

St Helena's Church of England Primary School

It is our responsibility to learn and achieve our dreams as a family.

Opening minds, widening horizons and developing a better world.

Valuing Community, Compassion, Endurance, Friendship, Hope, Respect, Thankfulness, Wisdom

Governor school visits policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the school. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter St Helena's CE Primary School. When they do so, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedure that all governors are expected to follow when visiting school and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose, so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

2. Guidance and scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the [maintained schools governance guide](#) (section 3.3.3).

2.1 Occasional visits (e.g. learning walks)

Governors will visit the school on an occasional basis as such visits enable governors to:

- Fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school
- Observe whether the school is implementing its policies and improvement plans
- Observe how its policies and improvement plans are working in practice

Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish.

2.2 Focused visits (e.g. formal monitoring visits)

Governors will also take part in focused governor monitoring visits, which should be:

- In line with school improvement plan (SIP) priorities

- For a specific purpose linked to the governing board's responsibilities, such as safeguarding
- Pre-arranged with the headteacher

2.3 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school

For those governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make their purpose in doing so clear.

3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

- **Formal monitoring visits**, where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member
- **Learning walks**, where governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

3.1 Governors for health and safety, special educational needs (SEN), and safeguarding

These governors will attend:

- At least a termly 1-to-1 monitoring visit with corresponding staff leads
- Ad-hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2 Subject lead governors

Subject lead governors will attend:

- A monitoring visit with the subject lead in September/February/May
- A learning walk in October/March/June

3.3 All governors

All governors will:

- Carry out at least 1 learning walk each term
- Attend at least 1 school assembly in the year
- Attend at least 1 educational visit in the year

4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the headteacher before scheduling a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware as a matter of courtesy
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff in order to avoid friction and ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day

- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the headteacher and/or relevant member of staff
- Send questions in advance to the staff member, so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils, and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the headteacher ahead of the visit
- Always wear a governor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are not permitted unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional, and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner that would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the headteacher after the visit

6. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable, these are available from the school office or online. In completing the report, governors will:

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit and its strategic role

Once complete, governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:

- The Clerk to Governors, who will then initially pass this onto the Headteacher
- The relevant staff member, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
- The Full Governing Board