



# Governor Visit Policy

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## Introduction

This policy replaces any previous policy and follows the DfE regulations and those issued by the London Borough of Harrow.

In line with the College's Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs policies, we aim to give all students equal opportunities to take part in all aspects of College life, as far as is appropriate, practicable and compatible with giving regard to health and safety and the efficient education of other students.

This policy takes account of the Government's aim for children to have the support they need under Every Child Matters:

- to be healthy
- to stay safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make a positive contribution
- to achieve economic well-being

The policy will follow the five principles of the Children's Plan:

- to support parents and families
- to allow children to reach their full potential
- to enable children to enjoy their childhood whilst preparing for adult life
- to provide services in response to children and family needs.
- to use preventative measures to help students to avoid the possibility of failure

This policy is founded upon the College's commitment to the development and maintenance of good behaviour and a positive and inclusive ethos for all members of the College community.

First Edition: June 2013

To be reviewed every 3 years by the Governing Body

## **Foreword**

Rooks Heath College is a mixed 11 to 18 multicultural comprehensive in the London Borough of Harrow. This policy is formulated by the Governing Body. The policy is subject to review every 3 years by the Governing Body and is subject to their approval.

## **Introduction**

Many governors worry about governors making visits to College and particularly about visiting a classroom. College staff too may be uncertain of the role of the governor when making such visits and may even have concerns about whether their performance is being judged by the governor. The purpose of this policy is to outline how a visit can be conducted at Rooks Heath in a way that allows governors and staff to gain the most from the visit but without impinging upon or undermining the College's performance management process and agreed arrangements regarding classroom observation,

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

## **Principles**

It is crucially important that individual governors make clear in advance the status of their visit to College, when undertaken on behalf of the governing body.

All visits should have a clear purpose and can be used to:

- Find out more about the work and organisation of the College
- Help keep up to date with developments
- Discuss topical issues with members of staff
- Join in with, or, contribute to an identified classroom activity
- Gather information to assist in decision making
- Offer visible support the staff
- Become known by the staff and demonstrate commitment
- Monitor the work of the College
- Carry out a specific task e.g. a health and safety audit
- Contribute to implementation of the College development plan, or reviewing its success

## **Governor Commitment**

Each of the governors at Rooks Heath College will be assigned to a curriculum area or a specific area of activities of the College and is expected to make visits accordingly.

It is acknowledged by governors that staff put a tremendous amount of time and effort into such activities, and governors therefore commit to make time to witness the work of staff and acknowledge their achievements.

It is important to try to attend any special occasions, especially if regular daytime visits are difficult and to try to attend whenever you have been specifically invited.

Some areas/activities which should be considered include:

- An extra-curricular activity – e.g. choir, football practice
- Musical and sporting events
- Student Council

- Day trips
- Residential visits
- Assessment of College meals
- Look at the possibilities for developing links with a class or year group
- Go in as a helper where appropriate and possible

Governors should make at least one curriculum visit per College year, regardless of whether their assigned subject area is due for specific review and make every effort to visit one other area/aspect of the College life.

If governors cannot make this commitment, then they should question whether they can make a realistic and valuable contribution to being a Governor.

### **Curriculum Visit Guidelines**

What to do before the visit:

- Ensure Disclosure & Barring Service check is in place
- Meet with the Head Teacher or SLT member to discuss your plans and seek approval to proceed
- Meet with the teacher or other staff member. This is absolutely essential, recognising possible tensions, be explicit about purpose of the visit. Building a trusting and professional relationship are key to ensuring visits are a valuable experience for all concerned
- Negotiate a mutually convenient date and time with the Headteacher, teacher etc. to ensure that the visit is expected and agree the duration (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)
- Discuss the purpose of the visit
- Find out how (if at all) you should get involved with the lesson
- Discuss whether note taking should be allowed – respect the teacher’s decision
- Arrange a convenient time to feedback your observations
- Feedback should be in the form of a one-to-one discussion no more than one week after the visit
- Get to know more about the subject. Is there any literature you can read? E.g. Strategic Plan, Curriculum Plan or OFSTED report
- The visit can (with the agreement of the Head or member of the SLT) take the form of:
  - Meeting with staff
  - Pupil interview
  - Looking at pupils work
  - Meeting with selected staff groups

What to do during the visit:

- Dress 'smart casual' – don’t be intimidating and follow the normal College rules e.g. don’t chew gum!
- Do what you agreed in the meeting with the teacher
- Get involved
- When appropriate ask questions, be courteous not critical
- Keep an open mind, be flexible and go with the flow
- Make sure that you arrive on time
- On arrival remember to follow the College’s security procedures and wear ID
- Make a point of listening rather than talking
- Be polite, tactful and sensitive

- Remember that you are there to learn
- Avoid getting drawn in to any discussion on personal or general staff grievances
- Thank the teacher, Headteacher, etc. at the end of the visit
- Give praise where it is due

What to do after the visit:

- Write down your observations as soon as possible
- Don't forget your one-to-one feedback session with the staff member at the agreed date and time
- Complete the College proforma (appendix 1) and issue to the staff member and Head within two weeks of the visit. Once agreed it will be passed to Clerk for distribution

Completing the Proforma:

As a guide, use the following headings:

- Date of Visit
- Staff Member
- Lesson/Event
- Purpose of Visit
- Observations
- Concluding Remarks

Make a verbal report to the next Committee or Full Governing Body meeting and be prepared to answer questions on your visit and the completed proforma.

## **LIMITATIONS ON AND DURING VISITS**

Governors commit that they will not:

- Go in 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
- Criticise the performance of a teacher, even in a constructive manner, during a visit
- Make promises to staff on behalf of the Governing Body

## **COMPLAINTS ABOUT A GOVERNOR VISIT**

In the event of complaint by a member of staff about the behaviour or conduct of a visit, the Chair of Governors and Headteacher shall investigate the complaint.

In the event of seriously inappropriate behaviour or conduct on the part of the governor, the Governing Body may consider removing the governor from the Governing Body.

(Appendix 1)

**ROOKS HEATH  
GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT PROFORMA**



Name of Visiting Governor:

Date of Visit:

Purpose of visit:

Links with the College development plan:

Observations/comments, including evidence: (factual – not opinions)

Key issues arising for Governing Body:

Follow up action:

Signed: Governor: ..... Date: .....

Staff: ..... Date: .....

Please forward to Clerk of Governors when completed. Thank you.