**[Name of School] Governor Visit Protocol**

The governing body must monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors need to know what progress is being made towards the targets set out in the school improvement plan. Visiting the school and classrooms can help to support this process.

School visits by governors should improve governor knowledge of the school, its staff, pupils, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses. Visits can be either formal or informal.

School visits by governors are NOT:

* a form of inspection where governors make judgements on the professional expertise of members of staff, especially about the quality of teaching
* to check the progress of an individual child
* to monopolise staff time or disrupt the lesson
* to pursue any personal agenda or issue.

**Formal Visits**

Formal visits are important:

* to increase governors’ understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
* to develop governors’ interests in and understanding of the life, work and achievement of the school
* to support the work of the school in its community
* to enable governors to be aware of the responses of pupils to their work and check that children are aware of what they are learning and how they feel about school
* to help governors become aware of any resource issues
* to enable governors to evaluate policies in action
* to develop the strategic role of governors
* to increase governors’ understanding of the teaching and learning process
* to develop governors’ first-hand knowledge of the school to enable them to ask informed and challenging questions in governing body meetings.

Formal visits should have a clear focus. For example:

* the health and safety governor visits to review H&S
* the SEN governor visits to review SEN provision and progress with the Inclusion Manager
* a governor linked to a specific subject area or responsibility visits to review their area of interest, eg: the safeguarding governor visits to ask questions about safeguarding procedures and training.

**Informal Visits**

These may include attendance at a school play, concert, sports day etc. These informal visits should be in addition to and not as an alternative to formal visits.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality should be adhered to. Comments should be shared with the teacher concerned and with the headteacher but not with other staff or parents. Governors should not make assumptions but should ask for explanations of anything that has not been understood.

Reports to the governing body should not identify individuals in a critical manner.

**Procedures for Formal Governor Visits**

The governors at [Name of School] have agreed that formal governor visits will occur [once every term].

The focus for each visit will relate to the school improvement plan or an aspect highlighted by external or internal monitoring reports.

Each visit will have an agreed purpose and format and governors will be required to write a visit report following each formal visit.

Additional formal visits will be arranged for those with specific responsibilities at appropriate times during the year.

Governors will be invited to INSET days where appropriate.

**Before the Visit**

* Confirm the time and date with the school/headteacher or contact the relevant staff member to make an appointment.
* Agree the focus and format of and the timescale of the visit.
* Ensure you have copies of any relevant documents such as the school improvement plan or actions to follow-up from your previous visits.

**During the Visit**

* Remember that you are there to watch and inform yourself. Please intrude as little as possible on the teacher’s time and the children’s learning.
* Arrive in good time.
* Don’t lose sight of the purpose of the visit; focus on the agreed theme.
* Be courteous and not critical.

**Visiting Classrooms**

* Remember you are not there to inspect.
* Listen and try not to distract the pupils.
* If the opportunity arises talk to children about their work and how they feel about school but they are there to learn so don’t monopolise their time.
* Only get involved in activities if this has been agreed with the school.
* Keep questions for the teacher until after the lesson.
* Be sensitive to the mood of the classroom and the expectations of pupils.
* If the teacher says that this is not a convenient time respect their view.
* Stick to the time allocated – don’t overstay your welcome.
* Respect the professional role of the teacher and do not make personal judgements.
* Don’t comment to the teacher about the conduct of lessons or individual children.
* Thank the teacher and children when you leave.

**After the Visit**

* Discuss your thoughts with the teacher/headteacher/appropriate member of staff as soon as possible after the visit.
* Write a short report to be fed back to the governing body and list questions.
* Do not name individual children – remember confidentiality.
* Email reports to the staff involved/headteacher/clerk before they are discussed at a governors’ meeting.