



**Kirkby la Thorpe
Church of England Primary Academy**

Policy Title	Governor Visit
Governance Function Area	Academic Performance Group
Date reviewed/amended	December 2023
Date for next review and frequency	December 2025 Biennially



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Governor Visit Policy

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Statement of intent

Through this policy, Kirkby la Thorpe CE Primary School aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least one visit during the academic year, demonstrating the governing board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding of the school's practices and procedures, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs, and allow governors to see the SDP in action.

For staff, governor visits allow staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

For governors to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

The role of a governor:

In law the governing body is a corporate body which means:

- No governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the full governing body.
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and although appointed through different routes (i.e. Parents, Co-opted, Foundation,), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school, and the welfare and safety of all pupils.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

This policy applies to all visits to the school by Governors for any purpose connected with the functioning of the governing body.

As a result, it does not apply to visits by governors acting in some other capacity (e.g. as a volunteer or as a parent/carer).

It also does not apply to:

- visits for the purpose of attending Governing Body or group meetings or hearings or appeals;
- visits solely for the purpose of attending a pre-arranged meeting with a member of staff;
- visits where notice of the event has been included in copies of the school's Newsletters; and/or
- visits where specific invitations have been sent out to governors.

2. Types of Governor Visits

Visits may be undertaken for a range of reasons, and this policy applies to the following types of visit.

- A) Visits to get to know the school (especially by new governors) – Appendix 1
- B) Informal visits to the school – Appendix 2
- C) Visits to school events such as sports days, concerts, parent awareness evenings, open evenings (such as for prospective parents) where governors are attending as governors – Appendix 3
- D) Formal governor visits – Appendix 4
- E) Health and safety or premises visits – Appendix 5

This policy is to provide guidelines for staff and governors during these types of governor visits to the school. It does not cover procedures for governor meetings.

3. Guidelines for all visits

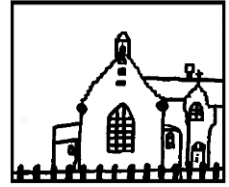
- To carry out a visit to school, governors should always do so by appointment. Where possible this should be made at least a week in advance, and the governor should aim to give the school or member of staff a number of dates and times, which the school can then try to accommodate. The Head Teacher should be advised of all governor visits in advance.
- Governors should comply with all safety and security arrangements, sign in and out and wear a badge as necessary.
- Staff will try to accommodate governors' wishes where possible, but must also take account of the needs of pupils and staff.
- Governors and staff should try to avoid cancelling prearranged visits, but if this is necessary should give as much notice as possible.
- Before entering a classroom, governors should knock on the door of the room they wish to enter, and wait to be invited by a member of staff.
- If a governor visits a classroom for any reason they should take care not to interrupt the teacher or distract the teacher or pupils at any time (other than when entering the room) and should consult the member of staff present before speaking to the pupils.
- Governors should always observe confidentiality in relation to anything they may observe or hear on a visit.

4. Health and Safety

ALL GOVERNORS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY. If any governor on a visit to the school for any purpose has concerns about urgent health and safety issues or the immediate well being of pupils, staff or visitors to the school they should raise these immediately with the member of staff leading their visit, or with the Head Teacher.

Less urgent matters should be brought to the attention of the appropriate staff member, the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governors as soon as possible. If not informed during the visit, the governor should ensure that the Head Teacher is advised of their concerns as soon as possible following the visit. The Chair of Governors or the lead of the Health and Safety and Premises group may also be advised.

Appendix 1 – Visits to get to know the school



Purpose

All new governors should aim to visit the school as soon as possible during their first term as governor, even if they have previously visited the school as a parent/carer or in another capacity. This is important so that they can become familiar with the school in their new role. Such visits will usually include an introductory meeting with the Head Teacher and/or Chair of Governors.

Aims

To introduce governors to the school and give them an initial and general understanding of the nature of the school and its organisation.

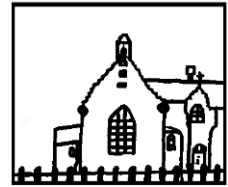
Guidelines

- Such visits should always be arranged with the Head Teacher in advance.
- There will not usually be an opportunity for the governor to observe more than parts of lessons or meet other members of staff other than in passing.
- Governors are welcome to ask any questions they may have about the school.
- If a governor has a particular area of interest, they should inform the Head Teacher when arranging the visit and it may be possible to provide more information on this.
- In the unlikely event that the governor has any outstanding issues following the visit these should be raised with the Head Teacher. Issues which cannot be resolved in this way should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

Reporting

Introductory visits are informal and the Governor need not make any report on their visits to the Governing Body.

Appendix 2 – Informal visits



Purpose

Governors may feel that they would like to make an informal visit to the school for a range of reasons, perhaps to raise an issue or idea with a member of staff or to inform themselves further about a particular matter which does not require a full formal visit.

Aims

These will be dependent upon the wishes/needs of the governor requesting the informal visit, but must relate to the School Development Plan, or the focus of the particular Group that the governors represents.

Guidelines

- Governors are welcome to visit the school informally during the school day, but should always do so by appointment.
- As a matter of courtesy it is helpful if the Head Teacher is informed that governors are due to visit on official business.
- It will not normally be possible for governors to attend classes, observe other activities or meet pupils on an informal visit. It is also unlikely that governors will be able to see staff other than those with whom they have made an appointment.
- If a governor requires written information or data they should request this when making the appointment, as it may not be possible to provide such material during a meeting.

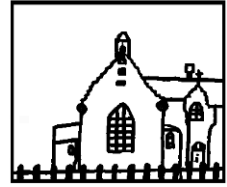
Urgent visits

- Should any urgent matter arise where a governor feels they need to speak to a member of staff quickly, governors should still seek to make an appointment even if very little notice can be given, in order to ensure that an appropriate member of staff is available.
- Staff will make every effort to ensure that an appropriate member of staff is available to discuss an urgent issue.

Reporting

Due to the informal nature of such visits, no formal report is required.

Appendix 3 – Visits to school events such as Sports Day, concerts, parent/carer information session, or open evenings



Purpose

Governors are encouraged to attend these events where possible, so that they can be more aware of the working of the school and meet parents, staff and pupils. Generally governors will simply participate in the event, but at open evenings they may be invited to help to represent the school and answer questions from visitors.

Aims

To involve governors in the life of the school and, where appropriate, for them to represent the school to visitors.

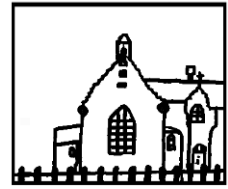
Guidelines

- Governors will generally be invited to attend these events.
- Governors attending open evenings as parents or staff will not be expected to act as governors or identify themselves as such.
- At awareness evenings and open evenings governors may be asked to wear badges identifying themselves so that visitors can approach them for information.
- Governors are not expected to know everything about the school and should have no hesitation in referring questions on unfamiliar areas to an appropriate member of staff.
- Governors will not be asked to make speeches or presentations without prior notice.

Reporting

No formal report is required of such visits, however, governors may be asked to provide verbal feedback about the event at the next full governing body meeting.

Appendix 4 – Formal governor visit



Purpose

Formal governor visits are prearranged visits where governors may meet a number of staff and observe lessons or other activities in progress, in pursuit of a specific aim related to the work of the Governing Body.

Aim

Visits should have a clear focus on aspects of the School Development Plan and on carrying out the work of the Governing Body. Governors have a duty to monitor the quality of education provided and the standards attained. However, this is a general duty which should be based on data from national and other tests and inspections by Ofsted and other professionals. It is not the role of governors to assess the teaching of individual teachers even if they do have professional qualifications.

At our school, governors are assigned to specific groups, which have a particular remit, as outlined in the Terms of Reference. Formal school visits will often be in support of these roles and have clear aims in relation to meeting particular responsibilities.

The governing body will discuss and agree the focus and frequency of formal governor visits, balancing the need to inform the work of the governing body, the priorities for teaching and learning and the demands on both staff and governors time.

Guidelines

Arranging a visit

- a) Formal visits should always be by prior appointment.
- b) Governors should give as much notice as possible for a visit (at least one week) and, where possible, offer a range of alternative dates and times.
- c) Governors should discuss the general purpose and specific aims for the visit with the Head Teacher well in advance. This will enable staff to ensure that the visit is as useful as possible. If the governor is not certain who to approach, the Head Teacher should be approached in the first instance.
- d) The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors should be advised of the visit and its purpose at an early stage.
- e) Members of staff are always free to say that it is not convenient for a governor to come in at any particular time, but should avoid cancelling a pre-arranged element of a visit unless this is absolutely necessary. Governors should also avoid cancelling a prearranged visit wherever possible.
- f) The Head Teacher will take responsibility for ensuring that all staff whose lessons or activities are to be observed are aware of this in advance of the visit and are also aware of the purpose and specific objectives for the visit. This will enable them to help ensure that these objectives are met.
- g) If Governors wish to see any written material they should request this well in advance. The relevant staff member can then have all the information available for the visit. Such materials might include:
 - a subject policy, and accompanying schemes of work;

- examples of children's work, to illustrate progress across year groups, for example;
- assessment information illustrating attainment and/or pupil progress broken down by year/boys/girls/SEN etc.; and/or
- records of pastoral issues (e.g. incidents of bullying).

Governors are welcome to ask the member of staff coordinating the visit any questions regarding written or other information. Staff should be given the opportunity to consider a question and provide information after the visit if necessary.

h) Schedules for visits should be provided to the governor and all staff concerned. As these will often be very tight and tied to lesson timings, governors and staff should make every effort to ensure that they are punctual.

Lesson observation

i) Formal visits will often include lesson observation. This will usually be specifically related to the focus of the visit. However, where no lesson observation would be appropriate for that focus, it may be possible for a governor to see some classroom activities while visiting the school to meet staff. If a governor wishes to take this opportunity, they should inform the member of staff arranging the visit at the earliest opportunity.

j) Lesson observation is a useful illustration of methods of teaching and the range of the curriculum; it may also be helpful in demonstrating the use of and need for resources. It can, therefore, be a valuable learning experience for governors. However, governors are not expected to assess the quality of teaching. The focus of visits should, therefore, be on the strategic issues being illustrated by the lessons rather than the lessons themselves.

k) Before a lesson observation, governors should establish with the member of staff coordinating the visit how they should behave in each class. In all cases they should aim to avoid any interruption while the teacher is speaking, or distracting the teacher or pupils, but they may need to establish matters such as:

- where they should place themselves in the room;
- whether they should move about the room at any point;
- whether they should speak to pupils and discuss their work;
- whether it would be appropriate to look at classroom displays; and/or
- whether they will be asked to participate in some way. Governors may, for example, be asked to support a small group of children in an activity, but if they would not feel comfortable with this, or any other kind of activity, they should advise the member of staff organising the visit in advance.

l) The Head Teacher should ensure that the governor is able to find the lesson or meeting venue and should aim to introduce the governor to the class teacher. Where possible the teacher should introduce the governor to the class. However, the teacher will not interrupt the lesson for this purpose and governors should not be concerned if such introductions are not possible.

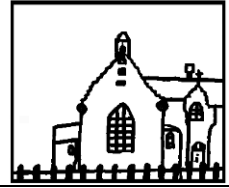
m) Governors should, where possible, be given an opportunity to ask any brief questions of the member of staff teaching the lesson at a convenient point following the lesson. Again these should be issues of clarification relating to the objectives of the visit, rather than any questions relating to the quality of teaching.

n) Should a Governor have any significant cause for concern during their visit, they should report this to the Head Teacher as soon as possible. Urgent matters of health and safety should always be brought to the attention of staff at once.

Reporting

- Governors should always provide a written report of a formal visit. They will, therefore, often need to take notes during discussions or observations so that they can report fully to the Governing Body. Where possible such notes should be made discretely so as not to distract the teacher whilst they are teaching.
- The report should set out the objectives of the visit, note the activities and individuals involved and explain any conclusions from the visit, especially those which suggest further action by the Governing Body. The proforma, Appendix 5, should be used for the report.
- The draft report should be sent to the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors for consideration before being considered at governing body meetings or group meetings.
- Governors are not there to comment on the quality of teaching in any lesson, but they should feel free to give feedback about how useful they found the visit. They should also provide observations about the focus for their visit and further questions that the visit has raised.
- Where there are issues for the governing body these should be identified and, if appropriate, governors should make recommendations for action.

Appendix 5 – Formal governor visit proforma



Governor's name	
Group governor is assigned to	
Date of visit	
Members of staff involved	
Purpose and aims of the visit	
Links with the School Development Plan (indicate Priority number)	
Information relating to the visit – facts and figures	
Summary of activities (eg. observing class, talking to staff, talking to pupils, looking at resources, etc.)	

Governor's observations and comments

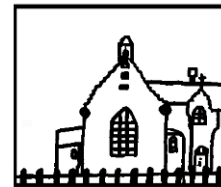
Aspects that I would like clarified and recommendations for any action.

Additional comments

Signed:
Governor

Signed:
Head Teacher

Appendix 6 – Health and Safety inspections and visits



Purpose

As an academy, the overall responsibility for Health and Safety lies with the Governing Body as the employer and manager of the premises, and with the Head Teacher and staff having responsibilities as employees. As a result, governors should visit the school regularly to consider health and safety issues. The Head Teacher has the day-to-day role of seeing that the governing body's health and safety policies and procedures are carried out. This section deals specifically with premises visits.

Aims

1. To inform governors about the state of the school buildings with regard to health and safety.
2. To enable governors to meet their responsibilities for ensuring that premises comply with Local Authority Health and Safety policies.
3. To ensure that the buildings, equipment and materials are safe and do not put the health of persons at risk whilst they are on the premises.

Guidelines

- Health and Safety and other premises visits will be carried out by one or more governors at the request of the Lead of the Health and Safety and Premises Group, and/or the Head Teacher.
- Staff, parents/carers or visitors who have any concerns about health and safety should inform the Headteacher. If these concerns are not answered they should then go to the Chair of Governors.
- Governors do not have the right of entry to the school and the Head Teacher should have given agreement to any visit, at least in principle. Routine Health and Safety visits are carried out twice a year. These should be arranged by the Lead of the Health and Safety and Premises Group, with the Head Teacher.
- Arrangements should be made at least a week in advance and efforts should be made to arrange such visits so as to avoid any non-essential disruption to teaching and learning. Governors may therefore need to be flexible about the timing of visits. However, it may be necessary to visit during school working hours to observe potential risks. The Head Teacher should be informed of any visit in good time.
- The Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors, the Lead of the Health and Safety and Premises Group or members of the Group may also seek additional Health and Safety visits where they have specific concerns related to Health and Safety. In such cases it may not be possible to give good notice, but visits should always be arranged in advance with the Head Teacher or senior member of staff and governors should try to be flexible as to the time of visits where this does not give rise to risks to health and safety.
- Premises visits which are not related to health and safety may also be necessary, for example, to review progress or problems with construction work to the premises. These may be arranged by the Head Teacher, the Chair of Governors or the Lead of the Health and Safety and Premises Committee. Usually such meetings should be arranged in advance with the agreement of the Head Teacher. However, it may not be possible to give significant notice of such visits, particularly if these arise during school holidays. In any case every effort should be made to agree an appointment with the Head Teacher, member of

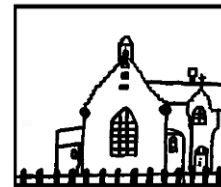
the SLT or Caretaker so as to avoid any disruption to teaching and learning and ensure appropriate access is available.

- Governors should take care to follow any safety precautions relevant to the site. Urgent matters of Health and Safety identified during any visit should be reported to the Head Teacher at once without waiting to submit a formal report. The Chair of Governors and the Lead of the Health and Safety and Premises Group should also be advised as soon as possible following the visit and a formal report provided to them. A report of each visit should be made to the Health and Safety and Premises Group and the Head Teacher with any issues outlined. This report should set out evidence collected during the visit and may make recommendations if appropriate.

Reporting

Health and Safety inspections and visits should be recorded on the format outlined in Appendix 7, based on HSE guidance.

Appendix 7 – Health and Safety inspections and visits proforma



<u>Health and safety inspection for classrooms</u>		Yes/No	Further action needed	N/A
<u>XXX classroom</u> – Date				
Movement around the classroom (slips and trips)	Is the internal flooring in a good condition?			
	Are there any changes in floor level or type of flooring that need to be highlighted?			
	Are gangways between desks kept clear?			
	Are trailing electrical leads/cables prevented wherever possible?			
	Is lighting bright enough to allow safe access and exit?			
	Are procedures in place to deal with spillages, eg water, blood from cuts?			
	For stand-alone classrooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are access steps or ramps properly maintained? ■ Are access stairs or ramps provided with handrails? 			
Work at height (falls)	Do you have an ‘elephant-foot’ stepstool or stepladder available for use where necessary?			
	Is a window-opener provided for opening high-level windows?			
Furniture and fixtures	Are permanent fixtures in good condition and securely fastened, eg cupboards, display boards, shelving?			
	Is furniture in good repair and suitable for the size of the user, whether adult or child?			
	Is portable equipment stable, eg a TV set on a suitable trolley?			
	Where window restrictors are fitted to upper-floor windows, are they in good working order?			
	Are hot surfaces of radiators etc protected where necessary to prevent the risk of burns to vulnerable young people?			
Manual handling	Have trolleys been provided for moving heavy objects, eg computers?			
Computers and similar equipment	If you use computers as part of your job, has a workstation assessment been completed?			
	Have pupils been advised about good practice when using computers?			
Electrical equipment and services	Are fixed electrical switches and plug sockets in good repair?			
	Are all plugs and cables in good repair?			
	Has portable electrical equipment, eg laminators, been visually checked and, where necessary, tested at suitable intervals to ensure that it’s safe to use? (There may be a sticker to show it has been tested.)			
	Has any damaged electrical equipment been taken out of service or replaced?			
Asbestos	If the school contains asbestos, have details of the location and its condition in the classroom been provided and explained to you?			
	Have you been provided with guidance on securing pieces of work to walls/ceilings that may contain asbestos?			

Fire	If there are fire exit doors in the classroom, are they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ unobstructed; ■ kept unlocked; and ■ easy to open from the inside? 			
	Is fire-fighting equipment in place in the classroom?			
	Are fire evacuation procedures clearly displayed?			
	Are you aware of the evacuation drill, including arrangements for any vulnerable adults or children?			
Workplace (ventilation and heating)	Does the room have natural ventilation?			
	Can a reasonable room temperature be maintained during use of the classroom?			
	Are measures in place, for example blinds, to protect from glare and heat from the sun?			

Additional issues and actions needed

Items		Further action needed – Yes/No	Action completed
1			
2			
3			

Name (and position):	Signature:	Date:
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Head teacher/ teaching staff to confirm actions completed

Name (and position):	Signature:	Date:
Location/name of classroom:		