



**CANSFIELD**  
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

# Governor School Visits Policy

<u>Approval Date</u>	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2022
<u>Policy Review Date</u>	September 2023
<u>Chair of Governors</u>	<i>Laches.</i>
<u>Headteacher</u>	<i>ER</i>

## 1. Aims

One of the core functions of the Governing Board at Cansfield High is to hold executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the School. In order to do this effectively, every Governor needs to know and understand the School and a particularly helpful way to gain this knowledge is through pre-arranged Governor Visits that have a clear focus. In this way, Governors can see for themselves whether Cansfield High is implementing the correct policies and procedures, if the School Development Plan is being followed and how it is working in practice. School Visits can also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views.

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct for all governors when making any visits to the School. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter Cansfield High. When they do so, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedure which all Governors are expected to follow when making an official visit to Cansfield High and how they are expected to report back on that visit to either the Full Governing Board or to the relevant Committee with the delegated responsibility.

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

The Governing Board is not an inspection body and its role is not to assess the quality or method of teaching or the extent of learning. Governors are not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of Cansfield High.

Any school visits should have a clear purpose and all concerned should be very clear about that purpose and why the visit is taking place.

For those Governors who wish to spend time in a classroom during their visit, they need to make it very clear to the member of staff concerned what their purpose is in doing so.

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the Governance Handbook.

### 2.1 Governors are Observers

Through pre-arranged visits, that must have a clear focus, Governors will:

- Observe whether the School is properly implementing school policies and agreed actions from the School Development Plan.
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice.
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff on those procedures.

### 2.2 Governors are Not Inspectors

During any School visits, 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.

## 3. School Visits during Coronavirus Pandemic

If Governors wish to visit the School during the current Coronavirus pandemic, they should first speak with the Headteacher and confirm that a visit is realistically able to take place and then work out a pragmatic solution

that considers the School's Risk Assessment and how the health and safety of visitors, alongside that of staff and pupils, will be protected.

#### **4. Visits Programme**

Governors should carry out regular school visits in order to meet the Governing Board's statutory obligation to monitor Cansfield's effectiveness.

There are two types of visit:

- **Formal Monitoring Visits** where Governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant member of staff.
- **Learning Walks** where Governors will go around the school with a relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils.

All members of the Governing Board have been assigned a Specific Responsibility and it will be up to the individual Governor to ensure that they are aware of which staff they should be liaising with in order to undertake the proper assessment for that specific area of responsibility. If in any doubt of who to contact, guidance should be sought from the Headteacher.

Each Governor should aim to undertake at least one Formal Monitoring Visit and one Learning Walk during the course of the academic year.

#### **5. Before a Visit**

Governors should never arrive at the School and just expect a meeting to take place. These must always be planned in advance. Preparation of a visit should always involve the following:

- Notification of the intention to visit, together with clarification of the purpose of the visit, in advance to the Headteacher and the Chair as a matter of courtesy, even if they will not be involved directly with the visit.
- Contacting relevant member(s) of staff to advise of the planned visit and what the purpose of the visit is.
- Agreeing a mutually convenient time with any relevant member(s) of staff, being sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time.
- Advising staff how many Governors will be visiting and what their role in the visit will be.
- Advising the Headteacher of the date/time of the visit once confirmed and arranging, if possible, to have a brief meeting at the start of the visit.
- Becoming familiar with any relevant documentation pertinent to the visit, such as School policies and procedures and the School Development Plan.

#### **6. 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 at the School.

Governors will:

- Arrive at the agreed time. If there is a delay for any reason, the relevant people must be informed and, if necessary, agree to re-schedule the meeting.
- Always wear an official Governor's lanyard whilst on the School's premises and ensure they comply with signing in and signing out at Reception.
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit, Appendix 1 for a Formal Monitoring Visit or Appendix 2 for a Learning Walk, a copy of which will have been sent to any relevant member(s) of staff in advance.
- Remain as observers – Governors are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them.

- Ensure all parties are very clear about the purpose of the visit, particularly if time is being spent in a classroom.
- Check with the relevant teacher before addressing any of the pupils directly.
- Ensure any concerns raised by staff during the visit are passed on to the relevant people.
- Dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils.
- Be friendly but professional at all times.

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice.
- Judge teaching methods.
- Assess the quality of teaching.
- Comment on the extent of learning.
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school.
- Behave in a manner that would make staff feel they are being inspected e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard.
- Raise concerns in the moment. Any concerns should be noted down and then raised with the Headteacher and/or the Chair of the Governing Board after the visit.
- Take photographs or videos unless this has been specifically agreed with the Headteacher beforehand as it is required for a specific purpose.

## **7. After a Visit**

Governors should complete a written report as soon as is reasonably practicable after the visit using the agreed format.

In completing the form, Governors should ensure they:

- 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 the form is complete, Governors should then submit it to the following people, in the following order:

- The Chair of the Governing Board for feedback.
- Any relevant staff member(s) involved with the visit, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy.
- The Headteacher, as a courtesy.
- The Clerk to the Governors in order it can be presented with papers for either the next relevant Committee meeting or Full Governing Board meeting, as agreed.

## Appendix 1: Formal Monitoring Visit

Formal Monitoring Visits are to discuss the progress of the School in a particular area with the relevant member(s) of staff

PART ONE: PLAN THE VISIT	
<b>Name and role of Governor(s) Visiting:</b>	
<b>Name and role of Staff Member(s) involved in Visit:</b>	
<b>Agreed Date and Time of Visit:</b>	
<b>Agreed Focus:</b>	<i>Make sure you focus on the agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by any other issues that have not been agreed beforehand with the relevant member(s) of staff.</i>
<b>Relevant School Objective or Priority:</b>	<i>This might be taken from the School Development Plan's objectives or the School's overarching Vision.</i>
<b>Questions to Ask:</b>	<p><i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the School Development Plan or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i></p> <p><i>Share your questions with the staff member(s) you are visiting in advance so they can prepare.</i></p>

PART TWO: DURING THE VISIT
<p><b>What is the School doing within this area of focus?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when,' 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'.</li> <li>• Do not be afraid to ask a member of staff to clarify any terms or acronyms that you are 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> <li>• When writing your report, use neutral language and do not name individual teachers and pupils.</li> </ul>

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

*Remember to:*

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the School is having in this area.*
- *Where a positive impact has not yet been made, note 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?**

**PART THREE: AFTER THE VISIT**

**Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Headteacher and/or Chair of the Governing Board**

## Appendix 2: Learning Walk

Learning Walks are where Governors go around the school with a relevant member of staff to get a feel for a particular area and to talk to a range of pupils and staff members.

PART ONE: PLAN THE VISIT	
<b>Name and role of Governor(s) Visiting:</b>	
<b>Name and role of Staff Member(s) involved in Visit:</b>	
<b>Agreed Date and Time of Visit:</b>	
<b>Agreed Focus:</b>	<i>Make sure you focus on the agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by any other issues that have not been agreed beforehand with the relevant member(s) of staff.</i>
<b>Relevant School Objective or Priority:</b>	<i>This might be taken from the School Development Plan's objectives or the School's overarching Vision.</i>
<b>Questions to Ask:</b>	<p><i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the School Development Plan or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i></p> <p><i>Share your questions with the staff member(s) you are visiting in advance so they can prepare.</i></p>

PART TWO: ON THE WALK
<p><b>General notes from discussions with staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when,' 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'.</li> <li>• Do not be afraid to ask a member of staff to clarify any terms or acronyms that you are 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> <li>• When writing your report, use neutral language and do not name individual members of staff.</li> </ul>

**General notes from discussions with pupils**

*Remember to:*

- *Do not ask pupils for views on a specific member of staff.*
- *Do not record pupil names*

**General notes on the School Environment and Overall Atmosphere**

*Note:*

- *Whether the Governing Board vision of the school is replicated on the ground.*
- *Any issues with the school site you see e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources.*

**What success stood out on the Learning Walk and why?**

**PART THREE: AFTER THE VISIT**

**Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Headteacher and/or Chair of the Governing Board**



### **Appendix 3: Sample Questions**

Below are some sample questions you might want to use to ask staff on your school visit.

It is good practice to send your questions to the relevant members of staff ahead of your visit to help them prepare.

#### **Questions to ask Teachers:**

1. How do you assess how well pupils are learning and making progress?
2. What support do you put in place to ensure the needs of different pupils are met?
3. What resources are available to your pupils to help them learn effectively?
4. How do you encourage parents in their children's learning?
5. What continuous professional development opportunities are available to you?

#### **Questions to ask Heads of Faculty:**

1. What is the quality of teaching of your subject like across the school and how do you know what it is?
2. What are the strengths of the subject and how do you know this?
3. What improvements have you made and/or planned for this academic year in your subject?
4. What is your vision for the subject and how are you putting this into practice?
5. How do you track standards and progress in the subject?
6. How do you support teachers to develop their subject knowledge and teaching practice?
7. Is your subject well resourced? If not, what else do you need in order to support teaching and learning?