



St Edward's
RC/CE VA School

Governor Visits Policy

**Reviewed and Approved by Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Staffing Committee
On: 14 June 2017**

**To be Reviewed and Ratified at the St Edward's FGB
On: 14 December 2017**

Next review date: December 2020

Member of SLT responsible: Mr Antram

Introduction

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held accountable for their own schools performance.

OFSTED assume that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. One of the best and most effective ways in which governors can get to know more about the school is to visit during the school day – see it at work, talk to staff and students and find out what happens in school and the classrooms on a day to day basis. Through prearranged visits that have a clear focus, governors can see whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans that they have signed up to and how they work in practice.

Visits can also help develop relationships with staff, allow the opportunity to talk to students and share in their success as well as providing support when necessary and showing that the Governing Body is taking its responsibilities seriously.

Responsibilities

Monitoring visits will be used to:-

- develop knowledge of the ethos of St Edward's and awareness of the work of the school, especially related to the School Development Plan.
- monitor aspects of the school including vision and values in action.
- acquire knowledge to enable effective and appropriate challenge.
- assist the whole governing body to fulfill its statutory role.
- contribute effectively to school self-evaluation.
- improve understanding of the needs of St Edward's and the priorities for future school development.
- support and celebrate the school's successes.
- improve links with staff, students, parents and the wider community.

Visits will not be used to:

- assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning.
- interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.
- pursue a personal agenda

Protocol

- Governors will work in sub-groups representing the committee on which they serve. In practice this will be PDBW, TLAS or Ethos. It is important to be prepared, organised and punctual and respect confidentiality.
- Governors will provide informal feedback to an SLT representative at the end of the visit, and will submit a written report.
- Each visit will include time to meet directly with the HT to report on strengths and areas for development.
- Governors will complete the feedback form within 7 days of the visit, once completed this should be sent to the Clerk, and HT. It is important that this process is followed before it is shared with any other governors. The governor responsible for the visit should send it to the Chair of Governors and to the Clerk who will circulate it to all governors and place a copy on the central file.
- Any action points will be reported to the FGB when necessary
- Governors and staff will respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit.

Focus and aims of visits:

Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Staffing Committee:

- Meet with key staff
- Visit lessons
- Talk to students about their learning
- Attend subject leader meetings
- Work scrutiny

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare Committee:

- Meet key staff
- Visit an assembly/act of worship
- Look at tutor programme material
- Talk to students about behaviour
- Observe behaviour in class and at break times
- Visit SEND and SET areas
- Monitor student safety and well being

Business and Premises Committee:

- Visits by members of their committee will be in addition to the regular meetings held between the Chair and School Business Manager on finance and the termly Health and Safety checks.

These are by no means exhaustive and each visit will be specifically tailored to meet its purpose. Governors with a particular responsibility/ link/theme are expected to focus on these specific areas during visits.

Each academic year a schedule of visits will be drawn up based on governors undertaking half termly visits. Formal visits should take approximately 2 hours.

Example of visit schedule:

8.30am – observe tutor time/assembly

Period one - Meet key people

Break time – observe behaviour/talk to students

Period 2 – carry out key aims of visit – learning walk/class observations

11-11.30am – evaluation and feedback with HT

Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy

The Policy will be reviewed every 3 years to reflect on the purpose and effectiveness of visits in enabling the Governing Body to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

Appendices

Appendix 1 -Guidelines for visits

Appendix 2 - Guidelines for classroom visits

Appendix 3 – Formal Visit Report

Guidelines for Visits:

Before your visit:

- Be familiar with the SDP priorities, especially related to the focus of your visit.
- Be aware that all staff have a full workload, so keep discussions brief and focused to maximise the time available.
- Consider the practicalities of your visit:
 - Where will you park
 - What is the dress code
 - Who should you report to

The visit itself:

- You should sign-in.
- Please wear your governor lanyard when in school.
- Arrive in good time for the visit and be prepared that some plans may have had to change due to the nature of school life!
- Ensure the visit/discussion sticks to the agreed priorities. Remember the dual role of governors to support and challenge when asking questions.

Visit reports:

- visit reports should be completed within 7 days of the visit and forwarded to the Clerk and Headteacher.
- provide a brief overview of the visit and the link to the SDP
- note key questions asked by the governor and the responses received
- share some strengths and positives from the visit
- highlight any area that it is agreed that needs to be followed up further

If you see something which concerns you, or a member of staff raises an issue, bring it to the attention of the Headteacher and/or the Chair of Governors. Do not be tempted to deal with it alone.

Informal Visits

As well as the formal monitoring visits to school all governors are encouraged to visit St Edward's informally during the school year e.g. assemblies, INSET days, school performances, Christmas Fayres, services.

Governors should receive school newsletters and other key information on the school such as notice of events and governors are welcome to attend these. Special invitations may also be sent out on occasions e.g. for Leavers' Services, Celebration events.

An Informal Visit Feedback Form (Appendix 3) should be used after this kind of visit and sent to the school in the same way as a formal visit record (see above).

Guidelines for Classroom Visits

Preparation:

Governors can discuss the focus of their classroom visits with their SLT link(s) in advance.

- feedback e.g. teacher to student, student to teacher, student to student, written, verbal and non verbal
- use of resources e.g. use of ICT, practical equipment, space in the room
- engagement/interaction e.g. of boys/girls in different parts of the lesson
- vulnerable group engagement (SEN, Disadvantaged, Most Able)
- assessment e.g. how is it undertaken, how is work moderated, do students know targets, how to the self-assess work
- school ethos
- how are interventions & SEN support managed
- stretching of students, making them think
- questioning e.g. what type of questions are used, how do students respond to different type of questions, what questions do students generate
- Governors have set questions to help them to audit Student Voice on key aspects of school performance. Additional questions could include:
 - What are you learning about? Show me/tell me more
 - What helps you to learn?
 - Why do you think you are learning this?
 - Are you practicing something you have already learned?
 - What did you know about...before you came to the lesson?
 - What do you know now that you didn't know before?
 - Is there anything which gets in the way of your learning?

The classroom visit itself

Good preparation will ensure this works best. Remember however focused the visit some staff will feel very nervous having a different person in the classroom.

- Governors should, whenever possible, be accompanied on classroom visits by a member of the school staff.
- Governors should be aware of the confidentiality of what they see and hear.
- Governors should be discreet so as not to disrupt the lesson in progress and any note taking should be unobtrusive. Certainly no clipboards perhaps post-it notes or a small pad.
- Before leaving the lesson always thank the teacher and the also the students, if that is possible.

Feedback on the classroom visit

It is crucial that this is about recording your reflections related to the focus of the visit and not about making judgments. So it is helpful to start sentences with phrases such as: I noticed... I saw... I heard...

Start with some positive feedback which will be a real encouragement to the school.

If there is something that you would like to explore further try to phrase it as an open question e.g.

- Can you tell me about the Assessment and Feedback policy in the school?
- How do the teachers gather evidence of prior knowledge?

ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL - GOVERNOR MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK FORM

Name of Governor:

On behalf of TLAS Committee

Date:

Meeting with SLT member(s) (Please specify)

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Meeting with Subject Leader(s) (Please Specify)

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Lesson visits: Students on-task/ Positive learning environment etc.

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Student Voice: What are the overall impressions of learning at St Edward's that you gained? Please note any particularly insightful comments made, and the year group(s) spoken to.

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Further comments:

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Signed:

PLEASE CONTINUE OVERLEAF IF NEEDED.

Please forward this form to Beth Stannard, Clerk to the Governors, and to the Headteacher.

ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL - GOVERNOR MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK FORM

Name of Governor:
On behalf of PDBW
Date:
Meeting with SLT member(s) (Please specify topics discussed)
Visit to collective worship/Tutor Group visit
Specialist tours meeting(s) : Careers, attendance, safeguarding, personal development
Student voice: What are the overall impressions of well-being and personal development at St Edward's that you gained? Please note any particularly insightful comments made, and the year group(s) spoken to.
Further comments:
Signed:

PLEASE CONTINUE OVERLEAF IF NEEDED.

Please forward this form to Beth Stannard, Clerk to the Governors, and to the Headteacher.