ST PETER'S RC
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Governors' Visits Policy

Approved by Gareth Rein Headteacher Date: 07.10.25

Approved by P McManus Chair of Governors Date: 07.10.25

Principles of Conduct for Governor Visits

Effective governance provides strategic direction and control to schools. It ensures accountability, oversight and assurance for the educational and financial performance. It also should safeguard the best interests of the children by promoting the highest standards of educational achievement.

All those elected to the role of governor should fulfil those duties in line with the principles of public life: the seven *Nolan Principles.* Selflessness; Integrity; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty and Leadership.

In a Voluntary Aided School, the Foundation Governors form a majority on the Governing Body. This is to ensure that they assist the bishop by sustaining and developing the Catholic Ethos and distinctive nature of the school. This is achieved by ensuring the terms of the Instrument of Government are fulfilled.

There is the additional duty to confirm that at all times the school is conducted in accord with the provisions of the Archdiocesan Trust Deed. This is essentially ensuring the whole curriculum is rooted in the teaching of the Gospel. Governors will also have to be mindful of their responsibilities under employment law and equality legislation, recognising inclusion and diversity.

At the basis of the Governors' Visit policy, and for the Governing Body to discharge its duties and responsibilities, Governors should fulfil the following principles individually and collectively:

- on appointment avail themselves of the opportunity to attend induction training provided by Central South Consortia, the Local Authority and Archdiocese
- attend Governing Body meetings regularly
- familiarise themselves with the work of the school
- maintain a knowledge of current educational policy, regulations and guidance by participation in training programmes
- respect the headteacher's responsibility for day-to-day management of the school
- challenge appropriately to guarantee improving outcomes for all pupils
- observe collective responsibility by supporting the decisions of the Governing Body
- be aware of the collective accountability to parents, the local community, the parish, the Local Authority and the Archdiocese, seeking effective dialogue with those interested in the standards and conduct of the school
- observe all protocols and procedures agreed by the Governing Body
- maintain confidentiality so that individual governor views are only noted in the Governor Visit Record and discussed in Governing Body or appropriate committee meetings

In fulfilling these principles governors will need to focus on what decisions are to be made in the best interests of the pupils: These include:

- Religious Education
- Teaching and Learning: the educational development of the children to their full potential
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Financial Regulations and the close monitoring of the financial health and business management of the school
- Strategic Direction of the school
- Accountability: Staffing and Performance Management
- Compliance: fulfilling statutory and contractual requirements
- Evaluation: Managing the Governing Body's effectiveness

Therefore, the creation of a Structure of Governance: Committees; their Terms of Reference and reporting to Full Governing Body through the implementation of a timetable in line with the school year is essential.

Each Governing Body is expected to acquire a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its school. Governors acquire their knowledge from the following sources:

- Headteacher Reports
- Papers from other members of staff
- School Development Plan and School Improvement Plan
- CSC/LA monitoring visits /advisor visits
- School's Key Performance Indicators
- Estyn Reports
- Evaluation from Parent Questionnaires
- Visits focussed on a particular aspect

Governors' Visits Policy

Governors should use their school visits purposefully to discuss progress directly with key area leads, to examine data and specific area reviews, as well as gathering first-hand evidence to inform their evaluations of the work of the school. The visits should be planned well with a clear focus, linked to the SDP and strategic priorities, and allow Governors to gain high quality information to help them judge progress that the school is making towards meeting their priorities for improvement.

The following list includes the main purposes of the Governor visit. Governors visit should be always linked to one of the purposes below:

- Develop governors understanding of the working of the school
- Support its work and contribute to the monitoring process
- To enable governors to raise informed questions at the Governing Body meetings and evaluate progress
- To note policies and schemes of work in action
- To assist in understanding the teaching and learning process
- To develop appropriate, positive relationships with staff
- To celebrate success
- To increase knowledge of the school to inform the strategic decisions
- To develop individual Link Governor roles
- To collect information to report back to the Governing Body on progress against priorities or initiatives that relate to the SDP
- To know that Governors are aware of the resource required to operate effectively
- To show that staff are valued and appreciated

It is not the role of governors to form judgements about the performance of school staff during visits and individuals should make every effort to avoid this impression.

Governors' visits can be formal or informal. Visits should not be confined to the classroom.

Formal visits might include one or more of the following:

- Attending a school assembly
- Meeting senior staff
- Undertaking a Learning Walk with an objective
- Reporting on extracurricular activities
- To note improvements in the school environment
- To look at pupils' work with a member of staff and talk to pupils about their work
- Spend time in individual classrooms

Most of these types of visits would be linked to the School Development Plan (SDP).

Governors should arrange their visits with the headteacher, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management and conduct of the school. They should agree on the timing, with adequate notice provided to relevant parties, and a clear focus of the visit should be determined in advance.

Each Governor should aim to visit the School for two link visits in the academic year related to their area of responsibility. These should be for either of autumn or spring terms and one in the summer term with visits during summer term recommended for the first half of term.

Examples of informal visits include attending a concert, participating in prayer and worship, a school social event / PTA event, sports activity, or a school event outside of the school where non-staff members are welcome to attend. These also foster trust and professional respect between staff and governors.

Both formal and informal visits should be recorded by the Governor and an appropriate note maintained (see template form attached to this policy). Such records will often link to the SDP and provide a clear indication of the important link between governance and management, indicating that both parties work together for the good of the school. It also provides the Governing Body with evidence to meet its statutory duty to present an Annual Report to Parents and evidence that governors have fulfilled their monitoring role by gaining first-hand evidence.

As a newly appointed governor, meeting the headteacher would be part of the *Induction* process, allowing one to become informed about the school, its daily curricular and extracurricular activities and how that links to the School Development Plan/School Improvement Plan. Later visits can be informal or formal and can be with other governors.

To ensure this policy is implemented Governors should aim to:

- Agree this policy annually
- Determine in September of each year the Areas of Focus for each Governor
- Ensure every member of staff has a copy
- Plan a timetable with the HT for Link visits linked to the SDP
- Include some visits of new Governors with more experienced Governors
- Evaluate at the last GB meeting of the academic year whether the visits have made a difference to the work of the Governing Body, an understanding of the role by the staff as well as improved knowledge of the work and standards of the pupils.

The Key Areas of Focus will be agreed by the Governing Body annually and the current area are listed below:

Additional Learning Needs
Attendance, Health & Well-being
Children Looked After
Equality & Diversity
Expressive Arts
Health & Safety
Humanities
Languages, Literacy and Communication
Mathematics & Numeracy
RE, Collective Worship & Catholic Life of the School
Professional Learning & Governor Training
Safeguarding (inc. Child Protection)
Science & Technology (inc DCF)
Teaching & Learning
Transition
UNCRC & School Senedd

Safeguarding
If any 'Safeguarding' issues arise from the implementation of this policy then they should be dealt with in accordance with the School's Child Protection policy. Any safeguarding concerns should be referred directly to the School for the attention of the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP).

ALN Statement

St Peter's RC Primary School is committed to providing an inclusive learning environment in line with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the ALN Code for Wales 2021. We are dedicated to identifying, assessing, and making provision for Additional Learning Needs at the earliest opportunity, working in collaboration with pupils, parents, and relevant professionals. Our approach is based on promoting equity, respecting diversity, and ensuring that all pupils are provided with opportunities to meet success.

UNCRC statement

St Peter's RC Primary School is committed to creating a community where children's rights are respected, upheld, and fulfilled. We aim to foster a rights respecting environment that empowers pupils to become active and responsible citizens. Through collaboration with pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors, we aim to embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into our policies and practice.

Additional guidance for Governors

The Welsh Government has provided improvement guidance:
210126-school-improvement-guidance-framework-for-evaluation-improvement-accountability.pdf (gov.wales)

The guidance suggests that the school uses two questions as a starting point for considering improvement progression:

1. Are learners progressing in the ways described in the principles of progression, supporting them to develop towards the four purposes?
2. Is the pace of learners' progress in line with the expectations of teachers and the curriculum?

The focus of Governor Link visits is to gain first-hand experience of the progress being made by the school against the SDP or in specific areas of learning or focus, if not specifically referred to within the SDP priorities.

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Governor Visit Record

Governor Name:		**Date:**		**Time at School:**	

1. **Agreed Focus of Visit** (Learning Walk /Link visit/Information)
2. Links with SDP & other goals
3. Governor Observations (What has been learnt or clarified)
4. Any Key issues arising from visit for Headteacher/Chair of Governors (Progress with policies, action plans, resources)
5. Report to Governing Body Committee/ Full Governing Body (Any action taken)

Governor:		**Date:**	
Headteacher:		**Date:**	