

# Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School

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## GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY – December 2017

### Purpose

This policy has been written to provide the framework for all our governor visits, to ensure we fulfil our purpose and our accountability.

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Board is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Governors' school visits are an integral part of the monitoring process and are important to ensure robust school accountability. School visits help to demonstrate the Board's role in the strategic management of the school by:

- Helping to evaluate the school's progress.
- Holding school leaders to account.
- Helping governors to get to know our school to aid the asking of challenging questions.

School visits are undertaken during the school day. This ensures governors can check that the policies and improvement plans that the Board have agreed are being implemented, and allows governors to see how the agreed vision and plans for the school are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to arrange meetings with pupils, staff and parents about what they think of the school and how it is changing.

The school safeguarding procedures must be followed during Governor visits – for full details refer to the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Whilst it is helpful to see classes at work and the learning environment, governors are not inspectors and it is not our role to assess the quality or method of teaching. We are also not school managers and we must make sure that we do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both of these roles are the remit of the head teacher.

### Aims of School Visits

1. Governors see the school at work and observe attitudes, behaviours and achievements.
2. Improve governor knowledge of the school so that governors:-
3. Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
4. Are better informed when discussing and making decisions.
5. Have a greater understanding of the context of their role.
6. Understand the needs of the school.
7. Develop relationships with staff and our stakeholders and demonstrate their commitment to the school.
8. Assist the governing board to fulfil its statutory roles in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum.
9. Assess the effectiveness of the school improvement plan and/or priorities for future plans.
10. Assess the impact of key decisions and initiatives to drive school improvement.
11. Focused school visits are one form of evidence for OfSTED, highlighting the positive impact made by the governing board on school improvement and, in turn, providing effective challenge to the senior leadership team.

### Benefits of school visits

For governors these include:-



1. More informed understanding of classroom life and practice.
2. Opportunity to meet and chat with the children.
3. Opportunity to meet class teachers and put faces to names.
4. Seeing policies and schemes of work in action.
5. Finding out what resources are being used and what are needed.

For Staff these include:-

1. Opportunity to find out more about the role of the Governor.
2. Having chance to illustrate the theory and policy in practice.
3. Opportunity to draw attention to any issues or questions they wish to raise.
4. Opportunity to reflect upon practice through discussion.

### Types of Visits

- 1) **Informal Visits** - can take many forms, for example reading stories, helping with gardening, cooking, supporting fundraising visits, making drinks at a parent event etc. They are not a formal governor visit, and whilst help to see the school in action, have no impact on the strategic role of governors.
- 2) **Formal visits** - must have a clear focus, which is linked with the governor's link role and the priorities in the School Improvement Plan. The visit must add value both to the school and the effectiveness of the whole Board. It is expected that each governor will formally visit at least once a term.

### Protocol for Informal visits

- 1) All informal visits must be agreed in advance with the head teacher / relevant member of the senior leadership team.
- 2) The purpose of the visit must be discussed and agreed in advance with head teacher / relevant member of the senior leadership team.
- 3) Informal visits are not part of the governor's formal or statutory duties, therefore no report or feedback to the Board is expected.

### Protocol for Formal Visits

- 1) All formal visits must be agreed in advance with the head teacher / relevant member of the senior leadership team.
- 2) The purpose of the visit must be discussed and agreed in advance with head teacher / relevant member of the senior leadership team, with a timetable for the visit agreed.
- 3) Governors must prepare themselves for the visit by reading the school improvement plan and any relevant policies for the focus of the visit.
- 4) Governors are expected to talk to the lead staff member for the focus of the visit as well as the head teacher /relevant member of the senior leadership team.
- 5) Governors are expected to talk to other staff, as appropriate, to ensure consistent understanding of stated practice within the appropriate policies.
- 6) Time must be allowed at the end of the visit to discuss the visit, clarify any areas and agree any actions with the head teacher / relevant member of the senior leadership team.
- 7) A report, using the visit report template is completed.
- 8) The governor must feedback to the relevant committee or the whole Board at the next committee or Board meeting.

### Points to Note:

- 1) Governors' visits are not a form of inspection and do not involve governors making a judgement about the quality of teaching or the professional expertise of the teacher. That remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.
- 2) Governors must not arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.
- 3) Governors must avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present. Governors must also avoid pursuing personal agendas and make sure they follow the agreed code of practice.
- 4) 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.
- 5) Keep an open mind about what you see. Education and classrooms 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. Do ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the demands on the staff.



- 6) Any issues / concerns must be discussed with the head teacher / relevant member of the senior leadership team, not staff or other members of the community.
- 7) Support can be obtained from the Board Chair, Vice Chair or head teacher.
- 8) Governors are reminded of the confidentiality aspect of their role – see code of practice for further information.

The Governing Board adopted this policy on (insert date) and it will be reviewed yearly.

Signed:..... Print Name:.....

Position: Chair Date:.....

Policy Agreed and approved at FGB Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017

