



Orchard Junior School

Growing together. **Branching out.**

Governor Visits to School Policy

Last Review Date:	September 2022
Reviewer:	FGB
Review Cycle:	3 yearly
Next Review Date:	Autumn 1 2025
Notes:	None
Statutory/Published on Website:	No/Yes

Introduction, Background and Purpose

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Visiting the school is one of the best ways this can be achieved.

Visits to school by governors during the time that the school is in operation give them insights that they can acquire in no other way. If governors are to carry out their strategic, monitoring, executive and accountability roles they need to have an understanding of the way schools work and a feel for the dynamics of their particular school. There is no better way of gaining this information than by visiting the working school.

The main reasons for governors to make visits are

- to learn about the school
- to contribute to the governing body's monitoring role
- to show those employed at the school that they are interested

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all formal visits to the school by any governor in the course of their duties as governor.

It excludes:

- visits to school by a governor in their role as a parent (eg to attend a school assembly in which their child is performing, to attend a Parents Evening etc)
- meetings at school (Governing Body meetings, committee meetings, other ad-hoc or informal meetings with staff)

Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of all Governors.

General Rules

The purpose of visits is to learn about the operation of the school in order to better be able to carry out the governor's monitoring role. Governors should not arrive at school with preconceived ideas or any sort of "agenda."

Although governors have a need to visit the school in order to carry out their duties, they have no automatic right of entry to the school. Most visits are pre-arranged in advance and planned and carried out in consultation with the Headteacher and staff at the school.

Governors visit the school as lay people, even if the governor is an education professional.

Governors are not inspectors and under no circumstances are governors to try to assess or comment on teaching practice or the conduct of lessons. A visit is not an inspection, a lesson observation nor a performance review: these are the responsibility of the school's management team and/or external bodies such as Ofsted.

It is of the utmost importance that the privacy and confidentiality of children, parents and staff are respected at all times.

Governors should be mindful that visits to school can be disruptive and stressful for staff, especially junior staff, and should make every effort to keep this disruption to a minimum.

Specific Rules

The primary purpose of visits is to attend lessons, but governors should consider participating in other school activities, such as school meals, playground play, or assemblies.

Governors' formal visits can take different forms. They can include visits to lessons, learning walks, meeting members of staff or meeting pupils.

To ensure that visits are effective the following will be observed:

- All new governors will be offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment so that they are aware of the school layout.
- All governors should sign in the governor visit book and the school visitor book each time that a visit is made to school and wear a governor name badge.
- Each governor will complete a visit report, which will then be given to the chair. This will be looked at by the curriculum committee when any questions will be answered.
- Individual governors should arrange a visit through the teacher, head or admin staff.
- Each visit should have an identified focus e.g. link governor, SIP or termly monitoring.
- Explain to staff why you wish to be there. Do not disrupt the lesson e.g. arriving late, leaving in the middle of lesson, and using mobile phones.
- Try to avoid encounters with your own children.

A Learning Walk, for example, could include:

- Walking around the school accompanied by a member of staff or a pupil
- Looking at displays
- Visiting identified classes or routes for a brief period (e.g. 10 minutes maximum per stop)
- Looking at pupils' work
- Observing Health & Safety and Safeguarding practices
- Taking note of multidisciplinary service involvement (e.g. therapy input in classes)

- Visit lessons for brief stays but without interrupting the flow of the lesson (i.e. the teacher should carry on with the lesson)

When governors visit the classroom it is not appropriate to:

- Undermine the teaching staff authority
- Check on progress of their own children
- Pursue personal agendas
- Monopolise the teacher's time
- Make judgement about the quality of teaching
- Arrive with inflexible pre-conceived ideas

Confidential reporting

There are times where governors may observe something that concerns them and may be perceived as not appropriate to write in report without checking. This can be dealt with in confidence with a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Chair of Governors.