
To develop individual Governor's roles in terms of their specific responsibilities e.g. Special Needs, Literacy etc

Responsibilities of visiting Governors and Staff

- (a) Governors will not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching they observe;
- (b) Governors will not pursue a personal agenda or seek to take advantage of their position;
- (c) Governors will express their gratitude, and any positive feed back to staff (and learners) as soon as possible and provide informal verbal feedback to the Head of School at the conclusion of each visit.
- (d) Governors to provide written report for file; (see sample report form below)
- (e) Governors and staff will respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit;
- (f) Any action points arising from the visit will be discussed and agreed by appropriate parties.

RECORD OF GOVERNOR'S VISIT

Governor's Name:	Date of Visit:
	Time:
Focus of visit/Link with Improvement Plan:	
Areas visited:	
General comments:	
Summary of what was learned:	
Points to take forward for discussion at the governing body meeting:	
Signed:	Date:
Received and discussed with Head of School:	
Received by the Governing Body:	