



Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Governors' Visits Policy

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| Key staff: | L Lewington |
| Key governor: | |
| Last reviewed: | Oct 2015 |
| Approved by Governing Body: | |
| Date: | Nov 17 |
| Due for renewal: | Nov 18 |

The purpose of this policy

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their schools and must monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Through visiting our School, the governors can get to know it better. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor should visit the School as a representative of that body, not as an individual. There must be an effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding and trust, which benefits the whole School community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out School visits.

Visit Programme

The following visit programmes are suggested and are the minimum requirements. If individual governors can visit more frequently, at the convenience of the School staff, that would be appreciated but is not expected.

Subject Co-ordinator Governors (Maths, English, Science, RE)

- *Bi-monthly meetings with department*

Subject Co-ordinator Governors (Literacy, Maths, Science, ICT, RE)

- September/October: 1:1 meeting with the relevant Subject Co-ordinator
- November/December: Lesson Visit
- February / March: 1:1 meeting with the relevant Subject Co-ordinator
- May/June: Lesson Visit
- Governor for RE should also attend 1 assembly and 1 Church Service per year

Year Group Governors (2013/14: EYFS, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3/4)

- September/October: Meeting with class teachers within the Year Group – this could be 1:1 or with all teachers from the Year at the same time.
- 1 visit to each class in Year Group per year
- 1 Class Assembly for the relevant Year Group per year

NB One lesson visit by each Subject Co-ordinator Governor and Year Group Governor should be in the company of either the Head Teacher or Deputy Head as they undertake one of their regular lesson observations in accordance with the Performance Management Policy. This will enable the governors to gain an understanding of the quality of teaching in the school from the perspective of the Senior Leadership Team.

Meeting Guidelines

- The Governor should arrange a mutually convenient date and time to meet the relevant subject co-ordinator or class teacher. The initial 1:1 meeting will be to discuss the year/terms ahead and include consideration of the curriculum, planning and anything else the teacher feels the Governing Body should be made aware of.
- The Subject Governor should then arrange a mutually convenient date and time to visit a lesson via the subject co-ordinator. The Year Group Governor should make these arrangements with the relevant Class Teachers. Once per year the visit should be co-ordinated with the Head or Deputy Head's Performance Management observations of the staff.
- Class visits can be for a single lesson (usually 45 minutes) or for a morning or afternoon session, as required and agreed with the teachers.
- Consideration should be given to the total number of lesson visits that can take place in a given period without disrupting the work of the school

- New Governors may prefer a settling in period before volunteering or being offered a subject or Year Group responsibility. New Governors will be offered a Mentor Governor when they assume a responsibility to make introductions to the staff and pass on best practice as required.

Lesson Visit Guidelines

- The focus of the visits will be to ensure the governors understand how the curriculum is taught at Cardinal Heenan. They may also be in conjunction with the School Improvement or Development Plans and in line with what has been discussed at the 1:1 meeting.
- Governors visit to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform the governing body's decision making. It is not our role to judge directly the quality of teaching: monitoring staff performance is the job of the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head. However, it will be helpful for governors to visit one lesson per year in the company of the Head or Deputy Head as they carry out a formal lesson observation under the Performance Management Policy. This process will allow governors to gain valuable experience in recognising the quality of teaching when placing their own experience of the lesson alongside the formal observations and assessments of the Head or Deputy Head.
- On arrival at the school please be punctual, sign in and wear your name badge. On arrival in the classroom please be discreet: the teacher will introduce you when ready.
- If possible, we encourage participation rather than observation from the back of the room, however, at a formal lesson observation in the company of the Head or Deputy Head the latter approach may be more appropriate and should be discussed beforehand. Think carefully about what you say and do during the lesson. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism and never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Remember that you are a representative of all the governors: what you say will be understood by the staff to be the views of the governing body as a whole.
- 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.
- 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 please use your discretion and either approach the teacher or Head Teacher after the lesson.
- There is no specific protocol about parent governors visiting their own child's class as this may be inevitable. However please ensure that all classes are equally visited.
- Confidentiality is paramount and nothing that is viewed within the classroom should be discussed outside the remit of the Governing Body.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Protection Policy.
- 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.

Reporting Guidelines

- Please ensure you make an accurate record of your visit as soon as possible.
- Each visit record should be sent to the Clerk to the Governors who will forward a copy to the Chair of the Staffing and Curriculum Committee. The Chair will then ensure the visits are minuted in future meetings.
- There is a standard Record Visit template attached to this policy for your assistance. Please complete it electronically and email it to the Clerk. If this is problematic a paper version can be submitted.
- Remember to send a copy to the teacher if requested.

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. Some examples of these events are:

- Assemblies
- Church services
- School productions
- Sports Day
- Celebration evening
- Fundraising events (e.g. Autumn Fair, Summer BBQ)

Review of this Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

The views of the staff on Governor presence within the School will be sought as part of the annual review process. The governing body will also consider if the visit programme is contributing to the information that the governing body has about progress towards priorities and targets identified in the School Development and Improvement Plans.

School Visit Record Sheet

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| Name: | |
| Governor Role (e.g. Literacy, Year 2 etc): | |
| Date of visit: | |
| Teacher, Class or Activity visited: | |
| Purpose of visit: | |
| Links with School Improvement Plan, School Development Plan, Subject specialism etc. Governor Comments: (i.e. what did you see, what did you learn, how long did the visit last etc) | |
| Any other information | |
| Signed | Dated |

Please send a copy of your Visit Record to the Clerk to the Governors.