

COURTLAND SCHOOL

PROTOCOL FOR GOVERNORS' VISITS TO SCHOOL

"Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. However, they need to be able to visit from time to time in order to develop their understanding of the school. These visits enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school. Governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school.

The Governing Body should plan visits to cover a wide range of school work and each visit should have a clear purpose. Visits by governors can be useful and informative. They do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Headteacher.

"Guide to the Law for School Governors May 2012"

Staff and Governors need to work in partnership as both are accountable and as they work towards the same goal. To do this, governors need to see the school in operation. The following guidelines are necessary to ensure everybody knows what is expected of them and why.

This protocol applies to formal visits by governors to the school. These are identified in the Governors Monitoring Schedule. They do not apply when governors help in school. At these times they are in school in their capacity as volunteer helpers and not as school governors.

Staff were consulted throughout the process of establishing and updating this protocol.

GUIDELINES

All visits by governors to the school (dates, times and purpose) should be arranged in advance and confirmed the day before.

This will help to avoid particularly busy or stressful times. Exceptions to this are when governors are invited to assemblies or to accompany trips.

The Headteacher/Deputy will communicate the dates, times and purpose of visits by governors to all staff via the staff bulletin/notice board.

Whenever a Governor is attending a meeting on behalf of the Governing Body they should introduce themselves to the person leading the meeting or be introduced by another member of staff

Visits to classrooms can only be arranged with the agreement of the class teacher. This helps to avoid inappropriate times and enables the class teacher to assess potential immediate effects on teaching and learning.

Visits to classrooms will be preceded by a short briefing from the class teacher. Time for the teacher to "debrief" the visiting governor will be made available. This helps to set the lesson in context and will be more informative for the visiting governor.

Classroom visits should help governors to understand aspects of the curriculum, school organisation or government strategies. However, it is not part of their role to judge the quality of teaching and learning in an individual class.

Governors should not make notes when visiting classrooms.
This could be quite disconcerting for the teacher and the pupils.

Governors need to observe confidentiality and not discuss anything they have seen with anybody other than the Headteacher and, if appropriate, the governing body.

Should a governor have concerns about anything they have seen during a visit, they should discuss them as soon as possible with the Headteacher.

These could, for example, be health and safety issues. These issues can then be addressed appropriately.

Governors should supply a brief written report of their visit to the Governing Body on the appropriate form (see Appendix A). No child or member of staff should be named in an observation report. Before being submitted to the Governing Body a copy of the report should be shown to the Headteacher and the teacher/member of staff who was present at the monitoring visit. This will then be shared with the relevant committee members before being circulated to other Governors.

This means there is a formal record of governors' interest and involvement. It is also a way of celebrating the school's successes and the achievements of particular individuals and/or groups. It avoids situations where reports could compromise other work of the Governing Body.

FURTHER NOTES FOR GOVERNORS

Why are you visiting?

- To get to know your school better
- To build up relationships with staff and pupils
- To learn about a particular area such as the building or an aspect of curriculum
- To contribute more effectively to the Governing Body's monitoring role
- To show the pupils and the staff at the school that you are interested.

What shouldn't you do?

- Go in like an inspector
- Interfere with the organisation of the class
- Try to talk to teachers or pupils while teaching is going on
- Make promises to staff on behalf of the Governing Body
- Observe in the same class as your child

What should you do?

- Prepare for your visit by reading background documents relevant to the purpose of your visit
- Remember you are there to learn and observe, not judge
- Make a point of listening rather than talking
- In a classroom, wait to be given the opportunity by the teacher if you want to ask him/her any questions
- Ask the teacher if it's okay if you want to talk to pupils
- Put people at ease by being positive about what you see
- Thank staff for the opportunity to see them at work
- Respect staff privacy - only spend time in the staff room if you are invited
- Evaluate your visit (see below) as a record of your Governor monitoring

Evaluating visits

Evaluating a visit can help make visits more productive. Ask yourself:

- Were the objectives of your visit realistic and appropriate?
- Were they achieved?
- Was your preparation thorough enough? Did you read the right material?
- Was any follow up to your visit appropriate? Was it effective?
- Will your visit require any further action?
- What did the Headteacher, staff and pupils think about your visit?

Governor/Staff partnership

It is important that everybody in the school community can work together. Therefore the following guidelines should help to facilitate this

- Everybody should have a photograph with their name and job title displayed on the boards across from the school office
- All staff know who the governors are and vice versa
- Governors should be made aware of new staff and where possible be introduced to them
- Annual Staff/Governor informal meeting (an opportunity for staff to meet Governors in an informal setting)

Governor Protocol

Guidelines set up:	January 2003	(L Walker)
Consultation with Governors:	15/01/03	29/01/03 draft copy
Consultation with Staff:	27/01/03	
Reviewed:	March 2008	(L Walker & Staffing Committee)
Reviewed:	March 2011	(L Walker & Staffing Committee)
Reviewed:	Feb 2014	(L Walker & Staffing Committee)
Reviewed:	May 2017	(L Walker & Staffing Committee)
Date of next review:	March 2020	

COURTLAND SCHOOL
SCHOOL GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT

Name of Governor:
Date of visit:
Objective of visit:

Observations:

Other comments, including follow up action:

Signed:
