

Love, Respect, Belong

## ST MARY'S BENTWORTH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNOR VISITS TO SCHOOL POLICY

<i>Date of implementation:</i> June 2024	<i>Date for review:</i> <b>June 2026</b>
<i>Ownership:</i> Education Committee	<i>Links to:</i> Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies, Confidentiality Policy, H&S Policy
<i>Review Committee:</i> Chair of Education Committee, Chair of Resources Committee, Head teacher	
<i>Communicated to:</i> Staff, Full Governing Body	
<i>Evaluation: (inc links to evidence)</i> Discussed at staff meetings; Governor record sheets shared with HT; HT report to Full Governing Body.	

### Context

In order to be effective governors need to know their school and how it works. Therefore the main purpose for school visits is to learn as much as possible in order to carry out the governor's responsibilities of monitoring school progress.

First hand impressions of what the school is like and what goes on there give governors a context and background for their discussions and decisions.

A second important purpose of school visits is to demonstrate to the staff an interest in, and support for, the school and that governors responsibilities are taken seriously. Governors have extensive powers which affect staff, so staff can reasonably expect governors to exercise these powers with a good understanding of their work and the context in which they do it.

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. Much of this monitoring will be done through the Head Teacher and other members of staff reporting to the governing body and its committees.

The **Governing Body** will, with the help of the Head Teacher and staff, organise a schedule of visits throughout the year. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per governor per year. Visits may be conducted in pairs.

The **Head Teacher** will guide the Governing Body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and school development plan priorities and targets to be covered each term. Governor visits may include reporting on Pupil Progress Meetings, Presentations, Clubs, SIP meetings, Governor Learning Walks, Assemblies and Performances, In-house days eg **specialist speaker visits**, World Book Day, Inter-generational projects etc. Reflective evaluation from Governors, particularly Foundation Governors, is welcomed and seen as an important aspect for feedback on our Collective Worship policy, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy, and our Church services.

**Individual governors or pairs of governors** will, with the guidance of the whole Governing Body; identify an aspect of the school's work to focus on. The choice of focus will be informed by the Terms of Reference for each committee. These will identify clearly which aspects of the SEF and school development plan each committee has responsibility for. The aim will be for them to explore an aspect of the school in some detail, increasing their confidence and knowledge and generating evidence to help the governing body to evaluate the school's performance.

A detailed planned visit by a governor can generate evidence that will inform decision-making by the whole governing body or its committees. It is essential that governors and staff are clear about the reasons for such visits and have agreed the way in which they will be conducted with the Headteacher. It is also important to adhere to current requirements on safeguarding.

**Teachers and support staff** will at all times be courteous and considerate to the governors, recognising the contribution made by the Governing Body to the school. They will make practical suggestions on the focus for governors' visits so as to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors.

Questions will be invited from governors, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality. While staff should take every care to anonymise any information or examples of work it may be possible for governors to identify individuals in discussions of progress and attainment of children in vulnerable or underperforming groups. Governors will be fully mindful of and committed to absolute confidentiality in such circumstances.

## **Governor Visits**

Governors are an important part of the school team and are welcomed into the school by staff. It is important that Governors remember to respect the professionals and the children, support the Head Teacher and the staff, and acknowledge that they represent the full Governing Body. If the agreed principles and procedures are followed then Governor Visits will result in effective monitoring by the Governing Body that will contribute positively to school improvement and can be enjoyable experiences for all involved.

### **Visits enable Governors to:-**

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff

### **Before making a visit** Governors will

- Contact the Head Teacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit
- Plan which classes will be visited
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

**On the day of the visit** the Governor will remember to:-

- Act as an observer and only participate in the class at the invitation of the teacher
- Respect the professionalism of the teacher, supporting but not interfering

**After the visit** the Governor will:-

- Meet with the Head Teacher to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose
- Complete the Governor Visit Pro-forma or specific Head Teacher Recording Form (found on page 4 of this Policy), reporting on the focus. The completed form will be shared with the Head Teacher and then, after discussion of its content, the report will be circulated to the governing body and /or staff.
- Governors must report factually, avoiding giving opinions, whilst maintaining their independence of view. Where possible individuals should not be able to be identified.

It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements should not be made arbitrarily.

**The visit is not about:-**

- Inspection
- Making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher
- Checking on your own children
- Pursuing a personal agenda
- Making complaints or hearing concerns – the relevant policies need to be followed

### **Informal visits**

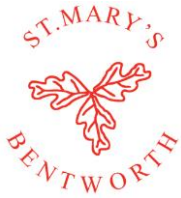
As well as visiting the school to fulfil more formal responsibilities many governors come into school (where their personal commitments allow) on a more informal basis. This may be to an assembly or school play; to join the school for lunch; to help with a school event or outing or for other reasons. The school welcomes such visits but appreciates if governors check with the school before coming. Communication is a vital aspect of governance.

If informal discussions develop into more day-to-day matters that in any way raise concerns about the school, the Headteacher needs to be informed immediately.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at committee and Governing Body meetings. At the final meeting of each academic year the chair will report the number of visits conducted and the areas of focus. This report and minutes of meetings when reports of visits were discussed will enable the Governing Body to judge the extent to which the information gathered informed the Governing Body's understanding of the school's performance. This will also generate data for school self-evaluation.

Staff governors will feedback from colleagues. They will be asked to identify what worked well and what if anything needs to be reconsidered. They will also be asked to describe the extent to which their colleagues' understanding of the Governing Body's role has been enhanced.



Love Respect Belong

**St Mary's CE Primary School, Bentworth**  
**Governor Visit Report** (Recording Form, *optional*  
*optional use for recording/note-taking*)

Name of Governor	
Date of visit	
Focus of visit	
Classes/staff visited	
Summary of activities eg visiting classes, talking to staff, looking at resources, had lunch etc.	
What I have learned as a result of my visit	
Positive comments about the focus	
Aspects I would like clarified/questions I have	
Ideas for future visits	
Any other comments	
Please continue on the back of this form or separate sheet if required	

Date:..... Signed: .....(governor's name)