



Holmer Green Senior School

Governor Visits Policy

February 2018

The purpose of this policy

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school, and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting our School, governors can get to know it better. The governing body is a corporate body and every governor will visit the School as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole School community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which governors will plan and carry out their School visits.

The organisation of the governor visits at Holmer Green Senior School

Visit programme

The programme of visits will be organised as follows.

- *How many visits and how often would it be reasonable for visits to take place? Consideration should be given to the views of the headteacher and staff about the total number of visits that could take place without disrupting the work of the school. How long will visits typically last? What 'experiences' will governors have on a typical visit?*
- *How frequently would each governor visit? Do governors want to agree a minimum commitment? If there are barriers preventing some governors from visiting, how can these be overcome?*
- *Do governors want to link with classes, departments or with subject leaders? Will that mean that some staff are not linked to a governor? Does that matter?*
- *How will new governors be included in the visit programme? Can more experienced governors visit alongside new governors to advise their colleagues?*

Content of visits

- *Should a programme of visits be drawn up? How far in advance would this be planned?*
- *What will be the focus of formal visits?*
- *Do governors want to agree a list of suggested questions (See Appendix 5)?*
- *How will governors seek the views of the pupils?*
- *How will the visits monitor School Improvement or Development Plan elements?*
- *Are there circumstances where it would be sensible to agree an approach in advance e.g. what will governors do if they see something that concerns them?*
- *Will there be an agreed protocol about parent governors visiting their child's class?*
- *How will the need for confidentiality be communicated? e.g. if a governor has looked at work samples*

Staff involvement

- Will the policy include a section written by staff e.g. a description of what governors are likely to see in school?
- Would additional information to assist staff in understanding why governors visit and how they can assist in raising the awareness of governors be helpful?
- Would some guidelines for approaching the governor visit be helpful?

Reporting

- How will feedback take place on the day?
- How will the visit be reported to other governors? Do governors want to use a standard format for all governor reports?
- Who will circulate reports to governors and the clerk to the governing body, once they have been finalised? Would it be helpful if someone co-ordinated this?
- Where will reports be published?

Procedure for carrying out visits at Holmer Green Senior School

Our governor visits will be organised as follows:

Before the visit

- Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Headteacher/class teacher or head of department. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the School calendar
- Clarify the purpose of the visit (see suggestions in Appendix 3) and agree this with the Headteacher and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.
- Agree how you will be introduced to the children and young people and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson
- Agree a convenient time to discuss your lesson observation with the class or subject teacher. This will also be your opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.
- Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents
- Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the governor visits at your School and abide by them.

During the visit

- **Remember this is a visit, not an inspection.** Governors are visiting to learn more about the School and to gather information to inform decision making by the governing body. It is not the governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Headteacher.
- Remember that you are an invited guest.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, the School's Child Protection policies and procedures.
- Be punctual, sign in and wear a name badge.
- Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the School by monopolising the teacher's time.
- Smile and listen. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.

- Remember that you are representing the governing body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies, but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the governing body.
- Avoid making promises on behalf of the governing body.
- Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.
- Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.
- Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as governor

After the visit

- If you have seen something that worries you, you would normally discuss this first with the teacher.
- Discuss your visit with the Headteacher and agree a draft of any written report with the Headteacher, and with staff, as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to governors and the clerk.
- Send a note to thank the relevant staff. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.
- Reflect upon your visit. Your views will inform the review of the policy and procedures.

Reporting on your visit

Following a visit, governors will share their impressions with the governing body through a formal report. Give staff the opportunity to comment on the governor visit. Copies of approved and finalised written reports should be given to the Headteacher and Chairman and subsequently made available to governors. Reports will be kept on the school GovernorZone

Evaluating the visit

Following a visit, governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the School and/or the governing body? E.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at termly FGB meetings. This policy will be reviewed taking into account the views of the staff. The governing body will consider if governor visits are contributing to the information that the governing body has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Development Plan.

This policy was approved by the governing body of Holmer Green Senior School on 6 March 2018

Review date: March 2020

Signed _____(Chairman) Date_____

Signed _____(Headteacher) Date_____