**JOINT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Governor Visit Guidance**

**Context**

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Board 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 senior leadership team to account and evaluate its progress. The governors visiting programme is an integral part of the schools yearly monitoring calendar. Each governor is encouraged to make one visit every half term in their role as a link governor to start with. In addition, governors will need to be involved in monitoring the school improvement plan during the year.

**Link Governors (amend as appropriate)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Link area** | **Governor** | **Link SLT member** |
| Finance |  |  |
| Health and Safety |  |  |
| Teaching and Learning |  |  |
| Safeguarding |  |  |
| Behaviour & Attendance  |  |  |
| Special Educational Needs & Disability |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

In addition to visiting the school and attending meetings, governors should ensure that they undertake appropriate training to support them in their role both as a governor generally but also in relation to any specific link roles.

**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
* Evaluate the impact of school improvement activities

# Ground Rules

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Always**  | **Never**  |
| Before  | -Arrange details of visit-Agree purpose of visit -Discuss the context of the lesson to be visited-Agree role within the lesson | -Turn up unannounced - ‘Observe’/grade a lesson |
| During  | -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. | -Assume a different role -Walk in with a clipboard -Interrupt the teacher -Distract the pupils from their learning  |
| After  | -Thank the teacher and the pupils-Discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience -Feedback to the Headteacher and governing body  | -Leave without acknowledgement -Break rules of confidentiality   |

# 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 might have changed a great deal since you 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 that teachers face.

**Before making a visit** governors will

* Contact the link SLT member and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
* Be clear about the reason for the visit, and this should be outlined e.g. curriculum area; school improvement plan area of focus etc
* Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
* Plan which, if any, classes will be visited
* Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Headteacher or the person he/she nominates

**On the day of the visit** the governor will remember to:-

* Arrive on time and clarify the timetable with the member of staff nominated as their contact
* 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
* If any aspect of the visit that concerns you, please take it to the Headteacher first, rather than the class teacher.

**After the visit** the governor will:-

* Remember to thank the teachers and children
* Meet with the Headteacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
* Complete the governor visit pro forma

**Reporting**

A governor visit report should be completed for each visit. (Appendix 2). Before the visit the sections relating to the purpose of the visit, the staff to visit and potential activities should be agreed between the governor and the SLT link person/Headteacher. After the visit, governors should update the activities section along with other sections as to what has been learned, comments and ideas for future visits. The report should be sent to the Headteacher for him/her to include comments, or correct any inaccuracies.

The report should then be copied to the Clerk to the governors who will ensure that it is available at the next full governing body meeting so that it can be shared with the governing body. The clerk will also ensure that the records are kept as they are likely to be important evidence for Ofsted.

**Appendix 1: School Visits - an Aide Memoire**

**What is the purpose of the visit?**

* What has prompted my decision to visit?
* Who has prompted my decision to visit?
* Is the reason specific or general?
* What are my/other people’s expectations?
* How can my visit benefit the teacher?

**How shall I carry it out?**

* What particular areas of the school am I interested in?
* What particular activities am I interested in?
* What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?
* Are there any questions that can be answered by observation?
* What questions should I ask?
* Who should I ask?

**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 fulfil my own/other people’s expectations?
* What difficulties did I meet and why?

**Is there any follow-up?**

* Have I recorded my experiences?
* Did I ‘report back’ to the Headteacher and staff?
* Have I prepared a short report for the next governors’ meeting?
* How can I build on this for the next visit?

**Appendix 2: School Visit Form**

**Governor Visit Record**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Governor Name** |  |
| **Date of Visit** |  |
| **Focus of Visit** |  |
| **Link to S.A.P** |  |
| **Classes/staff visited** |  |
| **Summary of activities eg visiting classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources etc**. |
| **What I have learned as a result of my visit:** |
| **Positive comments about the focus**: |
| **Questions that I will raise as a result of my monitoring visit:** |
| **Ideas for future visits, linked to the school SDP:** |
| **Any other comments/points I would like clarified:** |

**Signed (governor):** **Signed (link staff member):**

Date discussed with Headteacher: Date discussed at Governing Board: