



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Revision	Date	Author	Summary of Amendments	Reviewed by	Review Date	Approved (Date of GB Meeting)	Next Review
1	11/03/22	G Bath	New Draft	C&SI	March 2022	31/03/2022	March 2023

Governor Visits Policy

Vision



Together we love - Together we hope - Together we learn

Mission

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an inclusive, vibrant, Catholic community where we enable and encourage everyone to share and nurture a love of learning and the love of Christ.

Together, we hope to inspire ourselves and each other to be the best we can and to embrace our future with confidence.

Introduction

Governing Bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their schools and must monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Through visiting¹ our School, the governors can get to know it better. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor should visit the School as a representative of that body, not as an individual. There must be an effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding and trust, which benefits the whole School community.

This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out School visits.

¹ 'Visiting' may have to be carried out by telephone or video-link if public health restrictions make a physical visit impossible.

Policy consultation

This policy has been produced by the Curriculum and School Improvement Committee (C&SI) in consultation with the Governing Body, the Head Teacher (HT) and staff.

Purpose of Governor School Visits

Governors are not qualified to assess standards but they need to visit school in order to:

- Understand the context of the subject or class they are linked to.
- Provide a level of pastoral care for staff and children at the school.
- Increase the profile of governors.
- Help governors to make strategic decisions for the benefit of the school.
- Improve governor knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and development areas.
- Allow governors to reflect on how life at the school fits with school strategic plans.
- Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.

Governors are not inspectors and are not present in a lesson to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers. That remains a task for the HT and/or other education professionals. It would be inappropriate, therefore, for governors to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching or to pursue issues that relate to the day-to-day management of the school.
- Report on the progress of individual children.
- Pursue personal agendas.
- Monopolise teachers' time.
- Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

Types of governor visits and contacts

- Formal Visits:
 - "Learning Walks" as part of the school's Monitoring & Evaluation schedule
 - Formal visits by a subject link governor to meet with the subject lead
 - Visits to meet the class or class teacher during the school day
- Informal Visits (as agreed with the Headteacher or staff) include:
 - Assemblies
 - Celebration of mass
 - School Productions
 - Sports Day

Formal subject reviews focus on the subject lead teacher's annual subject report and improvement plan for the year.

Governors will aim for 1-2 discussions with the subject lead each year, one at the start of the year to review the prior year's subject report and identify priorities for coming year and one during the year or towards the year end to review progress vs objectives / to acknowledge receipt of the end of year subject report.

Class based visits will ideally follow the M&E cycle where the subject is on the schedule; not all contact needs to be school based and will be organised between the subject lead and the governor.

Governors with responsibility for SEND, PP and Sports premium must meet with SENDCO and PE lead at least 2 times (1 x before end of Term 2) per year to discuss allocation of funds and tracking

Link Class Governors will aim for 2-3 informal visits per academic year.² An initial meeting will be held between the teacher and link-class governor at the start of the academic year to discuss how to proceed with the link arrangement. This will include the type of activities both parties would like the governor to be involved with. Examples include the following: indoor / formal learning, outdoor / informal learning, PE / swimming / music events, prayer services, mass, productions, class trips and other events.

Governors will find opportunities to visit the school on an ad hoc basis, attending activities such as PE / swimming / music events, prayer services, Mass, productions and other events. This is especially important where governors do not have a class or subject link.

Staff involvement

An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole School community. It is important, therefore, that staff do not perceive governor visits as threatening but rather approach them as an opportunity to help governors in gaining an understanding of the school. Through this understanding governors can assist in driving improvements at school for the benefit of all children and the staff.

Procedure for Carrying Out Visits

Please see Appendix B for guidance.

Policy Monitoring And Review (To Include Sub-Committee)

This policy will be reviewed annually by staff, SLT, and Full Governing Board.

Authorisation

² Governors with children at the school will generally not be linked to their child's class. However, governors who are linked to a subject may not be able to avoid visiting their child's class. In these circumstances, the governor needs to remember that they are visiting the class in their capacity as a governor rather than as a parent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ML', is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Signed by

(Chair of Governing Board)

Approved by Governing Body: 31 March 2022

Review Date: Review March 2023

See Also:

Appendix A – Procedure for Visits

Appendix B – Visit Note Form

Appendix A - Procedure for Visits

Visits to school will be conducted in accordance with the following procedure:

Before the visit

- A mutually convenient time to visit should be agreed with the HT, class teacher or subject leader.
- The purpose of the visit should be clarified and agreed with the HT and relevant staff, with reference to the School Improvement Plan and individual Subject Action Plans, where appropriate. How best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time should be agreed.
- How the governor will be introduced to the children should be agreed along with the extent to which the governor will be involved in any activity or lesson.
- Governors need to ensure that they are aware of the core principles underlying governor visits to school and abide by them.

During the visit

- Governors need to remember that they are invited guests.
- Governors must ensure they are aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Safeguarding policies and procedures; this includes the use of mobile phones or personal devices (these should only be used in staff only areas)
- Governors should be punctual, sign in and wear a name badge.
- Governors will talk to pupils in class only when invited to do so by the teacher.
- Governors should try to smile, listen, relax and enjoy themselves.
- It is important that governors think carefully about what they say and do. Governors should be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. It is important to avoid criticism e.g. never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Governors should try not to draw too much attention to themselves.
- During a visit (e.g. learning walk, assembly, trip), governors should avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, they should write down their thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.
- Governors need to remember that they are representing the governing body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies, but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing body.
- Governors must avoid making promises on behalf of the governing body.
- Governors should only go into the staffroom if invited to do so.
- Governors must act in accordance with the governor code of conduct.

- It is important to remember to thank the staff for supporting governors in their role.
- If a governor witnesses something that concerns them they should use their discretion and either approach the teacher or Head Teacher after the visit.
- The visit should end with an opportunity for questions and discussion which can be recorded on the visit note.

After the visit

- It is courteous to send an email to thank the relevant member of staff. Governors should be open and honest, recognising and celebrating achievement.
- Governors should prepare a visit note using the template provided at Appendix B.
- A draft of the visit note should be shared with the staff member and copied to the Headteacher.
- Reports to the Governing Body should not identify individuals in a critical manner: this is not the role of a governor.
- Information about specific pupils is not to be divulged.

Evaluating the visit

Following a visit, governors may wish to reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the school and/or the governing body? e.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect, by allowing you to see how school improvement priorities are being translated into action in the classroom.

These points should be discussed when arranging the next meeting, added to an agenda or discussed at the next meeting.

Appendix B – Governor Visit Note

Name of Governor:		Date of Visit:
Staff Involved:		Subject Area/Topic:
Focus of visit	<input type="checkbox"/> Formal Visits - Learning Walks <input type="checkbox"/> Formal visits – Subject Link Governor Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Formal visits – Class Link Governor Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Visit – Assembly <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Visit – Celebration of mass <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Visit – School Productions <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Visit – Sports Event <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Visit – Other (Please Specify):	
Classes and/or Staff Visited:		
What did I see?		
What have I learned as a result of my visit?		
Areas discussed during the visit:		
Ideas for future visits:		
Signed _____ (Governor)		

Glossary of Terms

SENDCo – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

SLT – Senior Leadership Team

SMSA – School Meals Supervisory Assistant

LA – Local Authority

C&SI – Curriculum and School Improvement