



Bishopswood School

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Governor Monitoring Visits Policy

Note: We currently have an Interim Executive Board in place and so where the policy refers to Governing Board this should read Interim Executive Board

Date of Issue: March 2022

Date of Review: July 2023

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Hickles

Chair of Governors: Kevin Moyes

1. Purpose of this policy

Governing boards have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting our school, governors will get to know it better. The governing board is a corporate board, and every governor will visit the school as a representative member of that board, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole school community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their school monitoring visits to ensure that monitoring visits are effective and meaningful and contribute towards the areas identified in the School Development Plan.

1 to 1 meetings with the Chair of Governors and Headteacher do not come under this policy.

2. Types of Visits

Visits fall into the following categories.

1. For new governors – Induction Visits and Meetings
2. School community Events
3. Lead Governor School Development Plan evaluation and monitoring
4. Lead Governor Non-School Development Plan evaluation and monitoring

3. Induction visits for new governors

This is well documented in the Governor Induction Policy and includes visits to school and meetings with a mentor. Any visits are planned and organised, with the agreement of the Headteacher, by the Chair of Governors or the nominated Governor Mentor. Visit is recorded on the New Governor Induction Checklist (see Governor Induction Policy)

4. Support for school community events

These are visits where the governor is attending an event by invitation of the Headteacher in their official capacity as a school governor; they are representing the Governing Board of the school and must always consider this. All governors visiting school will wear a named badge, we would also ask Parent Governors to wear a 'governor badge', to raise their profile within the school community.

It is important for all governors to visit school to:

- Feel part of the school community.
- To understand and promote the school ethos and values.
- To support learning and teaching.

Visits could include:

- Social, fund raising and charity events, for example: school plays, assemblies, school council Christmas Fayre.
- Stay & Play mornings; a regular slot to come and share books or listen to pupils read.

The value of such visits should not be under-estimated in terms of getting to know the school, and the school community getting to know the governor. Additionally, governors become a valued and 'helpful' member of the school team!

Governors are asked to complete the Community Events Visit Record, which is forwarded to the clerk for inclusion on the Governor Hub and discussion at the next full GB meeting.

5. School Development plan evaluation and monitoring

Monitoring and evaluation will in the main be done in the Full Governing Board meetings through planned agenda items linked to aspects of the SDP by:

- i) Receiving of reports from HT and middle leaders.
- ii) Verbal input in Full Governing Board meetings by HT and middle leaders.
- iii) Challenging discussion, question, and answer sessions.
- iv) Data analysis: presented by HT, middle leaders, and lead governors.
- v) Standing items on agendas that cover aspects not always targeted in SDP.

Additionally, visits to school to monitor and evaluate the SDP may include:

- vi) Meetings with HT or middle leader and relevant, responsible governor/s to evaluate SDP in detail; outcomes of which to be discussed in Full Governing Board Meetings via Governor Monitoring Report using the SDP Governing Monitoring report template. The frequency of meetings to be no more than three times a year.
- vii) Being an **observer** at meetings between the HT and staff: e.g., Pupil Progress meetings, book scrutiny and learning walks.
- viii) Discussions with pupils – 'pupil voice feedback' -relevant to aspects of SDP; if used these will be organised by the responsible staff member and are likely to take place at the same time as point vi above.
- ix) Visits to classrooms to observe pupils in class will be brief and conducted alongside a staff member; these are likely to take place at the same time as point vi.
- x) Environmental walks: specifically, Health & Safety and premises related.

6. Lead Governor Non-School Development Plan evaluation and monitoring

- xi) As above but for areas not specifically identified in the SDP as an area for improvement but where there is a need to regularly monitor e.g., behaviour, safeguarding, Health and Safety. Governors would use the non-SDP Governor monitoring template or for lead governors the specific H&S and Safeguarding template as needed.

8. Visit Programme

The programme of visits will be organised at the beginning of each long term by the Full Governing Board and agreed with the Headteacher. Particular attention must be paid to ensure they are not at very stressful or busy periods in the school calendar.

9. Prior to the Visit

The focus and objectives of the visit will be agreed with the Lead Governor and the Headteacher in advance of the visit. The need for the visit will be clearly linked to the School Vision Map. The agreed focus and objectives will be shared in advance with the Headteacher and any relevant staff members at least 5 days before the visit.

The governor will prepare thoroughly for their visit by reading any relevant documents.

10. When visiting a classroom

Agreement will be reached with the relevant teacher on how the governor will be introduced to the children and the extent to which they will be involved in any activity or lesson. Discussion following the visit to clarify any points or observations must be pre-agreed.

Parent governors will not be expected to visit the class in which their child is taught.

11. Undertaking the Visit

Governors must remember that they are invited to school as a guest and that a visit is not an inspection. They are visiting to learn more about the school and to gather information to inform decision making by the governing board. It is not in the governors' remit to judge the quality of the teaching and learning. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of learning is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Governors are asked to carefully consider their time commitments and not create appointments that they may then not keep.

Governors visiting the school will be punctual; will sign in at reception and always wear a name badge. If they are unable to attend, they will give as much notice to the school and staff member as possible.

Governors will be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Protection policies and procedures.

If during the visit the governor observes something that concerns them, they will raise this with the Headteacher.

Confidentiality will be always maintained e.g., if pupils' work has been seen, any subsequent discussions and reports to the Full Governing Board will not contain any information that identifies an individual pupil.

Governors should go into the staffroom only if they are invited to do so, and respect confidentiality.

Staff not involved with the visit may approach the visiting governor if there is opportunity to do so and if there is something the staff member wishes to share or discuss with them.

Governors must always remember that they are representing the governing board and so should be prepared to explain policies but should avoid giving personal opinions that could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing board. They should also never make promises on behalf of the governing board.

Thanks will be given to all staff members; and where possible, a brief discussion will be held with Headteacher at the end of the visit.

12. After the visit

The governor will agree a draft of the Governor Visit Record SVM (appendix 2) with the Headteacher, and with staff, as appropriate. Governors should be prepared to take the comments and questions of others on board during the Full Governing Board meeting. The visit record should be discussed at the full governing board meeting and placed on the school file, so it is available to governors, parents, and carers.

Governors should be open and honest, and recognise and celebrate achievement, in their Visit Record.

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions and follow these up in the Full Governing Board meeting:

- How did the visit go?
- Were the objectives clear?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the school and/or the governing board? E.g., in collecting and monitoring evidence; in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

13. Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at termly full governing board meetings. This policy will be reviewed annually by the full governing board. The views of the staff will be sought. The governing board will consider if governor visits are successful and sustainable. Successful in terms of contributing to the information that the governing board has about the school in general, and in understanding the progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Vision Map.

14. Other relevant policies and documentation

Governors' Induction Policy

Annual Schedule; Standing Orders; Delegation Planner; Governors' code; TORs – Terms of

Reference for each Lead Governor (all on Governorhub), [DfE's Governance Handbook](#)