

ST CUTHBERT MAYNE SCHOOL
Joint Catholic and Church of England 11-18 Comprehensive School
Dioceses of Plymouth and Exeter



St Cuthbert Mayne School
Governor Visits Policy

Approved by Governors: September 2023

Reviewed by Full Governing Body: September 2023

Next Review Date: September 2024

Rationale

Personal observations made on school visits are a major source of information. The experience involves teamwork, directed towards a common goal, founded upon good relationships with the professionals. There must be trust.

Visiting increases understanding and assists informed judgement; it can improve the quality of decision making.

Purpose

All visits need a clear purpose which forms a part of a policy agreed by the governing board, the headteacher and teachers. Purposes might include:

- Knowing more about the work and organisation of the school
- Keeping up to date with developments
- Offering visible support
- Monitoring implementation of the school improvement plan, or reviewing its success.

Visiting is also a function of the governing board as a whole. All governors should decide on the structure and pattern of visiting by individual members.

It is crucially important to make clear in advance the status of a visit to school, when undertaken on behalf of the governing board.

Governors are not inspectors or advisers; it is not their job to assess the professional competence of individual teaching or support staff.

Good visiting practice....

- Includes clear objectives and intentions shared and agreed beforehand with the headteacher
- Take into account that a visitor's presence may affect proceedings
- Give visitors a chance to get a feel for the school.

Individual governors will...

- Negotiate a mutually convenient time with the headteacher, teacher etc to ensure that the visit is expected
- Look at the possibilities for developing links with a class, year group, subject department thank the teacher, headteacher, etc at the end of the visit
- Complete a governor visit form

- Ensure vigilance for any safeguarding concerns while on site and be aware of what to do in the case of any concerns
- Ask key parties (staff, students and parents where possible) general safeguarding questions to test knowledge
- Check that school policies are being used in practice, and record any concerns if this is not the case
- Give praise where it is due
- Make a point of listening rather than talking
- Dress appropriately and follow the normal school rules - for example, don't chew gum!
- Include a 'debriefing' session with a member of the senior management team
- Discuss any concerns the visit may raise with the headteacher/line manager
- Be polite, tactful and sensitive
- Avoid stressful periods such as during or just before an Ofsted inspection, SATs, the first and last weeks of term, unless specifically requested to attend
- Visit at different times of the day, term, year
- Try to attend any special occasions, especially if regular daytime visits are difficult
- Try to attend when you have been specifically invited
- Submit the visit report form to the clerk as soon as possible after the visit
- Share observations with other members of the board at meetings where necessary

Individual governors will not...

- Act like an inspector
- Sit at the back writing notes
- Go in unannounced
- Interfere with the organisation of the class
- Try to talk to the teacher while they are teaching - wait until the end of the session
- Criticise the performance of a teacher, even in a constructive manner, during your visit
- Make promises to staff on behalf of the governing board.

The governing board will...

- Have a consistent system for reporting back according to this policy
- Plan a timetable of visits so that every governor has the opportunity to visit during the year
- Agree an explicit purpose and plan for each visit, which is communicated to all parties
- Consider different styles of visit, for example paired visits where an experienced governor partners a less experienced one.