



# CMAT GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY AND REPORT FORM

*A thriving family of schools who work together to celebrate differences, and support each other in pursuit of excellence.*

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

<b>This document has been approved for operation within:</b>	All Chancery schools.		
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Governance and Compliance Lead		
<b>Approved by:</b>	Board of Directors		
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### Summary of changes within this version

This is the first version of this document which has been based on NGA guidance and existing school visits policies.

## Introduction

The Governing Board has a duty to oversee the direction and policies of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance. Visiting the school is the best way to learn how it functions, and to keep under review how it operates so that you can increase the Governing Board's first-hand knowledge, informing strategic decision making.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Development Plan. Governing Bodies must appoint a governor to lead on Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), Safeguarding and Health & Safety however any additional link governors can be determined in line with the School Development Plan. Chancery has developed role descriptors for link governors however this policy covers *all* types of governor visits.

## Policy aims

This policy aims to ensure that all governors understand:

- the purpose of governor visits
- the expectations for carrying out visits including preparation, expected conduct and reporting back to the governing board

## Purpose of visits carried out by governors

Visiting school on a planned, regular basis allows governors to:

- better understand their school's strengths and areas for development to enable governors to ask informed and challenging questions at governing board meetings
- determine if agreed policies and procedures are working in practice
- identify how resources are being used
- show staff and pupils that they are interested in the life, work and achievements of a school
- experience the culture and ethos of the school

Visits should focus on:

- strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the governing board
- the evaluation of progress: are the things people say are happening actually happening?
- seeking assurance that the needs of pupils are being met (such as safeguarding and SEND)

Visits provide the following benefits to staff:

- get to know and build positive relationships with governors

- feel valued
- appreciate and value the role and responsibilities of the governing board
- ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- observing the use of resources
- have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

## **Informal visits**

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role.

- The chair making a regular visit to see the Headteacher
- To lend a helping hand with a school event
- To get information from the office relating to a committee meeting
- To help in a class
- Attend a school function or educational visit

## **Frequency of visits**

The frequency of governance visits should be in accordance with the schedule established by the governing board and agreed with school leaders and relevant staff. Visits should be scheduled to allow governors to see relevant activities and strategic milestones.

## **Arranging and preparing for visits**

Visits should be arranged through the headteacher, with adequate notice, and agreed with the relevant members of staff.

Due regard should be given to:

- the purpose of the visit and how it will benefit the pupil, teacher and governing board
- how the visit fits with the schedule of board and committee meetings, to allow for timely feedback and discussion
- how to avoid visits clashing with important events and/or busy periods in school life
- the workload implications for staff who are likely to be involved in the visits

Governors are encouraged to prepare for their visit by:

- reading and familiarising yourself with the governing board's protocol for visits and the expected conduct
- reading the background information relating to the focus of the visit, such as relevant section(s) of the strategic plan, performance data, policies, stakeholder information
- clarifying the purpose of the visit with the head teacher and or relevant member of staff
- confirming the visit schedule and activities

## Conduct on visits

When visiting the school in a governing capacity, you should:

- arrive in good time and follow the school's procedures for safeguarding and health and safety (such as signing in and producing identification)
- adopt a friendly approach that puts everyone at ease
- be respectful of the school at work and if you wish to take notes, check that those you are with are comfortable with this
- if you are taking notes, be clear with everyone that this is for feedback purposes and that you are not recording judgements (for example on the quality of their teaching)
- ask relevant questions that are closely linked to the purpose of your visit. Chancery has developed a set of link governor questions to prompt discussion and the NGA has a set of ['questions for governing boards to ask'](#).
- acknowledge the staff and pupils you meet

Governors are also expected to behave in line with the governing board's code of conduct, being aware of the need to maintain confidentiality, and should not make promises on behalf of the governing board.

Furthermore, visits must never be concerned with checking on the progress of individual children or pursuing personal agendas or issues.

## Expectations following a visit

A Governor Visit Report Form (Appendix 1) should be completed as soon as possible after each visit. A draft will be shared with the headteacher and any other members of staff involved in the visit and, when agreed, a final version should be sent to the clerk to be included in the papers for discussion at the next governing board meeting.

## Appendix 1 – Governor Visit Report Form



### Governor Visit Report Form

Name		Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit: such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the governing board</i></li> <li>• <i>the evaluation of progress: are the things people say are happening actually happening?</i></li> <li>• <i>seeking assurance that the needs of pupils are being met (such as safeguarding and SEND)</i></li> </ul>		This visit will focus on.....	
Classes/staff visited			
Summary of activities e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>meeting staff with leadership responsibility for specific areas, such as safeguarding or SEND</i></li> <li>• <i>talking to staff and pupils</i></li> <li>• <i>experiencing a lesson being taught (as part of getting to know the school, rather than making judgements about quality of teaching)</i></li> <li>• <i>seeing examples of pupil work</i></li> </ul>			
What I have learned as result of my visit:			
Positive comments about the focus:			

Aspects I would like clarified / discussion points for the governing board:

Aspects to follow up at the next visit:

Any other comments:

Date of feedback to Headteacher		LGB meeting this will be shared with	
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