

## **GOVERNING BODY OF GLAPTON PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL POLICY ON GOVERNORS' SCHOOL VISITS**

The Governing Body of Glapton Primary and Nursery School is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school and has made a commitment to supporting the school and to acting as a "critical friend" to the school. In order to do this effectively, each governor will visit the school on a regular basis and, when doing so, will follow the basic guidelines laid out in this Policy.

### **Before the visit**

Governors will each identify a particular area of responsibility or interest, which will be the focus of their visits, such as:

- Special Educational Needs
- Curriculum areas, including Literacy and Numeracy
- Health and safety

**Governors will always make arrangements for the visit, in advance, with the Headteacher and the appropriate teachers. The Headteacher will approve the visit by signing the proforma after consulting teachers/ staff involved. Teachers to be visited will be given a written copy of the aims and purpose of the visit.**

### **Aims of the visit**

The main aims of the visit will be:

- To get to know the staff and to develop a supportive relationships
- To see the school in operation and to get to know the children
- To learn about the area which is the focus of the visit

### **During the visit**

- Governors will observe any school / classroom guidelines / rules
- Governors will remember that they are not at the school in the role of Inspector, but of observer. Governors will not observe individual teachers as a focus.
- Governors will not cause any disruption or interruption to the normal running of the school or classroom

### **After the visit**

- Governors will thank the school staff
- Governors will discuss the visit with the Headteacher
- Governors will respect rules of confidentiality at all times
- Governors will complete the proforma report on their visit
- Governors will circulate and present the report to the other members of the governing body at their next full meeting

**GOVERNORS' VISITS TO THE SCHOOL**

**REPORT ON THE VISIT MADE BY**

**ON**

**AIMS OF THE VISIT**

Visit purpose approved.....date.....

**OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING THE VISIT**

**COMMENTS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNING BODY**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Visiting the School

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There are at least three good reasons why every governor should try to make a formal visit to the school at least once a year:

- a. To develop a greater understanding of the functions of the school
- b. To learn first hand how the National Curriculum is being implemented (a legal responsibility for schools) and
- c. To build up relationships with staff and pupils of the school.

Many governors visit the schools for a number of other perfectly valid reasons:

- Governors' meetings and committee meetings
- Annual parents' meetings
- School functions
- Helping in the school.

These are all excellent ways of building relationships with the school community. Some governors - for example, those with a specific interest in special educational needs - may wish to set up regular meetings with the member of staff responsible for co-ordinating this area of work.

On the whole, these visits give very little information about the teaching and learning in the school. However, since people's main reason for being members of the governing body of a school is to ensure that the pupils get the best possible education within the resources available, it is essential that they build up a good knowledge of the content and effectiveness of the education being provided.

### Advice to ensure successful visits

Schools are busy places, and an unscheduled, unprepared visit can cause unnecessary anxiety. Although heads and staff should welcome governors at all times, it is good practice to agree at your governing body meeting on some rules for visiting the school. Here are some practical tips.

1. At the start of the academic year, establish a diary of proposed governors' visits to the school.
2. Pin this schedule on the staff notice board so that everyone is aware of it.
3. Plan each visit by deciding beforehand what you want to achieve and whether you wish to see a class being taught, look at the work of a whole department or review the implementation of a particular school policy.
4. Ask for relevant background papers so that you can familiarise yourself with what the school is trying to do.
5. If making a classroom visit, arrange to see the member of staff at a mutually convenient time (even if it is just to say "thank you").
6. Make sure that the head and staff know about the purpose of your visit.

7. On the day of the visit, start the visit with a meeting with the head. This will ensure that you are informed about any last minute changes in the arrangements.
8. If making a classroom visit, make sure you know which lesson will be in progress.
9. Do not sit at the back of the room as if you are inspecting the lesson. Get involved without being obstructive.
10. If you have questions about what is going on, do not disturb the teacher whilst he or she is teaching; make a note and ask at the pre-arranged time.
11. Finish your visit with a meeting with the head if possible, just to let him or her know how you got on.
12. It is always good to send a thank you note to the staff and pupils you visited. They will remember you and it will help to build relationships.
13. Share your findings and perceptions with the other governors. If every governor got involved and reported back, the governing body would have a very clear understanding of how the school was functioning.
14. Evaluate your visit. Did you actually achieve what you set out to? How has the visit increased your knowledge? Will your visit require any further action?

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This article first appeared in Birmingham Governor.