St. Mary's Church of England Primary School Fownhope

GOVERNOR VISIT POLICY

What we nurture today, flourishes tomorrow

UPDATED OCTOBER 2021

A rich education is more than simply learning reading, writing and maths. It is about helping a child grow into their full potential as inquisitive, well balanced and cheerful adults. As a Christian school we nurture children to display the 'fruit of the Spirit', which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). At St Mary's you will find children growing in mind, body and spirit as they form good relationships with each other, the staff and discover a faith which will sustain them in a rapidly changing world. As our motto has it: "what we nurture today flourishes tomorrow".

Statement of intent

Through this policy, St Mary's C of E Primary School aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least one visit during the academic year – depending on their link role this may be more. Monitoring visits demonstrate the governing board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding of the school's practices and procedures, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs and allow governors to see the School Development Plan (SDP) in action.

For staff, governor visits allow staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise and provide an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

Governors must:

- Remember to respect school staff and pupils.
- Support the headteacher.
- Acknowledge that they represent the full governing board.

By following the agreed principles and procedures, governor visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved and will significantly contribute towards school improvement.

1. **Legal framework**

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Department for Education (DfE) (2019) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

2. **Roles and responsibilities**

2.1 Governors are responsible for:

- Meeting their target of at least one visit per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with at least one staff member per academic year.
- Reporting their observations to the full governing board during a full governing board (FGB) meeting.

2.2 The headteacher is responsible for:

- Facilitating governor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with governors, prior to a report being made to the FGB.

3. Annual schedule

The annual schedule of visits will be presented at the first FGB meeting of the year and will be aligned with the SDP priorities where appropriate – or with a governor link role.

4. Etiquette

1. Governor visits are not a form of inspection and governors will not make judgements concerning teaching or other areas of school provision in any official capacity.
2. Governors will avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.
3. Governors will not pursue personal agendas during visits – the focus of the visit will be agreed at an FGB meeting and will be aligned with school priorities.
4. Governors will remain flexible and understand that the school must make pupils' education the priority and that this may sometimes lead to the rearranging of visits.
5. Governors will never visit the school unannounced.
6. Visits are not an opportunity for governors to check on individual children or monopolise the time of staff.

5. Preparing for a visit

1. Governors will arrange visits at least one week prior to the date of the proposed visit.
2. Before a visit, governors will complete a pre-visit form (**Appendix 1**) outlining:

- The purpose of the visit.
- The context of the activities to be observed.
- Their role within the activities.

6. During a visit

1. During a visit, governors will:

- Adhere to their agreed role.
- Where visiting activities involve lesson observations, not ask questions, interrupt the teacher or distract pupils during the lesson.
- Adhere to confidentially agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils and the wider school community.

2. During a visit, governors will not assume a role different to that which has been agreed.

7. After a visit

1. After a visit, governors will:

- Thank the staff, and pupils where appropriate, involved in the visiting activities.
- Discuss the visit with the staff involved in the visiting activity at their convenience.
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full governing board.
- Ensure strict confidentiality. Where giving feedback, either in written form or verbally, care should be taken that individual pupils cannot be identified; this is particularly important when the visit has focused on a small cohort where pronouns (he/she) could help identify the child(ren).

8. Providing feedback

1. A time will be agreed between the governor and staff, at the staff members' convenience, to discuss what was observed during the visit.
2. During the discussion, governors will adhere to the following framework:

- Ask staff for their views on what happened during the visit
- Present your observations
- Provide positive feedback
- Raise any issues
- Ask further questions
- Thank staff for the opportunity

3. By the end of the discussion, both the governor and staff members will be clear as to what information will be shared with the headteacher and full governing board.
4. The governor visit proforma (**Appendix 2**) will be completed as soon as possible after the visit.
5. The headteacher and governor will discuss (in person or via email) the observation prior to the distribution of the proforma.
6. A copy of the completed proforma will be provided to:

- The headteacher
- The subject leader (if relevant)
- The member of staff concerned
- The clerk to governors

7. A copy of the report should be circulated at the next appropriate committee or governing board meeting.

9. Monitoring and review

1. This policy will be reviewed annually by the FGB.
2. When reviewing the success of the policy, the FGB will consider:

- Has every governor conducted at least one visit during the academic year?
- Has every governor made links with their allocated subject or area of provision?
- Are visits achieving the desired outcomes?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can practice be improved?

3. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all governors and staff members.
4. All governors are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body on:	5th October 2021
Signature of Headteacher:	T. Milne
Signature of Chair of Governors:	C. Moore
Review Date:	October 2022

Appendix 1

Governor Pre-Visit Form

Name of governor completing the visit	
Link role of governor completing the visit	
Key notes of any previous visits	
Purpose of this visit	
Documents used to prepare and complete visit e.g. School Development Plan; policies; school strategies	
Evidence governor would like to see	
Questions	

Suggested dates/times	
Other notes	

Appendix 2

Governor Visit Form

Name of governor completing the visit	
Link role of governor completing the visit	
Time and date of visit	
Key notes from pre-visit form	
Purpose of this visit	
Evidence and/or documents presented during the visit	
Answer to pre-visit questions	
Outcome(s); Strength(s);	

Suggested area(s) for development	
Other notes	
Next steps	
Date report will be presented to committee or FGB	
Any action required by FGB	

Governor
Sign……Date……..

PRINT……..

Staff
Sign……..Date……

PRINT……

Headteacher
Sign……Date……

PRINT……

Please ensure a copy of this form, along with the pre-visit form, is submitted to the Clerk to Governors for filing.