



As a community, including children, staff, parents and governors, we seek to encourage the faith and educational journey of all our members.

We exist to identify the spiritual, academic, physical and professional needs of the children and staff, enabling them to affirm, support and develop each other in the spirit of Jesus.

We believe especially that our education must be broad and life-changing, enabling all the children to develop to their fullest potential so they may influence both the world of today and the world of tomorrow.

GOVERNOR VISITS GUIDELINES **Advice on Conducting School Visits**

RATIONALE

The Governing Body at St Andrew's has a responsibility to keep in touch with what is happening in the classroom and in school as a whole. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway will help members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

OBJECTIVES

The Governing Body should aim to:

- Inform their decision-making by having visited at least one lesson during the year.
- Be aware of the feelings of members of staff and the issues they face by having had a more lengthy discussion with at least one member of staff during the year.
- Read and keep up-to-date with school newsletters and other documents that are sent out.
- Keep up-to-date with their nominated age group or subject area, introduce themselves and spend time discussing the school with some of the children from the class.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Some of our Governors are already linked to a particular subject. They are:

Literacy Governor

Numeracy Governor

Governor linked to ICT

Governor linked to Special Needs

Governor linked to Child Protection

This does not mean that their visits should be exclusively geared to that subject. However, it is anticipated that at some point during the year they will take time to talk to the subject leader.

We also believe it is important that there are Governors that are linked to certain age groups. The following are the age group links established at present:

Foundation Stage

Key stage 1

Key Stage 2

THE BENEFITS OF VISITING SCHOOL

Closer links between Governors and teachers has potential benefits to both.

For governors these include:-

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

For Teachers these include:-

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

WHAT TO AVOID

It is important for all parties to note that governors' visits are not a form of inspection and do not involve governors making a judgement about teaching in any official capacity. That remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and other education professionals.

It might be wise for governors to avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present. It can cause discomfort for everyone! They should also be aware of 'pursuing personal agendas' and make sure they fulfill the code of conduct as it is outlined here.

Please remember that 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. No two

days are ever the same.

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. By all means ask questions (preferably at the end of the lesson) but be sensitive to the extra demands of differentiation and inclusion that teachers now face.

GROUND RULES

	ALWAYS	NEVER
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrange details of visit ▪ Agree purpose of visit ▪ Discuss the context of the lesson to be observed ▪ Agree role within the lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Turn up unannounced
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep to the role/focus agreed ▪ Keep questions for the class teacher until after the visit is over ▪ Remember confidentiality ▪ Stick to the times and purpose agreed ▪ Be sensitive to the mood in the classroom and the expectations of the children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assume a different role ▪ Walk in with a clipboard ▪ Interrupt the teacher ▪ Distract the pupils from their task
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thank the teacher and pupils ▪ Discuss the visit with the teacher at their convenience ▪ Feedback to the governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leave without acknowledgement ▪ Break rules of confidentiality

CONDUCTING A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

After planning your visit with the class teacher or subject coordinator you might have agreed to-

- take part in a lesson acting as classroom helper during your visit
- do a formal observation-taking no immediate role other than talking to the children about what they are doing
- work with a small group
- introduce yourself to your linked class and answer any of their questions
- meet with the class teacher or coordinator to discuss particular issues or set the context
- observe - focusing on an agreed area/issue that the class teacher would like some feedback on e.g. the involvement of a particular group of pupils.

Please remember that observations do not require judgement on the teacher.

It might also be useful to clarify some 'what ifs' beforehand. For example:-

- What if I see children misbehaving when the teacher doesn't?
- What if a pupil asks me how to do something?
- What if I have a suggestion to make?

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

It is important that a time is agreed between yourself and the class teacher to discuss the lesson you have taken part in or observed. During this feedback you might refer to notes you have made. The structure might include:

1. Asking the teacher for any further clarification of the lesson or for their views on how it went.
2. Giving your own impressions on what you saw
3. Providing any positive comment.
4. Raising any issues that appeared to develop.
5. Any further questions you might have
6. A summary of the feedback you will be giving to the governing body.

At the end of the feedback both you and the teacher should be clear about what you will be sharing with the governing body- there should be no surprises!

The Governors' visits to classrooms pro forma should be completed as soon as possible after the visit. It should reflect the discussion you have had with the teacher. The report should be copied to:

- The Headteacher
- The subject leader
- The teacher concerned
- The clerk to the governors

POLICY REVIEW

The policy should be reviewed every two years. The key questions should be:

- Has every Governor visited at least one lesson during the year?
- Has each Governor made links with their allocated class?
- Has every Governor had a conversation with the subject leader they are linked to?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in this policy?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make policy and practice even better?

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