

GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS' VISITS

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

1. The School has a system of Link Governors; this system works well and is appreciated by staff and Governors alike.
2. This element of Governors evaluative and monitoring role is important because:
 - a. Governors' statutory responsibilities under the Education Acts now include setting and monitoring progress towards performance targets and indicators and the establishment of effective evaluative and monitoring mechanisms;
 - b. The development of such self-evaluative mechanisms is a clear aim expressed in the School's Strategic Plan;
 - c. OFSTED inspectors are increasingly interested in the degree to which schools have in place mechanisms and structures to enable self-monitoring and self-evaluation;
 - d. It is essential that Governors should not be distant and out of touch with the needs of and increasing pressures on the classroom teacher.
3. In order to aid governors' understanding of the School, the principle of regular day-long visits by individual Governors has been adopted during which they will either conduct a pupil pursuit or, more normally, visit a number of lessons according to a pre-arranged programme.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAMME OF VISITS

4. Whilst Governors are encouraged to visit the classroom, find out more about the curriculum and monitor what is going on in the School, it is recognised that such visits if unplanned or not carefully agreed and structured in advance can lead to mutual awkwardness and suspicion, and thus have the opposite effect to that which is desired.

WHAT THE VISITS AIM TO ACHIEVE

5. The programme aims to
 - a. Develop mutually supportive and informative relationships between Governors and staff.
 - b. Help Governors get to know the pupil body better.
 - c. Assist Governors in recognising and appreciating different teaching styles.
 - d. Enable Governors to act as researchers for teachers, if required.
 - e. Familiarise Governors with the working environment of the School.
 - f. Help Governors to understand the constraints within which teachers and support staff work.
 - g. Provide the opportunity for Governors to observe the use of and need for practical resources.
 - h. Enable the Governor to observe the implementation of policies and schemes of work.

- i. Ensure more informed decision making by the Governing Body.

WHAT THE VISITS ARE NOT ABOUT

6. Visits are not intended for:
 - a. Making judgements about the quality of teaching.
 - b. Checking on the progress of specific children.
 - c. Pursuing personal agendas and arriving with preconceived ideas.
 - d. Monopolising teachers' and support staff's time.

PROTOCOLS TO BE OBSERVED

7. Where appropriate, the principle of confidentiality must be observed in conversations between Governors and staff and in subsequent feedback.
8. Every visit must have an agreed and published purpose.
9. There must be an opportunity for discussion and feedback with the staff concerned.
10. All class guidelines and school rules must be observed at all times.
11. The visiting governors are to write a summary report of their visit for circulation by the Company Secretary to the remainder of the board.
12. A visit aide memoire is at Annex A.
13. [Suggested safeguarding questions are at Annex B.](#)

Annexes:

- A. Aide Memoire.
- B. [Suggested Safeguarding Questions.](#)

**ANNEX A TO
GUIDANCE FOR GOVERNORS' VISITS**

SCHOOL VISITS – GOVERNORS AIDE MEMOIRE

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT?
What has prompted my decision to visit? Who has prompted my decision to visit? Is the reason specific or general? What are my/other people's expectations?
HOW SHALL I CARRY IT OUT?
What particular areas of the school am I interested in? What particular activities am I interested in? What particular age-group(s) am I interested in? Are there any questions that can be answered by observation? What questions should I ask? Who should I ask?
DID I ACHIEVE MY AIM?
To what extent did I address the reason for my visit? Which of my questions did I answer? To what extent did I fulfil my own/other people's expectations? What difficulties did I meet and why?
IS THERE ANY FOLLOW-UP?
Have I recorded my experiences? Did I 'report back' to the relevant staff? Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting? How can I build on this for the next visit?

SUGGESTED SAFEGUARDING QUESTIONS

<p>Safeguarding induction for new staff and volunteers</p>
<p>Questions for recently appointed staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What formed part of your safeguarding induction? • Have you been provided with KCSiE Part 1 (and Annex B if you're working directly with children)? Do you feel confident with the requirements?
<p>Safeguarding training</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What safeguarding training have you completed? • Do you feel this training has equipped you to fulfil your safeguarding duties?
<p>Specific safeguarding risks</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a training plan to deliver (or revisit) these specific issues with staff and those working directly with children? eg those listed in Part 1 of KCSiE 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) ○ domestic abuse ○ radicalisation ○ Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) ○ mental health ○ serious violence ○ risk outside the home (ROTH) • Are you aware that some children are potentially greater risk of harm than others? Can you give me an example? Eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children who need a social worker ○ Children missing from education ○ Elective Home Educated children ○ Children requiring mental health support ○ Looked after children and previously looked after children ○ Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or health issues ○ Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)
<p>Child on child abuse</p>
<p>Are staff aware that the following constitute child on child abuse and will report it as such to the DSL?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying) • teenage relationship abuse ie abuse in intimate personal relationships between children or • physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)

- **sexual violence** eg rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- **sexual harassment** eg sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- **causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent** eg forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- **consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- **upskirting**, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm, and
- **initiation/hazing type violence and rituals** (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Online safety

- Do you feel confident about your knowledge of the online risks faced by the children in your care?
- What would you do if you were concerned about a child?

Recording pupil voice

- Do you understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances?
- How do you build trusted relationships which facilitate communication?
- We know that children communicate with their behaviour. How do you ensure that safeguarding is always considered when a child displays inconvenient or challenging behaviour?

CPOMS

- What are the expectations in terms of recording concerns on CPOMS?

Safeguarding curriculum

- Are you aware that the school has developed a curriculum that ensures pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through a range of teaching and learning opportunities? Are you part of this?
- Are pupils encouraged to adopt safe and responsible practices and deal sensibly with risk?
- Are pupils comfortable to talk about any concerns they may have and understand that they will be listened to and valued?

The importance of challenge

- Can staff articulate the importance of challenge to create a strong safeguarding culture at the school?
- Are they aware of the need to press for reconsideration if a child's situation does not appear to be improving, despite having raised their concerns with the DSL?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do they feel empowered to challenge the DSL (or anyone else) where they feel a decision made is leaving a child at risk of harm?
<p>Allegations against staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do staff make an allegation against staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors? What if the allegation is against the headteacher? Practically, how would staff get hold of the chair of governors contact details? Are staff familiar with the SVPP Concerns and Allegations flowchart?
<p>Low-level concerns</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are staff clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are they confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour, in themselves and others? Are staff empowered to share any low-level safeguarding concerns? What is the procedure for staff to report low-level concerns against staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors? What if the concern is about the headteacher?
<p>Whistleblowing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do staff understand whistleblowing and the school's procedure to deal with whistleblowing concerns?
<p>Visitors procedures</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the staff (and pupils) aware of the significance of the coloured lanyards? What would staff (and pupils) do if spot any visitor not wearing a lanyard or one that denotes they do not have clearance to work directly with pupils if they are seen unaccompanied on site?
<p>Single Central Record and safer recruitment</p>
<p>Questions for staff who maintain the SCR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you using the most recent template provided by Wiltshire Council? Have you completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer recruitment training (eg NSPCC) SCR training – eg pre-recorded training Microsoft Excel training (where appropriate)? Have you completed an audit to ensure data recorded on the SCR matches with information contained in the personnel files? Are there regular reviews scheduled with a governor? You may use the SCR monitoring guide for governors, available here.