



Eastburn
Junior and Infant School

Protocol for Governor Visits

January 2018

Eastburn Junior and Infant School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding. We recognise that all adults working with, or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with the: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016) and 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings' (October 2015) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

Rationale

The Governing Body at Eastburn Junior and Infant School has important responsibilities but limited time and resources. It is therefore important that we focus on where we can add the most value to our school. One of our prime roles is to decide on the school's strategy for development and improvement. To do this effectively we need to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. The more we know and understand, the better equipped we will be to contribute to the quality of our pupils' education and to support our school in the community.

Governors can learn a great deal from the various forms of documentation relating to the school. We should all be very familiar with our School Improvement Plan, the School Prospectus, the latest Ofsted report, Analysing School Performance information and the Self Evaluation Form (SEF). These, together with termly updates from our Headteacher, should provide us with the information to allow us to follow the progress of the school.

Visits to the school are also a major source of information if used purposefully and in full cooperation with the Headteacher and staff. All visits should have a clearly defined objective agreed in advance with the Headteacher and the relevant staff members. Such visits may include an introductory visit for a new Governor, a meeting with a subject leader or an informal visit to a classroom.

When in school, Governors always remember that we are there to gain information and impressions, to observe and learn, and in so doing, to gain knowledge and understanding – we are not inspecting. We must be sensitive to the fact that we are entering another person's professional arena and that our presence may affect proceedings. We try to avoid taking notes in class – in can be intimidating. Instead, we set time aside after the visit for jotting things down. Governor visits often include extra work for the staff and it is important to thank staff and children for letting you share their lessons.

We always plan in time at the end of a visit to talk through what has been seen with the teacher or the Headteacher.

New Governors

All new Governors should arrange an introductory visit to the school with the Headteacher. This is an invaluable way of getting a feel for how the school works, to meet the staff and to become familiar with the layout and resources. It provides some background knowledge for the papers and discussions at Governing Body meetings.

Timetable of Visits

- All Governors should visit the school at least once a term during the working day;
- All new Governors should be offered an introductory visit soon after their appointment as part of their introductory programme;
- Governors are welcome to arrange a visit to the school, but must ensure that one week's prior notice is given with the Headteacher; this is so that the visit can be planned and a focus can be agreed;
- Specific visits will be sent for some occasions e.g. celebration assemblies.

Focus of Visits

Visits will focus on aspects of the School Improvement Plan and on carrying out the work of the Governing Body e.g. SEN, Health and Safety, Safeguarding etc.

The visits could have a particular emphasis one-year group, or on one major aspect of delivery of the curriculum. The Governing Body, in partnership with the Headteacher, will discuss the focus of these visits in advance.

The purpose of a Governor visit is not to:

- Make judgements about the quality of teaching or management of the school;
- Check on the progress of own children;
- Pursue personal agendas;
- Interrupt, give ideas or suggestions during teaching time.

Format for Governor Visits

1. Arrange a visit with the Headteacher and agree the aims of the visit and arrangements for it at least one week in advance. The Headteacher will brief the staff involved about the discussion and subjects to be covered in advance.
2. The visit – some visits will take place in the classroom and staff will have been consulted about the date, time and purpose of the visit. This will enable them to prepare information related to the focus of the visit, this might include:
 - Informal observations of children at work;
 - Opportunities to speak with children about their work;
 - Opportunities to look at displays and the learning environment;
 - Supporting a group of children on a set task.

Governors would be expected to be present at the beginning of a lesson as this will give the teacher time to make the relevant introductions. Governors are also aware of confidentiality of what they see and hear.

The Follow Up

- Governors to complete a Governor Visits Form (Appendix 2)
- Feedback to the GB in the appropriate committee that the visit has taken place;
- Staff and Governors to review the effectiveness of visits;
- Governors and staff to update the protocol every three years.

	ALWAYS	NEVER
BEFORE	<p>Agree purpose of the visit.</p> <p>Agree the time schedule.</p> <p>Agree when you will discuss the visit with the Headteacher.</p> <p>Consider practicalities (parking, time of arrival, how to make notes etc.)</p> <p>Find out how each teacher wants you to contribute (or not).</p>	<p>Turn up unannounced.</p>
DURING	<p>Introduce yourself to staff and pupils.</p> <p>Note and praise the positive.</p> <p>Ask questions to increase understanding.</p> <p>Remain focused on the purpose of the visit.</p>	<p>Interrupt the teacher.</p> <p>Make judgements i.e. good, satisfactory etc.</p> <p>Pursue your own agenda.</p>
AFTER	<p>Thank the teacher and pupils.</p> <p>Discuss the visit with the teacher.</p> <p>Complete a Governors Visit Form.</p> <p>Review the visit with the Headteacher.</p>	<p>Leave without a word.</p>

Governor Visit Report



Name:	Date:
Focus of visit (Refer to School Improvement Plan)	Classes/staff visited
Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch etc.	
What have I learned as a result of my visit?	
Aspects I would like clarified/questions that I have:	
Ideas for future visits:	
Any other comments:	
Signed _____ (Governor)	