

PROMOTING POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

BRIGHSTONE C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL



GOVERNING BODY VISITING POLICY AND GUIDE

Date Agreed: 20th October 2009

Review Date: October 2010

Signed: _____

Chair Board of Governors

Governing Body Visiting Policy and Guide

Value of Visiting

1. Survey the range of attitudes, behaviour and outcomes of pupils.
2. Understand the views and values of the staff and pupils.
3. Evaluate the resources and the environment of the school.
4. Gain first-hand information to assist policy making and decision taking.
5. Governors are known and demonstrate their commitment to the school.
6. Observe the operation of policies.
7. Give active support to the activities of the school.
8. Aware of changes and different approaches to teaching and learning.

Value of a Policy

1. Demonstrate being a critical friend of the school.
2. Holding the school to account, evaluating its progress.

Frequency of Visits

All Governors are expected to make at least six visits into school per year.

Arranging and Planning a Visit

1. Agree date and time with the head teacher
2. Clarify what you will do:
 - 2.1 Time of arrival
 - 2.2 Time of departure
 - 2.3 Who you will see
3. Remember that you are representing the governing body and are a guest of the school.
4. Remember to respect the professionalism of the teachers and to respect the children.

Recording a Visit

1. The record should be completed and given to the clerk of the Governors.
2. It will be stored in the Governors' Visiting Folder.

Conclusions

1. Be supportive of the head teacher and all the staff.
2. Ask questions: What, why, how, where, when?
3. Beware giving opinions.
4. Acknowledge that you represent the full governing body. As an individual governor you are a guest of the school.

Document Date: 20th October 2009

Due for review: October 2010

Governors' Visits

In order to help you undertake your role effectively, it is essential that you know your school well. Only in this way can you assist effectively in the promotion of high standards and monitor change. It forms an essential part of the process to ensure that each governor and the governing body as a whole is effective in undertaking their statutory responsibilities in matters such as monitoring.

One important way of developing this knowledge and understanding is by making school visits.

Visits take a significant amount of governors' time and it is important therefore that the reasons for visiting are understood.

Although you will receive written information such as school policies and performance data, there is nothing to match personal contact with the school in order see and judge first-hand the effect these policies are having.

The head teacher and staff will be pleased to know that you are taking your responsibilities seriously and are genuinely interested in the work they are doing.

You will be partnered with a class as their class link governor. This gives the opportunity to explore learning and monitor their progress as they grow.

It is fun and a delight to share in the work of our learners. It also helps to destroy some of the myths about what goes on in schools nowadays and gives governors an understanding of the successes, the difficulties and the pressures in our school—of which there are many!

Informal Visits

Being part of the class for a session can be a very rewarding experience—particularly if you have not been in a school for some years. You will be able to see the National Curriculum working in practice, see how teachers differentiate between individual pupils, how the literacy hour operates, the pressures on staff, etc.

If you wish to undertake such an informal visit, it is still important to arrange this with the office beforehand or with the class teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Formal Visits

Formal visits by individual governors should be carefully planned by the governing body over one or two years in order that over this period all of the activities for which the governing body is accountable are the subject of a formal visit. This will also be good evidence in an OFSTED inspection that the governing body is working strategically and effectively.

For your first formal visit you may feel more at ease if you undertake a joint visit in the company of a more experienced governor. If you wish to do this, mention it at the governors' meeting.

You should expect the governing body to ask you to focus on a particular activity/ issue/class group, etc. If, however, you are left to choose the focus yourself, this is best done by discussion with the head teacher having regard to your own interests and responsibilities and the school priorities as identified in the School Development Plan.

Before the Visit

Contact the head teacher, class teacher or relevant co-ordinator to agree:

1. Date and time of the visit
2. Duration
3. Programme for the visit including classes to visit, questions to ask
4. Personnel involved

The Visit Itself

1. Arrive on time, report to the office and sign both the visitor's book and governors' log (yellow sheet at the back of the visitors book)
2. It is the responsibility of the governor to monitor the subject (not the teacher) or assess the quality of teaching
3. When visiting lessons Governors should be willing to help and participate in the lesson if considered appropriate by the teacher/relevant co-ordinator.
4. Although you may wish to take brief notes on certain aspects, try to keep this to a minimum and do it in as casual a way as possible. Do not be afraid to talk to the teachers and children.
5. Remember, it is a visit and not an inspection!
6. Staff who have been involved in your programme will very much appreciate a few words of thanks at the end of the session and indications from what you say and your "body language" that you have been interested in and impressed by what you have seen. Do not just walk out of the classroom! If you have concerns, please speak to the head teacher first.
7. Once the programme is complete, see again (if possible) the head teacher or staff member who has arranged the visit. Thank them for their help and comment as to whether the programme has gone smoothly.
8. Expect to modify your first impressions as your experience grows and in the light of further visits. Schools are dynamic places that change and develop all the time.

After the Visit

- Complete the monitoring sheet provided
- Remember when you are writing your report that you are not an inspector (even if you are one!) and should not make written observations about the quality of teaching and learning. If there was anything which concerned you in this way, raise them with the head teacher verbally
- It is considered good practice not to name staff or pupils. Check with the head teacher if you are unsure
- When your final report is ready give a copy to the clerk to the governors
- At the governors' meeting, be prepared to make a short verbal introduction to your report and be ready to answer any questions other governors may have.
- FINALLY — think to yourself — what can I do to make my next visit even more effective

GOVERNOR VISIT

GOVERNOR		DATE		TIME	
PURPOSE OF VISIT					
DETAILS					
Did you observe anything that met the five outcomes? . please note below each heading:					
Enjoy+Achieve	Be Healthy	Stay Safe	Positive Cont	Economic Wellbeing	

Every Child Matters - Suggested questions to ask children

Enjoying and Achieving

- What do you like about school?
- What are you learning about?
- Do you know what you need to do to get better?
- Do you know more now than at the start of the lesson?
- What do you enjoy most about school?
- What is your most exciting lesson?
- How do you know when you have done well?
- Do you like learning at home?
- Who helps you?
- How do they help you?
- Who talks to you about your work?

Being Healthy

- How often do you do PE?
- What does it mean to be healthy?
- What is a healthy meal?
- How often do you drink water?
- Do you enjoy being active - doing what?
- What is your favourite activity?

Staying Safe

- Who can you talk to if you are unhappy or sad?
- If someone upsets you on the playground what do you do?
- Are there times when other people are unkind to you?
- Do you feel safe at school?
- Is there anywhere in school that you don't feel safe?
- If you see children being unkind to another child what do you do?

Positive Contribution

- What jobs do you do in school?
- What does the word responsibility mean to you?
- Do you feel you can express your ideas and that they are listened to?
- What do you get involved with in school?

Economic Well-being

- What skills do you think you need when you are grown up?
- Can you tell us about skills you have learnt in school?
- How well can you use a computer?
- What do you want to be/do when you grow up?