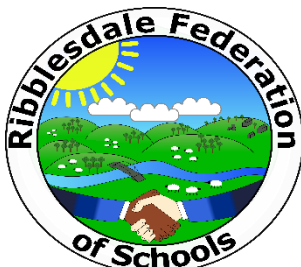


# The Ribblesdale Federation of Schools

Do Everything in Love (1 Corinthians 16:14)



## Governor Visits Policy

Document Status			
Date of policy creation/review	Reasons for review	Date of adoption by the Governing Board	Date of next review
2023	Annual	27/11/23	Autumn 24
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Executive Headteacher	<i>C. Maddock</i>	Chair of Governors	<i>James Bradley</i>

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the school. When governors visit any of the schools within the Federation, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting Giggleswick Primary School, Long Preston Endowed Primary School and Hellifield Community Primary School and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the Governing Board.

Governors will fulfil their duties in line with the seven principles of public life (Nolan Principles). Those governing will comply with the Governing Board Code of Conduct.

Governing Boards have 3 core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Executive Head teacher to account for educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent.

Governors draw on a range of evidence to carry out these functions effectively. School visits provide one source of information available to governors. Visits help governors to gain a greater understanding of provision and school needs first hand, to observe school improvement priorities/policies being implemented, put other information into context and gather views from those involved in the life of the school and Federation. They also help school leaders to share and demonstrate the impact of school improvement priorities and actions taken. School visits are one way in which the Governing Board can know their school well.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose, so school visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

## 2. Guidance and scope

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the [Governance Handbook](#) (section 3.4.2).

### 2.1 Governors are observers

Boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

### 2.2 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school

For those governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make their purpose in doing so clear.

### 3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

Governors will carry out school visits according to the annual schedule/ cycle of school business, considering the work load of all staff.

The Executive Head teacher may also request a governor visit or meeting in light of specific issues or priorities which may arise.

The Chair of the Governing Board will be a regular visitor in school and will aim to meet with the Executive Headteacher fortnightly. Both the Executive Head teacher and Chair of the Governing Board recognize that on occasion additional requests for an agreed visit may arise, at a mutually convenient time.

### 4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the Executive Headteacher before scheduling a visit, even if the Executive headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware as a matter of courtesy.
- Visits should normally be planned at least 5-7 working days in advance
- The agreed and focus and agenda would be approved in advance
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff to ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the Executive headteacher and/or relevant member of staff
- Send questions in advance to the staff member, so everyone can feel properly prepared
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Fortnightly visits with the Chair of the Governing Board and Executive Board will be less formal and an opportunity for updates and keeping in touch

### 5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

**Governors will:**

- Be on time and meet with the Executive Headteacher ahead of the visit, if she is present in the building
- Always wear their Governor badge or a visitor's badge and sign in the Visitors book
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils, so that this is done at an appropriate time
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people

- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

**Governors will not:**

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors or Executive Headteacher after the visit

## **6. After a visit**

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable [using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) as appropriate. In completing the report, governors will:

- Use neutral language at all times
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role

Once complete, governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:

- The relevant staff member, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
- The Executive headteacher, as a courtesy
- The chair of the Governing Board
- The clerk to the Governing Board (Sarah Williamson)

## Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where a governor discusses the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: Plan the visit	
<b>Name and role of governor(s)</b>	
<b>Name and role of staff member(s)</b>	
<b>Date and time of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus</b> Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.	
<b>Relevant school objective or priority</b> This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or an area of link governor responsibility.	
<b>Questions to ask</b> Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP (if applicable), or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Questions may be linked to your link governor role. Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.	

Part 2: In the meeting
<p><b>What is the school doing within this area of focus?</b></p> <p><i>Tips:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'</li> <li>• Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with</li> <li>• Remember you are <b>not</b> there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them – you remain an observer</li> </ul>

- *When writing the report, use neutral language and do not name individual teachers and pupils*

**How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?**

*Remember:*

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area*
- *Where a positive impact has not been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*
- *Add any further evidence you would like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact*

**What successes stood out and why?**

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Executive headteacher or chair of governors