

# Charlton House Independent School



'Love One Another'

## GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY AND GUIDE

**Reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee November 2022**

**To be reviewed by Curriculum Committee November 2024**

<b>Date</b>	Nov 2022			
<b>Reviewed by</b>	FGB			

## **Charlton House Independent School**

### **Governing Body Visiting Policy and Guide**

#### **Value of Visiting**

1. Survey the range of attitudes, behaviour and outcomes of pupils, with particular reference to the Catholic Christian ethos of the school
2. Understand the views and values of the staff and pupils.
3. Evaluate the resources and the environment of the school.
4. Gain first-hand information to assist policy making and decision taking.
5. Governors are known and demonstrate their commitment to the school.
6. Observe the operation of policies.
7. Give active support to the activities of the school.
8. Aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning.

#### **Value of a Policy**

1. Demonstrate being a supportive, critical friend of the school.
2. Holding the school to account, evaluating its progress.

#### **Frequency of Visits**

All Governors are asked to make at least two visits to school per year. A schedule for visits linked to the Governor's Business Plan is established.

#### **Arranging and Planning a Visit**

1. Agree date and time with the Head teacher or link teacher
2. Clarify what you will do:
  - 2.1 Time of arrival
  - 2.2 Time of departure
  - 2.3 Who you will see
3. Remember that you are representing the governing body and are a guest of the school.
4. Remember to respect the professionalism of the teachers and to respect the children. Maintain professional boundaries.

#### **Recording a Visit**

1. The record should be completed and given to the Head Teacher to sign. The visiting Governor should then give a copy to the Clerk and the Chair of Governors. It will be stored in a Governors' Visits Folder by the Clerk.

#### **Conclusions**

1. Be supportive of the Headteacher and all the staff.
2. Ask questions: What, why, how, where, when?

3. Beware of giving personal opinions.
4. Acknowledge that you represent the full governing body. As an individual governor you are a guest of the school at all times.

### **Governors' Visits**

In order to help you undertake your role effectively, it is essential that you know our school well. Only in this way can you assist effectively in the promotion of high standards and monitor change. It forms an essential part of the process to ensure that each governor and the governing body as a whole is effective in undertaking their statutory responsibilities in matters such as monitoring.

One important way of developing this knowledge and understanding is by making school visits.

Visits take a significant amount of governors' time and it is important therefore, that the reasons for visiting are understood.

Although you will receive written information such as school policies and performance data, there is nothing to match personal contact with the school in order to see and judge first-hand the effect these policies are having.

The Head Teacher and staff will be pleased to know that you are taking your responsibilities seriously and are genuinely interested in the work they are doing.

You will be assigned a key priority area and/or special area responsibility e.g. English, Special Educational Needs. These areas will be linked with staff contacts, wherever possible, to prevent duplication.

It is fun and a delight to share in the work of our learners. It also helps to destroy some of the myths about what goes on in schools nowadays and gives governors an understanding of the successes, the difficulties and the pressures in our school day —of which there can be many!

### **Informal Visits**

Being part of a class for a session can be a very rewarding experience— particularly if you have not been in a school for some years. You will be able to see the National Curriculum working in practice, see how teachers differentiate between individual pupils, how English and Mathematics are now taught, the competing pressures on staff, etc. If you wish to undertake such an informal visit, it is still important to arrange this with the class teacher beforehand, at a mutually convenient time.

### **Formal Visits**

The governing body should carefully plan formal visits by individual governors over the course of the year, in order that all governors who are accountable for a specific area and/or area of special responsibility are covered. This will also be good evidence in an OFSTED inspection that the governing body is working strategically and effectively to evaluate the quality of school provision.

For your first formal visit you may feel more at ease if you undertake a joint visit in the company of a more experienced governor. If you wish to do this, mention it to the Headteacher at the time of

booking the visit.

You should expect to focus on the impact of actions from your SSE area. If, however, you are left to choose the focus yourself, this is best done by discussion with the Headteacher having regard to your own interests and responsibilities and the school priorities as identified in the School Development Plan.

### **Before the Visit**

Contact the Head Teacher, class teacher or relevant leader to agree:

1. Date and time of the visit
2. Duration
3. Programme for the visit including classes to visit, questions to ask
4. Personnel involved

### **The Visit Itself**

1. Arrive on time, report to the school office and sign in.
2. It is the responsibility of the governor to monitor the specific area (not the teacher) or to assess the quality of teaching.
3. When visiting lessons Governors should be willing to help and participate in the lesson if considered appropriate by the teacher/relevant leader.
4. Although you may wish to take brief notes on certain aspects, try to keep this to a minimum and do it in as casual a way as possible. Do not be afraid to talk to the teachers and children.
5. Remember, it is a visit and not an inspection!
6. Staff who have been involved in your visit will very much appreciate a few words of thanks at the end of the session and indications from what you say and your body language that you have been interested in and impressed by what you have seen. Do not just walk out of the classroom! If you have concerns, please speak to the Headteacher first.
7. Once the visit is complete, see again (if possible) the Headteacher or staff member if applicable. Thank them for their help and comment as to whether the visit has gone smoothly.
8. Expect to modify your first impressions as your experience grows and in the light of further visits. Schools are dynamic places that change and develop all the time.

### **After the Visit**

- Complete the monitoring sheet provided – this should be completed for every visit to school, including to hear readers, meet with the caretaker, attending a curriculum evening etc.
- Remember when you are recording your visit, that you are not an inspector (even if you are one!) and should not make written observations about the quality of teaching and learning. If there was anything which concerned you in this way, raise this with the Head teacher verbally as soon as possible.
- It is considered good practice not to name staff or pupils when writing the record of your visit. Check with the Headteacher if you are unsure.
- When your final report is ready, give a copy to the Clerk of the governors and Headteacher
- At the next full governors meeting related to the SSE/subject specific area, be prepared to make a short verbal introduction to your report and be ready to answer any questions other governors may have.
- FINALLY — think to yourself — what can I do to make my next visit even more effective?

## GOVERNORS VISIT- LOG

Governors Name:	Time in:
	Date:
Visiting Staff Name/Department:	
Purpose of (Check) visit:	
Achieved (after visit):	
Comments on Catholic ethos of the school:	
Time left:	
Via email.	

**Thank you for completing this form.**



**Please return this form to the Headteacher, the administrations officer and the Clerk to the board by email to [katherine.lewis@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:katherine.lewis@southampton.gov.uk)**