

# Governor Visits Policy



## Policy

**Reviewed: December 2021**  
**To be reviewed: December 2024**

## The purpose of this policy

Governing Boards have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their schools and must monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Through visiting our school, the governors can get to know it better. The Governing Board is a corporate Board and every governor should visit the school as a representative of that Board, 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 visit to help maintain the school's distinctive Christian ethos and raise standards.

## Formal visits

As part of their monitoring role, governors need to make formal, focussed visits to the school. These visits may relate to statutory functions and aspects such as Safeguarding and SEND. They may also relate to areas of the curriculum, or school improvement priorities. A visit may also provide the opportunity to see agreed policies in action.

## Visit Programme

We expect all governors to make at least one formal monitoring visit to school per academic year but if individual governors can visit more frequently, at the convenience of the SLT and teaching staff, that would be appreciated. These visits do not necessarily have to be during the school day and timings will depend upon the focus. Alternatives may include an online meeting via Zoom with school staff.

## Some simple general guidelines

The purpose of the visit is to find out about how the school, or how a particular aspect of the school functions. This will enable the governor to work more effectively. You need to have a clear understanding of what your visit is about. Always bear in mind the following points:

- **You have no personal right to be there.** You have been appointed to visit the school on behalf of the governing body.
- **The headteacher is responsible in law for the day-to-day management of the school.** Your visit must be arranged with the headteacher, because you should cause no disruption to the education of the children; this is a requirement and a courtesy.
- **Your visit should be planned.** You can discuss the purpose of your visit with the headteacher, what you are here to see, as well as the best time to call; for your first visit you may just want a private talk with the headteacher to break the ice.
- **Do not let yourself feel intimidated just because you know you are going to the school to learn.**

The staff will appreciate your taking the trouble to find out more, so that you can give them more realistic help.

- **Realise you are not visiting the school to become a professional educationalist.**

You are going there to understand things for yourself so do not be put off by all the jargon, but ask your own questions in your own way, and if you don't understand the answers, say so!

Remember that you are not assessing the professional competence of individual teachers, and you must make sure you are not seen in that light. It is particularly important to be sensitive about this if you, as a governor, have specialised educational knowledge (for example, if you are a teacher in another school). Your role is that of support to the head/staff/school. Please remember that you are in school as an invited guest and that you are there to learn, not to inspect.

### **Lesson Visit Guidelines**

- The focus of the visits will be to ensure that governors understand how the curriculum is taught at St John's. They may also be in conjunction with the School Improvement/ Development Plans and pupil progress data.
- Governors visit to learn more about the school and to gather information to inform the governing Board's decision making. It is not a governor's role to judge the quality of teaching: monitoring staff performance is the job of the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- On arrival in the classroom please be discreet: the teacher will introduce you when ready.
- We encourage participation rather than observation from the back of the room and if making notes please do so discreetly and avoid the use of a clipboard! If you plan to take notes during your time in the classroom inform the teacher beforehand. Aim to keep note-taking to a minimum and ensure that you make a record of your visit as soon as possible afterwards
- Remember that you are a representative of all the governors: what you say will be understood by the staff to be the views of the governing Board as a whole.
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the governors but of course offer to take comments, questions or requests from staff and pupils to the next relevant governors' meeting.
- If you witness something that concerns you please use your discretion and either approach the teacher or Head Teacher after the lesson.
- There is no specific protocol about parent governors visiting their own child's class as this may be inevitable. However, please ensure that all classes are visited as equally as possible.

- Confidentiality is paramount and nothing that is viewed within the classroom should be discussed outside the remit of the Governing Board.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Safeguarding Policies.
- Before you leave, remember to thank the member of staff for supporting you in your role as a governor. Offer to forward them a copy of the Visit Record Sheet that you will be compiling.

## **Reporting Guidelines**

- Please ensure you make an accurate record of your visit as soon as possible on the agreed pro-forma.
- There are standard Visit Record templates attached to this policy for your assistance. Each visit record should be sent (electronically if possible- if this is problematic a paper version can be submitted) to the Head Teacher and any class teacher involved in the visit and a copy sent to the Chair of Governors. The Chair will then ensure the visits are minuted in future meetings.

## **Informal visits**

It is important that governors also engage with the school in less formal ways and all Governors are encouraged to attend ad-hoc events throughout the school year. At these times, even if you are attending on a personal basis as well as representing the Governing Board, please ensure that you sign in as a governor, wear your visitor badge and make a record of your visit on the agreed pro-forma wherever possible.

This maintains the profile of our school governors and allows staff, pupils and the community to feel supported by governors. Informal visits also afford you the opportunity to gather 'soft' evidence such as the quality of the learning environment or relationships. Such visits also allow the governing body to recognise and praise the school and the impact of its activity on pupils and the community.

Examples of such events are:

Celebration Assemblies/Acts of Worship  
 Church services  
 School productions  
 Sports Day  
 Celebration evening  
 Fundraising events (e.g. Christmas Fair, Summer Picnics)  
 Curriculum Focus Weeks  
 Parents' Evenings

## **Inclusion and Equality**

In line with our duties under the Equality Act (2010) and as set out in our Equality Policy we are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Everybody is valued, respected and challenged regardless of race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

### **Policy Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed following the 3-year Policy Review Cycle of the school or when there are any changes to the statutory guidance that warrant it. It may also be reviewed earlier should it no longer comply with school practice or the legal requirements of the school.

**Policy produced by ..Vicki Nordoff.....Date: 09.12.21.....**

**Approved by (Chair of Governors): Vicki Nordoff Date: 15.12.21**  
**Date : .....**

**Review Date: December 2024**

*If you need further copies of this document, or would like the document in another format, such as enlarged print, audio tape or another language, please contact Sarmilla Dhangar, Bursar, at the school.*

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Appendix 1: Governor Visit Form:



**St John's CE (C) Primary School Governor Monitoring**



**Visit Record Sheet**

<b>Your name:</b>	<b>Date of visit:</b>
<b>Teacher/Class/Activity observed:</b>	
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	
<b>Links with School Improvement Plan</b>	
<b>Governor observations and comments (what did you see, learn, how long did visit last etc.)</b>	
<b>Any key issues arising for the governing body</b>	
<b>Date of feedback to governing body and any action following governing body meeting</b>	