St. Anthony's Catholic Primary, A Voluntary Academy

Governor Visits Policy

Mission Statement

'Enter to learn, learn to serve'

At St Anthony's, it is our mission to provide a high-quality education, in a Gospel centred Community, where individual needs and talents are appreciated and catered for. We strive for excellence in all we do. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Date of issue	Date ratified by Governing Body	Next Review
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Purpose of this policy:

This policy is designed to provide guidance on the routines for carrying out a visit to school and the evidence that you might collect. Ofsted are increasingly looking at governors' roles in school and that effective and robust investigation of information around school performance and improvement is being carried out as part of our roles. Integral to this is the idea of data triangulation i.e. checking the information provided by the school with visits and against external assessment and outcomes to ensure that the school is making progress and improvements and to satisfy the governing body that the school is carrying out the work it submits to meetings.

Planning a visit:

All visits should be planned on a visit planning form (see appendix 1) and submitted to the headteacher or chair of governors at least 2 weeks in advance of the visit. There may be some situations where this is not possible or that a governor is requested to visit by the school in a shorter time frame. These situations are at the discretion of the head teacher, but it is still recognised that governors themselves are busy individuals and may not be able to visit any sooner.

All visits must be linked to the school development plan. Exceptions to this may be introducing a new governor to the school or attendance at pastoral events.

Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the headteacher before scheduling a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of courtesy.
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff and make sure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are most productive when conducted during a school day.
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time.
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the chair, the headteacher and/or relevant member of staff.
- Send questions in advance to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared.
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent at the school.

Governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the headteacher ahead of the visit.
- Always wear a visitor's badge.
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them.
- Make sure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so.
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils.
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise to the relevant people.

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning.
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school.
- Behave in a manner that would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard.
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors or headteacher after the visit.

Reporting back from a visit:

Once the visit is complete a report form should be completed (see Governor Visit Record below) and passed to any members of staff who you have had a meeting with as well as the headteacher. These stakeholders should be given the opportunity to respond to the report and have their feedback recorded. Once this process is completed the report should be provided

for the next meeting of the Governing Body in advance/ This can be done through the chair of governors and/or the clerk to the governing body.

Guidance on visit scope:

Governors conduct visits to gather evidence to support or challenge information provided in meetings as part of the triangulation of information to check that what the school reports is accurate. This is also a supportive event which can be used to highlight areas of excellence and good practice to the board.

It is not in the remit of governors to carry out lesson observations, regardless of the background of that governor. In the event that a governor is joining leadership on a learning walk they should be guided by the decisions and advice of the member of the leadership team.

The visit should be kept to the remit for which is was planned. A governor may well see something which is concerning or interesting and in this case a note may be made in order to follow this up in another visit or to report this fact to the governing body. The only exception to this would be if a serious violation of safeguarding is observed to take place.

Any meetings with staff need to be planned and agreed beforehand. Meetings should not be requested on the day and if you feel that additional meetings may be helpful then these could be requested at a later date in order to allow staff to prepare.

Visits should be a positive experience for any staff who have been involved and should leave them feeling happier by the time you leave.

Dos and Don’ts:

DO turn up on time and follow standard safeguarding procedures; sign in, wear the correct identification etc.
DO familiarise yourself with emergency procedures e.g. fire alarms.
DO NOT be unescorted at any time or without adult supervision.
DO thank a teacher / member of staff for their time if you have been in their classroom or had a meeting with them.
DO NOT challenge anything that occurs in the school or give instructions to staff or students.
DO ask students for their opinions, these are often extremely honest!
DO try to be supportive of the staff and students that you interact with.

Appendix 1 Visit planning pro-forma.

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School
Governors School Visit Report Form

Proposed date of visit:		Date submitted:	
Reason for visit:			
Link to school improvement plan:			
Areas that will be visited:			
Staff that will be involved:			
Desired outcomes and expected evidence:			
Signed by chair of governors:		Signed by head teacher:	
Date:		Date:	

Governor Visit Record

This form should be completed by governors following an agreed visit to a school within the Trust. All visits should have a clear strategic focus and be linked to the governor's role or the School Development Plan. Completed forms should be shared with the Headteacher and Clerk and retained as part of Academy Council records.

School	
Governor Name	
Governor Role / Link Area	
Date of Visit	
Time	
Staff Member(s) / Class(es) visited	

1. Purpose of the Visit

(Linked to School Improvement Priorities / Governor Role / Strategic Area)
e.g. SEND Link Governor visit to review provision against School Development Plan targets.

2. Activities Undertaken

(e.g. learning walk, book scrutiny, discussions with staff/pupils, review of data)

3. Key Findings / Observations

(Strategic, not operational – e.g. progress towards priorities, evidence of impact, strengths and areas for development)

4. Impact / Next Steps

- How does this visit contribute to governance understanding?
- Any follow-up actions for the Governor, Academy Council or School?

5. Feedback to Academy Council

(Brief summary to share at the next meeting)

Signatures

Governor Signature:	Date:
Headteacher Signature:	Date:

Guidance for Governors

• Visits should be strategic, not inspections or monitoring of staff performance.
• Always agree the focus of the visit with the Headteacher in advance.
• Be professional, objective, and respectful of staff and pupils.
• Complete and return this form promptly after your visit so it can be shared with the Clerk and Academy Council.