

## **William Gilpin School ~ Governors' Visits**

1. The aims of Governor visits at William Gilpin school are:

- For Governors to develop a greater understanding of the way the school operates.
- For Governors to become better informed about the school.
- To build up good relationships between Governors, staff and pupils.
- To contribute to the Governing Body's monitoring role.

2. Visits must be arranged in consultation with the Headteacher and staff.

3. All visits will be part of a planned programme and link to School Improvement Plan. Priorities and the purpose and scope of each visit will be agreed in advance.

4. Each visit, where possible, will start with a meeting with the Headteacher to ensure any last minute changes to the arrangements are discussed. The Headteacher is free to change the arrangements if necessary, including postponing the visit.

5. Any issues arising from the visit will be discussed with the Headteacher in the first instance. The Headteacher, where possible, will ensure time is available for a brief meeting with the visiting Governor at the end of the visit.

6. The school will provide visiting governors with relevant information before the school visit.

7. The Headteacher and all staff will promote Governor visits as valuable and positive. The children will be informed of who the visitor is, and what they are expected to do.

8. Reporting the visit to the Governing Body will be in accordance with agreed protocols. The content of any written report will be checked with the Headteacher before it is circulated.

9. Reports should not contain evaluative or judgemental comments about the quality of teaching and learning.

### **10. Monitoring and Review:**

This policy will be reviewed and amended in September 2009.

**Signed:**

**Date: September 2006**

## **For Individual Governors**

- Negotiate a mutually convenient time with the Headteacher and class teacher for the visit and discussion afterwards, recognising that teachers' and Governors' time is valuable.
- Ensure that any visit has an explicit purpose and focus, which have been agreed with all concerned.
- Avoid stressful periods such as during or just before an Ofsted inspection or examinations.
- Always wear a name badge.
- Avoid attempting to take on a teaching role, or discussing irrelevant issues with the pupils during the lesson.
- Avoid note taking or acting in any way like an inspector.
- Avoid making promises to staff on behalf of the governing body.
- Respect the normal conventions of governor confidentiality, in particular issues surrounding named staff or pupils.
- Recognise that sometimes it might be appropriate for you to leave the classroom should a situation arise which might become more problematic, e.g. a behaviour outburst.

## **For the Teacher**

- Always feel able to suggest an alternative time if the visit is not convenient.
- Ensure that each visit has an explicit purpose and focus, which have been agreed by all concerned.
- Prepare your class for the visit of a governor.
- Welcome the governor when they arrive in your class.
- Have a seat ready for the governor and tell them where it is.
- Be aware that a visit can be stressful for staff and governors alike.
- Inform the governor if you wish them to be involved in the lesson, and what it would be helpful for them to do.
- Don't leave your governor alone with the class, even if they are willing to do so.
- Raise any concerns over the visit with your Headteacher.
- Avoid discussing unrelated issues during the lesson.

## Benefits of the school visit

### **Potential benefits to – GOVERNORS**

- To recognise and celebrate success.
- To develop relationships with the staff.
- To get to know the children.
- To recognise different teaching styles and values of each.
- To act as a "researcher" for the teacher.
- To understand the environment in which teachers teach.
- To see policies and schemes of work in action.
- To inform decision making.
- To find out what resources are needed and help to prioritise their acquisition.
- To understand roles of teachers.

### **Potential benefits to – STAFF**

- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom.
- To get to know the governors.
- To understand better the governors roles and responsibilities.
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion.
- To highlight the need for particular resources.
- To understand roles of governors.

## **Link Governor School Visits ~ An 'Aide- Mémoire'**

### **What is the Purpose of the Visit?**

- What has prompted my decision to visit?
- What aspect of the school development plan does my visit relate to?
- How can my visit benefit the school?

### **How Shall I Carry it Out?**

- Who do I need to contact in advance?
- What particular areas of the school am I interested in?
- What particular activities am I interested in?
- What particular age-group(s) am I interested in?
- What questions should I ask?
- Who should I ask?

### **Did I Achieve My Aim?**

- To what extent did I address the reason for my visit?
- Which of my questions did I answer?
- What difficulties did I meet and why?

### **Is There Any 'Follow-Up'?**

- Have I recorded my experiences?
- Did I 'report back'?
- Have I prepared a short report for the next governors' meeting?
- How can I build on this for the next visit?

### **Some Questions You May Wish to Ask.**

- How do you ensure that planning caters for all groups of pupils?
- How is the provision for a subject organised, e.g. 'When is it taught? How often?
- How do you assess and measure children's progress?
- Is there any extra curricular provision for a particular subject?
- How are standards monitored and moderated, are they appropriate?
- What INSET has taken place for both yourself and other staff in connection with your subject area?
- How do you support staff in the school?
- Is the subject sufficiently resourced and what resource priorities do you have for your subject?
- What is the budget for the curriculum area that you lead and how have you used the money?
- What are the main priorities for improvement in your subject?