



# Governor Visits Policy

Revised: April 2024

To be reviewed: April 2025

## Vision

We put children first, pioneering excellence and championing each and every child.

## Overview

*'Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, the board can see for themselves whether the school is implementing their policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views; though are unlikely to be sufficient for these purposes.'*

DfE (2019) 'Governance handbook', p.25

Through this policy, The Pioneer Academy aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least one visit per term (three visits per school year), demonstrating the School Board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs, and allow governors to see the School Development Plan in action.

For teaching staff, governor visits allow teaching staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

Governors must:

- Remember to respect school staff and pupils.
- Support the Head Teacher.
- Acknowledge that they represent the full School Board.

By following the agreed principles and procedures, governor visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved, and will significantly contribute towards school improvement.

## Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'

- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

## Roles and responsibilities

Governors are responsible for:

- Meeting their target of three visits per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with their linked staff member
- Reporting their observations to the full School Board.

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Facilitating governor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with the special interest governors and their linked staff member, prior to a report being made to the full School Board.

Each School Board would have a Chair, Vice Chair, a Safeguarding Governor, an Inclusion Governor, and an Attainment and Progress Governor. Role Descriptions for these are provided in the Governance Framework.

The Safeguarding Governor, Inclusion Governor and Attainment and Progress Governor should meet their identified member of staff at least termly.

Besides these five consistent roles, the other Lead Roles would be agreed annually by the School Board (at meeting 1 in September) to reflect priorities within the School Development Plan.

Governors in these other roles should meet staff and visit school as appropriate to the role.

## Protocols

Governor visits are **not** a form of inspection, and governors should not make judgements concerning teaching in any official capacity.

- Governors should avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.
- Governors should avoid the pursuance of personal agendas.
- Governors must remain flexible and understand that teaching staff must make pupils' education the priority, and that this may sometimes lead to the rearranging of visits.
- Governors must never visit unannounced.
- Visits are not an opportunity for governors to check on individual children or monopolise teachers' time.

**Agree purpose of the termly visit with the linked member of staff**, so that mutual trust and respect are established, and to clarify the key differences between the evaluation roles of senior leaders and governors.

There will be times when governors visit classrooms with their linked member of staff. It is not appropriate for governors to be judging the quality of teaching, however some activities will provide

evidence which contributes towards judgements on the quality of learning. Other visits might include activities undertaken with staff, such as:

- Statutory compliance review
- Equalities/Inclusion review
- Safeguarding review
- Community Cohesion review
- Engagement with stakeholder (parents/carers, pupils) questionnaires – distribution/analysis/next steps
- Focused discussions with children about their learning
- ‘Learning walks’ with an agreed focus
- Directed observations of aspects of school life – eg behaviour, SMSC outcomes
- Regular review of attainment and progress such as the Analysis of Schools Performance (ASP)
- Discussion about reports from meetings with subject leaders

Governors have a role to play in ensuring that all policies and other documents that schools are required to have by law are in place and regularly reviewed.

### **Preparing for a visit**

Before a visit, governors will:

- Arrange the termly visit within good time.
- Agree the purpose of the visit with the linked member of staff.
- Discuss any planned learning walk and the focus linked to the School Development Plan.

### **During a visit**

During a visit, governors will:

- Adhere to their agreed role.
- Not interrupt a teaching session to pose questions.
- Adhere to confidentiality agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils.

During a visit, governors will not:

- Assume a role different to that which has been agreed.
- Interrupt the teacher.
- Distract pupils.

### **After a visit**

After a visit, governors will:

- Thank their linked member of staff and Head Teacher
- Discuss the visit with the linked member of staff.
- Draft a record of the visit (appendix 1) and share with the linked member of staff, who will share the report with the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher will share the report with the Chair of the School Board for distribution with the papers for the next School Board Meeting.
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full School Board.

After a visit, governors will not:

- Break confidentiality agreements.

### Summary

It is recommended that governors:

	Always	Never
<b>BEFORE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree the details of the visit with senior leaders/linked member of staff</li><li>• Agree the purpose of the visit</li><li>• Agree levels of confidentiality</li><li>• Notify staff, if the visit will include time in classrooms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turn up unannounced</li></ul>
<b>DURING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stick to the agreed protocol</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interrupt the teaching</li></ul>
<b>AFTER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thank the staff and children</li><li>• Give praise where it's due</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leave without a word</li></ul>

### By being proactively engaged in this way, governors:

- gain insights into the day to day life of the school,
- have a deeper understanding of how well the school is doing,
- increase their knowledge of the school's successes and challenges,
- contribute to school improvement planning and self-evaluation reviews,
- are effective partners in strategic leadership,
- are able to provide more effective support to staff and pupils,
- have greater confidence in providing appropriate, well-informed challenge to senior leaders,
- find their role more fulfilling!

### Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the **Head of Governance** in consultation with **Head Teachers** and **Chairs of the School Boards**. When reviewing the success of the policy, the following will be taken into consideration:

- Has every governor visited at least **three times** during the academic year?
- Has every governor made links with their allocated staff member?
- Are visits achieving the desired outcomes?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can practice be improved?

Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all School Board governors. All governors are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.