



South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust

Governors' Visits Policy

Date	Changes
3/9/17	Original draft circulated to LGCs and Trust Board
26/3/18	All SMART-Trust policies which unions requested further consultation on were removed from sites and previous policies reinstated to enable establishment of a JCNC and a fresh round of consultation
14/12/18	Updated draft circulated
13/03/19	Copy sent to senior staff, unions, LGC, legal and Trust Board inviting comments
01/05/19	Consultation with unions in JCNC meeting at Liskeard
25/06/19	Recommended by the Chairs of the LGCs for approval by Trust Board
26/06/19	Version sent for final check prior to Trust Board
22/07/19	Approved by Trust Board

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Current Status: Approved by Trust Board

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Contents

Introduction	3
Why should Governors visit school?	3
Through visiting Governors can:	3
Successful visiting	3
Frequency and duration of visits	3
Preparation for a visit	4
Arranging the visit	4
Arrival in school	4
Conduct in the classroom	4
At the end of the lesson	5
Reporting back	5
Appendix 1 – Governor Visits Form	6

Introduction

The Local Governing Committee has a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum in accordance with the SMART Scheme of Delegation. They also fulfil a largely strategic role in monitoring and reviewing aims, objectives and whether the policies, targets and priorities are being achieved.

OFSTED requires governors to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This includes assessing performance data with an understanding of the learning contexts of the school.

Why should Governors visit school?

- To demonstrate their commitment to the school and support for the Headteacher and their staff
- To enable governors to make better informed decisions to assist policy making and strategic planning

Through visiting Governors can:

- Develop a greater understanding of the functions of the school
- Learn first-hand how the Curriculum is being implemented
- Build up relationships with staff and pupils
- Evaluate the resources and the environment of the school
- Give visible support to the activities of the school
- Become aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Become informed about relevant documentation and legislation for their particular linked area
- Understand the context in which OFSTED sets its criteria for evaluating subject provision
- Be aware of the local and national issues impacting on their particular linked area

Successful visiting

When the visiting governor goes into school outside the normal pattern of meetings, interviews, hearings, events, it is to learn, not inspect. Visits should be as positive and constructive as possible. The visiting governor is not there to make judgments.

Frequency and duration of visits

All governors should be linked to an area in the School Development Plan for monitoring; the requirements for which should be included in the Plan. Some governors may have additional responsibilities e.g. Special Education Needs Governor, Safeguarding Governor.

All governors are expected to monitor their link areas as detailed in the current School Development Plan. If time allows for staff meetings and INSET training to be visited this would also be desirable. The duration of each visit will be dependent on the purpose of the visit and the time available. All governors should make every effort to visit the school at least once a year.

Preparation for a visit

When governors are visiting classes they will need to ask for information about the context of the lesson or topic being covered. If they are visiting for other reasons they will need to ask for any appropriate and relevant background information so that they can familiarise themselves with what the school is trying to achieve.

Arranging the visit

The visiting governor will need to arrange, in advance of the visit, for the relevant staff member to be available at a mutually convenient time to visit the school. The visiting governor will need to advise a senior member of staff where an issue has arisen when there is no supervision by a member of staff present during their visit. The visiting governor will need to make sure they have a clear agenda for the visit: times, meetings and items for discussion.

If arranging a visit to lessons the visiting governor will need to discuss with the Headteacher or Head of Department the particulars of which classes will be visited in order to focus the visit in the agreed area. The visiting governor will need to know for each lesson; in which room it is being taught, the name of the teacher, the year group being taught. Parent governors should avoid being in the same class as their child. Headteachers or Heads of Department/subject leads will need to notify class teachers a week before that a governor wishes to be present in their lesson and reassure them about the governors' role, as well as seek their agreement. The visiting governor will need to confirm that somebody will be available to guide them from reception if necessary.

The visiting governor should also consider whether they will be in school for registrations, break and lunchtime and make appropriate arrangements. Registration time may be a good opportunity to talk to some students or visit an assembly. Meetings should be arranged to meet with the Headteacher or Head of Department/subject lead to gain knowledge about developments in the department/subject as a whole.

Remember the importance of taking a balanced view of what is experienced. Do not take what one teacher or student says as the only opinion - try to talk to several people - and remember that even if the visit is for a whole day it is still only a snapshot in the life of the school.

Arrival in school

The visiting governor must at all times remember that they are a visitor to the school. They must sign in and wear a visitor or governor badge whilst on school premises. They should also be punctual throughout the visit.

Conduct in the classroom

If the visiting governor's visit involves being in a lesson the following guidance should be observed:

- Introduce themselves to the teacher of each lesson they will attend (if a member of staff has not already done so)

- If it is possible, talk briefly with the teacher before the start of each lesson to reassure them of the purpose of the visit - to watch and learn not to criticise and judge
- Gain a little background to the lesson about to be taught

It is very important that the teacher introduces the visiting governor to the class and lets them know why they are attending the lesson. The visiting governor should ask the teacher where they should sit, or how they can be involved in the lesson (or not).

The visiting governor must clear it with the teacher in the classroom before the lesson begins if they feel the need to make any notes or jot down questions to be asked later.

At the end of the lesson

The visiting governor should make sure that there has been a dialogue with the teacher during the lesson or, if this is not appropriate, that they have a short discussion with the teacher at the end of the lesson, or as soon as reasonably possible and within the timetable of the visit, so that they understand what the governor has learned from the visit and whether the focus of the visit has been realised. The visiting governor should give positive feedback to the teachers concerned (a thank you and a smile is much appreciated, even by experienced staff), and discuss anything they do not understand.

Take care not to make promises on behalf of the Local Governing Committee.

Reporting back

The visiting governor should complete the 'Governor Visits Form' (see appendix 1) and return to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Governors' Visits will be a standing agenda item for the Local Governing Committee meetings.

Appendix 1 – Governor Visits Form



Governor Visit Report Form

Name of Governor		Date of Visit	
Focus of the Visit			
Reference to School Development Plan			
Staff visited			

Brief summary of what you did during your visit.	
If this is your first visit on this focus, please detail the starting point and the interventions being introduced to realise improvement. If this is your second or subsequent visit, please detail the progress or differences found compared with your previous visit.	
Can you give examples of any progress or differences; you can include the opinions of staff and pupils.	

Detail of any actions you feel should be taken as a result of your visit.	
Any further comments.	
Comments from staff member.	

Signed: Date:
(Governor)

Signed: Date:
(Staff)

Signed: Date:
(Headteacher)

Thank you for making the visit – please send an electronic copy to the Chair of Governors and to the Headteacher for signature. Once all complete, email to the Clerk for circulation to all governors and a copy to the School Secretary/Heads PA.

