**Governor visits to schools - protocol for Gorse Hall**

**Primary and Nursery School**

The Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery school Governing Board (GB) are encouraged to visit the school and to attend school events.

Governor visits assist the GB in undertaking its statutory roles and responsibilities. All visits must be planned in advance and agreed with the Headteacher through the School Office, the Chair of Governors should also be made aware. Individual governors do not have an automatic right of access to school without visit approval.. .

**Purpose of school visits**

The primary purpose of school visits is to develop and strengthen the Governing Board’s capacity to undertake their strategic monitoring review and evaluation role. All schools are unique; therefore governor visits:

* improve the Governing Boards knowledge, insight and understanding of the school, its context, ethos, needs, and how it operates
* help build up trust, respect and positive relationships between governors, staff and pupils
* provide an opportunity to engage in discussions and ask questions
* contribute to the GB monitoring role, particularly school policies, and the implementation of action points in the school development plan
* Ofsted requires evidence that governors are familiar with the school’s strengths and priorities for improvement
* support the school and its work and celebrate success
* assist a governor fulfill a link governor role and responsibility
* contribute to the continuing professional development of the Governing Board
* raise the profile of the Governing Board within the local community

School visits should **NOT** be used for:

* making a judgement about the professional expertise of staff
* forming part of any other evidence base e.g. performance management
* a discussion about their own children
* pursuing or attempting to pursue their own personal agenda
* getting involved with the every-day operation of the school
* discussions with staff about any individual grievances which should be directed to their line manager

**Focus of visits**

All visits must have a clear focus and should be agreed by the Governing Board on a termly basis. The agreed programme should be part of a plan to support strategic decision making.

Visits will have different purposes and involve different activities.

* An introduction to school for new governors to understand the structure and organisation of the school
* part of the monitoring arrangements for the school improvement
* participating in learning walks with a focus on the learning environment
* looking at school resources
* meeting with Phase Leaders as part of their link governor responsibility
* attending parent evenings and school events

NB. Schools should provide governors with a timetable and appropriate supporting documentation prior to the visit if necessary.

**Agreeing the parameters**

The purpose, focus and length of school visits should be agreed in advance and understood by all involved. Any concerns identified during such visits, should be reported to the Headteacher immediately so that the appropriate action can be taken if necessary. These will be discussed with the Chair of Governors by the Headteacher. Feedback from the focus for the visit should be reported to the appropriate Governing Board during the relevant Committee meeting.

**De-briefing arrangements and dealing with concerns**

After a visit has been completed the governor should feedback to the Headteacher in order to:

* put a “snapshot” visit in context
* seek clarification of issues arising from the visit
* report on the outcome of the visit in relation to the visit objectives
* raise issues and concerns and ways forward if necessary
* discuss any child protection or safeguarding issues if necessary

**Reporting arrangements to the Governing Board**

* complete a governor visit feedback form and email to Head and Chair of the appropriate Committee – see Appendix 1 for example
* have a regular agenda item for reports arising from governor visits
* ensure that reports focus on the objectives of the visit and ensure that this has been shared with the Headteacher prior to the meeting
* conclusions should be based on evidence, not pre-conceived ideas
* reports should not contain comments about the quality of teaching and learning or identify staff and pupils by name
* Governor Feedback Forms will be kept by the Head as part of the evidence of monitoring.

**Evaluating the impact**

The Governing Board should review their impact of evaluation an annual basis. Key question should focus on “value added” and include:

What impact, if any, have school visits made on the effectiveness of the Governing Board?

* What impact, if any, have governor visits had on the school and its operations, and how do you know?
* Have there been any benefits to staff, students, parents, other stakeholder groups?
* In what way, if any, can the protocol be improved (if necessary) in order to make sure it works more effectively

**Practicalities**

* The governors should report to the School office on arrival and sign in. They should wait in the main Reception area for the Headteacher or appropriate member of staff.
* Governors should always wear their school identification lanyard if visiting in an official capacity
* Governors visiting school are here in an official capacity as a member of the strategic board leadership and management of the school and should present themselves accordingly
* Washroom facilities are available for use and are located in the main Reception area however, the staff room and main school office are not unless invited.
* Remember you are not in school as an Inspector please be aware that staff may be anxious about your visit.
* Please use the time you spend in school in a constructive and effective way in order to maximize the opportunity.
* Any concerns around safeguarding and child protection should be reported directly to the Head in line with school policy.
* Always remember to thank staff and pupils at the end of the visit

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

** Governor Visit’s Feedback Form**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of governor** | **Governor responsibility** | **Date of visit** |
| **Staff/ area visited** |  |
| **Objective/ purpose of the visit** | Why did it take place? – this should be completed before the visit and indicate key questions/ issues for the governor to explore. |
| **Outcomes of the visit** | What did you see, what did you learn? |
| **Any Headteacher/ staff comments?** | Feedback from de-briefing meeting(s). |
| **Issues for the Governing****Board’s attention?** | Issues which need discussing because of their impact. |
| **Do you feel the visit has contributed towards your development** | Indicate how the visit has made you a more effective governor. |
| **Signed/date** | Signature | Date |