



THE BELLBIRD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy on

School Governor Visits – Code of Conduct

Spring 2020

(to be reviewed Spring 2023)

Introduction

Schools are busy workplaces and no governor or other visitor can expect to access the staff or premises without sufficient notice and/or permission. A visit must fit in with the school and needs of the pupils. Governors should discuss potential visits with the relevant staff and the Headteacher in advance of a proposed visit.

Here are some ideas and tips for school governors to put into practice when making a school visit.

Support and Challenge

- Recognise and celebrate the achievements of the school.
- Provide support and encouragement when strategies to bring about improvement are being explored.
- Know where the school is not achieving as well as it could.

Teamwork

- Be clear about what the team is trying to achieve. Ensure that the policy on governor's visits and a system for reporting back have been agreed with staff.
- Consider how you might use your personal and professional strengths and interests to support the work of the governing body.
- It is not necessary to know everything about all aspects of governance, work to strengths.

What can you do to support and challenge?

- Attend school events.
- Visit the school.
- Attend training sessions.
- Be attached to a particular class, year group or curriculum subject.
- Participate in school outings and social events.
- Invite staff to give presentations to the governing body.

We should visit to:

- Discover how plans are being implemented and what progress is being made.
- Identify and share good practice.
- Clarify what still needs to be improved.
- Ensure accountability.

Visiting the school

Classroom visits are primarily for governors to gain first hand knowledge of the school at work.

However, if your visit is being undertaken to enhance the governing body's understanding of an aspect of the school's work, it should be planned very carefully. Ideally the governing body will have agreed a schedule for governors' visits to the school with agreed timescales. The Headteacher should provide members of the governing body with the relevant background information, i.e. timetable with staff names and responsibilities. The visit should reflect the priorities in the School Improvement Plan and the specific interests and responsibilities of governors.

Before the visit

- Arrange details of the visit, never turn up unannounced.
- Agree the level of confidentiality.
- Agree the purpose of the visit, and read the considerations for commenting on the learning environment which follow.

During the visit

Fulfill the agreed purpose, this can be by developing links with a class, year group or subject area, but remember:

- Don't arrive late.
- Don't go in like an inspector with a clipboard or notebook.
- Use the agreed recording format for the type of visit undertaken.
- Never interrupt the teacher during a lesson and avoid taking on a teaching role, or discussing irrelevant issues with the pupils.
- Do have discussions with pupils if this is relevant to the visit.
- Wear an identity badge.
- Don't make visits during a school OFSTED inspection or SATs week.
- Avoid making promises to staff on behalf of the governing body.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Recognise that sometimes it might be appropriate to leave the classroom should a situation arise which might become more problematic, e.g. a behaviour outburst.

After the visit

- Thank the teacher and pupils.
- Discuss observations with the Headteacher at an agreed time.
- Always let the headteacher or office team know you are leaving the building.

- Complete a governors' visit report form and feedback to the governing body on the findings of the visit after verifying the draft governor's report for accuracy with the relevant staff and Headteacher.

Considerations for the learning environment

Below are a few considerations to bear in mind when commenting on classrooms and the learning that takes place in them.

- The range of activities that students engage in/experience.
- The pupils engagement with the task – they are active, not passive, asking and responding to questions and listening to each other.
- Displays use pupils work and are creative, celebrate achievement and mainly relate to current work.
- Utilisation of the space in the classroom.
- How is the classroom organised?
- Quantity, quality and appropriateness of resources in the classroom.
- Motivation and self esteem.
- Behaviour.
- Are all staff actively participating within the sessions and know what they are doing?

Recording and reporting a governor visit

Date of Visit

.....

Governors

Staff Members

1. FOCUS OF VISIT	
2. SUMMARY Key points from discussion	
4. OBSERVATIONS	
5. RESOURCES Adequacy and effective use of resources	
6. PROGRESS Progress made by staff and pupils in relation to the School Improvement Plan	
ACTION POINTS	