

JOHN CLIFFORD SCHOOL
Guidelines for Governor Visits

Welcome to our governing body. We hope that you enjoy your time as a school governor. This leaflet outlines how you can become better informed about our work through making a visit to our school.

As a governor of the school, you will attend a number of meetings and contribute to the strategic leadership and management of the school. As part of your role, we hope that you will sometimes be able to visit while the children are present. This ensures that you see the school as it is meant to be — full of children living and learning together. It gives you the chance to see how the policies and procedures that may have been discussed by governors are being put into action.

What is a governor visit? There are different types of school visit:

- **Visits by invitation** include coming to see a class assembly or a production, or attending a school event. They provide a chance to see the school and the children on show. Dates for these events appear in the school newsletters and governors are always welcome. Governors also receive an invitation to all our productions with the opportunity to have a seat reserved, if you wish.
- **A learning walk** with the Head Teacher. This is an opportunity to have a tour of the whole school and see the philosophy, aims and values 'in action'.
- **General visits** provide the chance, especially for new governors, to see the school in action by following a programme of classroom visits and observing teaching and learning in a variety of curriculum areas.
- **Themed visits** allow governors to observe some of the teaching and learning in a particular subject or aspect of the curriculum. Themes could include literacy, numeracy, ICT, humanities, special needs, the arts or PE.
- **Link visits** provide an opportunity to visit a teacher or class with which you are specifically linked. These give governors the chance to get to know and talk with staff and children about any issues or events happening in school; for example, visits, residential, special occasions or curriculum initiatives.
- **Casual visits** offer the chance to pop into school when you can without a prior appointment. This will probably be for only a few minutes but may provide the opportunity to chat with a few members of staff or take an interest in things that are going on.

How do I arrange a visit?

Visits should normally be arranged through the Head Teacher by phone, e-mail or conversation. The school will do its best to accommodate requests for specific dates or times. We recognise that many governors have work commitments and may have limited time available. However, there may be good reason why certain days are not suitable for a visit due to the commitments, on and off

site, of key members of staff. If you are a Link Governor, it is appropriate to contact the member of staff concerned directly but it is still helpful if the Head Teacher is kept informed.

How will I know where to go?

Like all other visitors, governors are expected to come into school using the main entrance, report to reception and sign the visitors' book. If your visit is pre-arranged, the office will either have a copy of an outline programme or know who to send for to meet you. Governors are asked to follow any pre-arranged programme - it is not appropriate to drop into a classroom (or an office) unannounced during a visit. If your visit is unplanned, the office will check to see if anyone is available to see you.

What is the behaviour code when making a visit?

- Governors are guests in the school. As such, staff and children should always treat you with **courtesy and respect**. Similarly, governors should respect the professional role of teachers and support staff and recognise that their first duty is to ensure that children are learning and making progress.
- Please remember, for children and for staff, **the school is their workplace** and all of them have work to do. A governor visit should not *interrupt* the work of the school. You should feel free to talk with staff or children but please remember that they may have a meeting to go to or an activity to prepare.
- Governors are welcome to make full use of **staff facilities** while visiting the school. These include the staff toilets and staffroom where refreshments are available. If you would like to have a school meal, this can be booked with the office when you arrive in the morning.
- **Child protection** is taken very seriously in our school. Governors should never be left on their own with children and should avoid putting themselves in a vulnerable situation eg talking with a child on your own and out of sight in a classroom quiet area; or walking into an area where children are changing.
- Once the children are working, it is often useful to **talk with some of the children** about the work they are doing and other work they have done - our children are used to people coming into their classroom and talking to them about their work. Anything you see or hear concerning individual children or staff should remain confidential.

Do I have to report back to anyone about a school visit?

There is no requirement to make a formal or written report. However, at each meeting of the governing body, there is an opportunity to speak briefly about any visits you have made. It may be appropriate to make a few notes for your own use, especially if you made a visit to look at something in particular. Feedback is very welcome and helps the school improve what it offers. Reports at governors' meetings should not normally name individual pupils. If you see something that worries or confuses you while visiting the school, it would be appropriate to speak with the staff or Head Teacher to seek clarification or explanation. If you have a concern you wish to share with other governors, please inform the head teacher so that a response can be prepared if necessary.