



Governors' Visits Policy

Approved by:	Governing Board	Date: 4 March 2026
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Last reviewed:	March 2026
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Next review due by:	March 2027
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1. Aims of this policy

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Board is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. The Governors' visiting programme is an integral part of the school's monitoring process and provides Governors with valuable insights into school life and culture..

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting Downlands School and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose, so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

2. Guidance and scope

2.1 Governors are observers

Boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and action from the school development plan
- Observe how those developments are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

2.2 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not advise on the management of the school or on the day-to-day operations of the school

2.3.Visits enable Governors to:

- Be better informed as critical friends to the school
- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff
- Observe the delivery and impact of the curriculum
- Learn about how the curriculum is delivered inclusively to ensure it is accessible to all pupils.
- Observe progress of the School Development Plan (SDP)
- Monitor safeguarding issues through discussion with staff and pupils

2.4 Visits enable staff to:

- Get to know Governors
- Discuss with Governors how their work contributes to the plans and priorities of the school
- Celebrate successes and share some of the challenges

3.1 Visit protocols

3.1 General expectations

- Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.
- Each visit should be clear on focus including monitoring the School Development Plan
- The purpose of the visit must be agreed in advance with the head of department/faculty and understood by all involved.
- New governors may find it helpful to discuss their plans for their first visit with a more experienced governor.

Link governors

These governors will attend:

- A formal monitoring visit with the lead staff member each term where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area.
- Subject link governors will also attend an exam meeting in September

Lead Governors for attendance, curriculum, disadvantaged/inclusion, safeguarding, special educational needs and wellbeing

These governors will attend:

- At least one monitoring visit per term with corresponding staff leads
- Ad-hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2. Before a visit

Governors will

- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff in order to make sure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are most productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the relevant member of staff
- Send questions in advance if they feel this is helpful to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Request a classroom visit if appropriate to the focus of the visit
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures

3.3. During a visit

During visits governors should ensure they minimise disruption for staff and pupils.

Governors will:

- Remain as observers not inspectors
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Acknowledge any concerns that staff may raise and offer to pass them on to the relevant line manager. Offering solutions to problems is not appropriate as it is an operational matter.

- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner that would make staff feel that Governors are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard

3.4. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable using the monitoring visit form.

Governors will:

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what they saw and discussed
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit
- Once complete, governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:
- (New governors may choose to send it to a more experienced governor for feedback)
- The relevant staff member, the Headteacher and Clerk to Governors
- Once the report has been agreed by the Headteacher, the Clerk to Governors will circulate to all Governors.

This flow chart should be used in conjunction with the Governors' Visits Policy and the sections referred to in this flow chart



Arrange to have a conversation with the member of staff you are linked with



Agree a focus from the SDP with the member of staff. Arrange a date and time for the visit. Please see sections 2, 3.2 of the Governors' Visits Policy. If unsure, discuss plans with a more experienced governor



Decide with the member of staff how you will investigate the focus you have jointly chosen. For example: lesson visits, documentation, discussion, interviews



Agree a time and date for the one hour visit



Visit takes place. A verbal discussion should take place to agree any action points/feedback. See section 3.3



Write up the report, adhering to the Governors' Visits Policy sections 3.3 and 3.4. If unsure, send the draft report to an experienced governor before sending to staff (see next box)



Send the draft report to the Head of Teaching and Learning (HoTL)/member of staff to carry out an initial fact check. Ask them to return it to you as soon as possible.



When you receive the report back from the HoTL, send the report to the Headteacher and copy in the HoTL and Clerk to Governors. The Headteacher may suggest amendments. If you would like to discuss the amendments please make an appointment with the Headteacher. If you are happy with the amendments please signal your agreement.



Once amendments have been made and the draft report has been agreed Clerk to Governors will circulate to all governors

Appendix 1 Governor Visits proforma

Downlands Community School Governor Visit Proforma (Appendix 1 to Governor Visits Policy)
Once complete, governors should submit their reports to the following people, in the following order: • The relevant staff member, the Headteacher and Clerk to Governors. Once the report had been agreed by the Headteacher, the Clerk to Governors will circulate to all Governors.
Governor: Date and time of visit:
Link department or lead area:
Focus of Visit including link to relevant part of School Development Plan (SDP) and school priorities:
Sources of information (e.g. Department head, class teacher, display work, pupils' workbooks, talking to pupils, looking at resources) and areas visited:
Issues and key questions discussed:
Summary of what was learned (include evidence of progress and of planned next steps in area of focus):

Key points to take forward for discussion at the Governing Board and Committee meetings, with reference to the SDP:
Signed: (Governor) Date:
Date sent to Headteacher:
Date sent to the Governing Board:

Appendix 2 Exam meeting proforma

Downlands Community School Governor Exam Meeting Proforma (Appendix 2 to Governor Visits Policy)	
Once complete, governors should submit their reports to the following people, in the following order: The relevant staff member, the Headteacher and Clerk to Governors. Once the report had been agreed by the Headteacher, the Clerk to Governors will circulate to all Governors.	
Governor's name:	Date and time of visit:
The meeting was attended by:	
Summary of what was learned including successes and next steps to address concerns:	
Key points to take forward for discussion at the Governing Board and Committee meetings, with reference to the SDP:	
Signed: Governor	Date:
Sent to Headteacher:	Date:
Sent to the Governing Board:	Date: