


# **Governor school visits** **policy**



<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>October 2024</b>
<b>Next review</b>	<b>October 2025</b>
<b>Shared with Governors</b>	<b>November 2024</b>
<b>Signature of Chair of Governors</b>  <b>Matt Dunkin</b>	<b>Signature of Headteacher</b>  <b>Jill Cromeey</b>  

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy was agreed in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, the Governing Board and the staff of the school.

## 2. BACKGROUND (see Annex A)

The Governing Board has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school 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 ways in which a governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and children and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.

Visits will be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to assist the Governing Board in fulfilling its statutory duties, its role in monitoring and evaluation and to improve its understanding of the school to ensure informed decision making.

Governors do not have an automatic right to enter Stubbins Primary School. When they do so, they are invited guests.

## 3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

The policy aims to ensure:

- That governors are fully aware of their duties in relation to school visits, so visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved;
- That teachers fully understand the purpose of governor visits;
- That all involved understand how these visits fit into the statutory and strategic purpose of the Governing Board;
- That governors understand the procedure and standards of conduct they are expected to follow when visiting school;
- That all involved fully understand what a governor will and will not do;
- That all involved know what will happen following a governor visit and how information will be used;
- That all involved will understand how the success of this policy will be measured.

School visits by members of the Governing Board are a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff:

Benefits to governors:

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop relationships with the staff
- Get to know the children
- Recognise different teaching styles
- Understand the environment in which teachers and other staff work
- See policies and schemes of learning in action
- Inform decision-making

Benefits to staff:

- Help governors understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know the governors
- Understand better the governor roles and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

## 4. PURPOSE OF GOVERNOR VISITS

Visits are undertaken to:

- Improve Governing Board knowledge of the school and its staff;
- Assist the Governing Board in monitoring the implementation of the school improvement plan;
- Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as SEN;
- Assist the Governing Board in fulfilling its statutory duties including monitoring and evaluation;
- Assist the Governing Board in making informed decisions.

When visiting school on official governor visits, governors will **not**:

- Pursue personal agendas or arrive with inflexible or preconceived ideas;
- Visit their own child's class on official governor visits;
- Make any judgements about students' work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day-to-day running of the school. Those are the responsibility of the Headteacher.

## 5. PLANNING THE VISIT

- Visits will be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme formally organised by the Governing Board or one of its committees and with approval of the Head.
- Frequency of visits will depend on the complexity of the areas of responsibility allocated to them and the availability of appropriate staff and timetabling.
- There are 2 types of visits:
  - Formal monitoring visits, where governors discuss progress in a particular area with the relevant staff member. These can take place in school, or as an online video call or phone call where mutually convenient.
  - Learning walks, where governors will go around school with the relevant staff member or member of Senior Leadership Team to experience a particular area and may talk to other staff members and/or pupils.
- The Head will be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit.
- At least one week's notice of a visit will be provided to teachers, who will be informed of the focus of the visit and any key questions so they can feel prepared.
- Governors will be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time, and the implications of any time out of class.
- Governors will make themselves fully acquainted with Health and Safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to any visit.
- Governors will make themselves fully acquainted with safeguarding procedures prior to any visit.

## 6. DURING THE VISIT

- Governors will at all times report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors.
- If visiting a classroom, the governor will arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning and follow the agreed purpose of the visit.
- Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom.
- At the end of the visit governors will thank everyone concerned, including the children.
- Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.
- If governors have concerns, they should not raise these in the moment. If the concern relates to safeguarding, it must be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and before the end of the visit. Other concerns should be noted and raised with the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) after the visit.

## **7. FOLLOWING THE VISIT**

After visiting the school, the governor will:

- Give some time and thought to reflection;
- Consider what went well and what did not go so well with their involvement in the visit;
- Consider how the visit has helped them in their role as governor;
- Consider what they would do differently in a future visit;
- Complete a visit report form (see Appendix), share this with the visited staff member and the Head as a courtesy, inviting them to comment, before uploading a copy to the visits folder in GovernorHub. In writing their report, governors should:
  - Use neutral language;
  - Remain observational and describe only what they see;
  - Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit and its strategic role;
- Following completion of the agreed monitoring programme the governor will report back to the Governing Board or committee as appropriate.

## **8. MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY**

The success of this policy will be measured by the extent to which:

- Governors become involved in visits to school;
- Governors make more informed decisions;
- Staff feel comfortable with governor involvement in their school;
- Governors feel more involved in school;
- Governors can demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, needs and priorities.

## Appendix: Template report for a school visit

### Governor visit report, Stubbins Primary School

Part 1: plan the visit	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Type of visit	Learning walk / Monitoring visit / school event
Agreed focus	
Relevant school objective or priority	
Questions to ask (including re Safeguarding)	

Part 2: during the meeting
What is the school doing within this area of focus?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li></li></ul>

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li></li></ul>

What successes stood out and why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li></li></ul>

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the headteacher or chair of governors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li></li></ul>