

**Learning Together for Life**

*Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you' John 15:12, New Testament ('Injil')*

# Stepney Greencoat

## Church of England Primary School



## Governor Visits Policy

<b>Policy Reviewed/Approved</b>	By Committee, Individual Governor or Head teacher
<b>Policy Renewal Date</b>	SUMMER 2023

**Learning Together for Life**  
**Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you' John 15:12,**  
**New Testament ('Injil')**

**Learning:** Learning is central to the School's life. In order to better understand the learning that is taking place, governors need to visit the School.

**Together:** As governors we do not visit the School with our own agenda or with a personal perspective. Rather, we visit the School following agreed objectives with the Governing Body and the Head Teacher.

**Life:** Visiting the School is a crucial way for the Governors to understand what is going on in the life of the School and to see how our children are being equipped for life beyond School.

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## INTRODUCTION

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1. Our Governors are key people in our school. They give constructive support to school improvement in four ways:
2. Our Governors are key people in our school. They give constructive support to school improvement in four ways:
  - providing a strategic view
  - acting as a critical friend
  - ensuring accountability
  - promoting the school's interests in the community and beyond
3. In order to carry out these responsibilities effectively Governors need to:
  - understand how the school works
  - know how well the school is performing
  - have a clear view of the school's priorities
  - be well informed about the impact of developments
  - ask pertinent and relevant questions of senior managers to check that everything is being done to ensure that all students at the school receive a good education
  - support the staff by ensuring that they have the necessary resources, training and encouragement to work effectively
  - develop a friendly, helpful and supportive relationship with the Headteacher.
4. School visits are one of the ways that Governors can build this essential knowledge and understanding about the school and carry out their responsibilities for general oversight of the school and for monitoring and evaluating the school's development. An effective partnership between Governors and staff based on mutual understanding benefits the whole school community.
5. In the current climate of covid-19 it is unlikely that governor visits can physically take place on the school site. In lieu of a real visit, each governor should endeavour to speak to the relevant teacher or staff member they are linked with on the phone or by zoom at least once in a term.

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## THE ROLE OF THE VISITING GOVERNOR

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6. The Governing Body is a corporate body and every Governor visits the school as a representative of that body, not as an individual.
7. The object of a Governor's visit is not to inspect but to learn so that they can more effectively carry out the role of a 'critical friend'. Governors should not make judgments about the quality of the professional work carried out by staff; this is the responsibility of the school's senior staff. The Governing Body has responsibility for the general oversight and strategic direction of the school; it is not concerned with

the day-to-day management and organisation, which is the responsibility of the Headteacher.

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#### AIMS OF GOVERNORS' VISITS

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8. Governors' visits may have one or more of the following aims:
  - a. To enable the Governors to have a wider understanding when making decisions about the school.
  - b. To enable staff and students to get to know Governors.
  - c. To demonstrate Governors' interest in the school and to encourage the Headteacher and staff in their work.
  - d. To enable Governors more effectively to carry out their responsibility to monitor and evaluate the school's development.
  - e. To enable Governors to be better informed advocates, able to speak up for the school from personal knowledge.
  - f. To carry out their responsibilities as members of decision-making panels.
  - g. To celebrate the school's achievements.

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#### FOCUSES FOR GOVERNORS' VISITS

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9. The focus of the majority of Governors' visits will be to gather knowledge, understanding and information that will enable them to monitor and evaluate progress on the School Improvement Plan more effectively.
10. Each Governor will adopt one of the School Improvement Plan priorities and will make at least one visit per year that focuses on the school's progress on that priority.
11. Other visits may focus on other aspects of the life, work and context of the school, e.g. extra-curricular activities, premises, health and safety, school meals, pastoral care of students, links with parents, assemblies, school events, facilities for staff, etc.

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#### MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE VISIT

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12. Governors should give the Headteacher a minimum of one week's notice of their intention to make a visit to the school. Times when staff are particularly busy should be avoided, e.g. the 1<sup>st</sup> week of term, SATs weeks, the period leading up to and during OFSTED inspection.
13. The visit should have a clear purpose, time of arrival and duration agreed with the Headteacher. The itinerary for visit will also be agreed in advance with the Headteacher.

14. The Headteacher will inform all staff about the Governor's visit.
15. Governors should always reply to special invitations to attend school functions.

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#### PROCEDURES FOR THE VISIT

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16. Governors should always check in and out with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. They will be given a name badge, which should be worn throughout the visit.
17. Each visit will start with a briefing for the Governor(s) by a member of staff with relevant responsibilities.
18. Governors should stick to the agreed itinerary for the visit except where changes are agreed with the Headteacher.
19. At the end of the visit Governors will meet with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to discuss their impressions and to ask any questions they may have arising from their experiences and observations.

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#### STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE VISIT

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20. As soon as there is an appropriate opportunity, the class teacher should introduce himself/herself and the other adults in the room to the Governor and introduce the Governor to the students, maybe briefly explaining the role of the Governors.
21. The class teacher should indicate where the Governor is to sit or stand in the room.
22. If there is an appropriate opportunity, the class teacher or EMA teacher should introduce some of the students and the work they have done to the Governor. It goes without saying that Governors introduced to the children and their work are expected to be engaged and interested in the children and their work and express suitable encouragement.
23. Staff should ensure that Governors receive a respectful welcome during their visit. If there are any comments that staff wish to make about the visit these should be directed to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

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#### GOVERNORS' CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE VISIT

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24. Listen carefully, concentrate and show interest. Don't talk too much – you have come to learn; but don't remain silent – this can send negative messages.
25. Begin and end your visit in a positive way, finding some things to genuinely praise.
26. Be courteous and sensitive.
27. Ask questions but don't expect immediate answers every time.

28. Don't get involved in personal staffing matters.
29. Earn the respect and confidence of staff by not talking about your visit to anyone except the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and when reporting to Governors. If there are any issues, please report them to the Headteacher.
30. Don't get involved in investigating complaints – this is the Headteacher's responsibility.
31. Don't interrupt lessons in progress by talking when the teacher is teaching.
32. Always thank teachers for welcoming you into their classroom before you leave.
33. SMILE!

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#### AFTER THE VISIT

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34. Following each visit that they make, Governors will complete a short written report. A proforma for this report is appended to this policy. Copies should be given to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

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#### INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION

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35. All new Governors and staff will be given a copy of this policy when they begin their term of office or take up post. Staff will be consulted on their views before each review of the policy, and the Governing Body will take the results of this consultation into account when the policy is reviewed.

**The Governing Body will review this policy during the Autumn Term each year.**