

# Moss Park Junior School



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## **Governor School Visits Policy**

### Rationale

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their own school's performance. OfSTED assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work. The Governing Body has appointed link governors to facilitate the liaison between the governing body and specific subject/curriculum areas or aspect of the work of the school. The role of a link governor is a source of support to the school and a source of information for the governing body. An integral part of the link governor role is to view lessons in particular subject/curriculum areas and to learn about the general running of the school. It is not an inspection but a fact finding and observational opportunity.

The policy includes a sample Governors' Visits report form which will help guide discussion on the issues raised and also provide a formal record for OfSTED of the Governors' structured involvement in the work and life of the school. It should not, however, form part of any other evidence base e.g. a member of staff's performance management.

### Objectives

- To promote and uphold the vision and aims and policies of the school and to hold the school to account.
- To establish and develop effective relationships with the staff
- To have a greater understanding of pupils' needs
- To establish a clear picture of the strengths of the school and celebrate success
- To monitor the implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- To increase their first-hand knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions
- To understand the environment in which staff work and teachers teach
- To see policies and schemes of learning in practice
- To find out what resources are used or needed
- To show support and encouragement to staff and students
- To demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process
- To develop links with a class, year group or subject area
- To develop individual Governor's roles in terms of their specific responsibilities
- To be an ambassador for the school in the community

### Protocols

All visits to be by prior arrangement with the headteacher who will arrange the visit with the staff concerned. Feedback, either verbal or written, to be given to the member of staff and the Headteacher following the visit. Link Governors will try to visit at least once per year. Opportunities for Governors to monitor the School Improvement Plan will be written into the SIP at the start of the year and revised each term.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for ensuring this policy meets the needs of Moss Park Junior School and is regularly reviewed and monitored for its effectiveness. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring all staff, students and parents are aware of the policy and that the policy is fully implemented.

## Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

The appropriate Committee will review this policy bi-annually and report back to the Governing Body in the summer term. The review will consider:

- Are we doing what we set out to do?
- Are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in the policy?
- Are we better-informed and enabled to make sensible decisions?
- Have we developed a further method of direct communication with staff?
- Do the staff feel affirmed and valued?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make the policy and practice even better?

## Outcomes

The efficient implementation of this monitoring policy will ensure that the governing body is aware of the strengths and areas for development in every aspect of the school's work. The strengths will be celebrated and the areas for development will be used as the basis for school improvement planning. The outcomes of self-evaluation will be used keep key stakeholders well informed and to set challenging targets for raising standards.

Signed: A Humphris on behalf of the Governing Body

Date: September 2019

Review: September 2022

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### Responsibilities of visiting Governors and Staff

- (a) Governors should not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching they observe
- (b) Governors should not pursue a personal agenda or seek to take advantage of their position
- (c) Governors will express their gratitude, and any positive feedback to staff (and pupils) as soon as possible and provide informal verbal feedback to the Headteacher at the conclusion of each visit
- (d) Governors to provide written report for file with Clerk (see sample report form below)
- (e) Governors and staff should respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit
- (f) Any action points arising from the visit will be discussed and agreed by appropriate parties.

### Before the Visit

A few days before a visit there are some issues you should clarify with the Headteacher or teacher:

- Timetable and brief for the visit
- When I join the classroom/activity where would you like me to sit?
- Would you like me to be involved in the activity/lesson?
- Do you mind me asking questions during the session (when it's appropriate)?
- What should I do if I see a pupil behaving inappropriately?
- The safeguarding reporting procedure for my visit
- Evacuation procedures

### On the Day of the Visit

- ✓ On arrival at the School please be punctual, sign in and wear your name badge.
- ✓ Please make sure any electronic device is switched off/on silent and out of sight of children
- ✓ On arrival, the teacher will introduce you to the lesson/pupils/colleagues
- ✓ If you plan to take notes during your time in the classroom inform the teacher beforehand. Aim to keep note-taking to a minimum and ensure that you make a record of your visit as soon as possible afterwards
- ✓ If you witness something that concerns you (safeguarding) please use your discretion and either approach the teacher or Head Teacher after the lesson
- ✓ Confidentiality is paramount and **nothing** that is viewed within the classroom should be discussed outside the remit of the Governing Body
- ✓ Before you leave, remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as a governor. Also offer to forward them a copy of the Visit Record Sheet that you will be compiling.
- ✓ Avoid making promises on behalf of the governors but of course offer to take comments, questions or requests from staff and pupils to the next relevant governors' meeting

### Reporting Guidelines

- Please ensure you make an accurate record of your visit as soon as possible.
- There is a standard Record Visit template attached to this policy for your assistance. Please complete it electronically and email it to the Headteacher. If this is problematic a paper version can be submitted.

- The Headteacher will have a discussion with you about the report and upload your record of visit to the GovernorHub website 'Governor Monitoring'.
- Remember to send a copy to the teacher following your correspondence with the Headteacher
- The Chair will then ensure the visits are minuted in future meetings.

### Ad hoc School Visits

All Governors are encouraged to attend ad hoc events throughout the School Year. At these times, even if you are attending on a personal basis as well as representing the governing body, please ensure that you sign in as a governor, wear your name badge and make a record of your visit – even if it is just an email. Some examples of these events are:

- Assemblies
- School productions
- Sports Day
- Fundraising events

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### Record of Governor's Visit

Governor's Name	Date of Visit
Focus of visit	
Areas/classes visited	
Sources of information: <i>e.g.: Headteacher, class teacher, display work, students' workbooks, talking to students, looking at resources</i>	
General comments:	
Summary of what was learned:	
Points to take forward for discussion at the governing body meeting:	
Signed:	Date:
Received and discussed with Headteacher:	
Received by the Governing Body:	