

St Richard's Catholic College

GOVERNORS' VISITS POLICY



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: March 2022

Chair of Governors: *Alison Horan*

Principal: Miss D Cronin

The Governing Body will review the policy in March 2024

Policy for Governors' Visits

The Purpose of this Policy

Governing Bodies have a statutory responsibility to promote high standards at their school, and must monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in this respect. Through visiting St Richard's Catholic College, Governors can get to know it better. The Governing Body is a corporate body and every Governor will visit the school as a representative member of that body, not as an individual. An effective partnership between Governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole school community. This policy will provide an agreed framework within which Governors will plan and carry out their school visits.

The Organisation of the Governor visits at St Richard's Catholic College

This policy has been produced by the Principal and a small committee of Governors who consulted with the full Governing Body.

Visit Programme

The programme of visits will be organised as follows:

- Each Governor will try to make two school visits a year (school day or evening events).
- Each Governor is linked to a department or team and will try to visit that department and attend at least one departmental team meeting annually.
- A sub-committee will visit termly to assess health and safety and general maintenance.
- The Subject Leader and Principal will be involved in the organisation of visits.

Content of Visits

- Annually, a programme of visits will be organised to include attendance at events and to carry out pupil voice interviews.
- Each term at least two Governors on a rota basis will try to visit the school to observe some lessons or to tour the school or to spend time with a member of staff or to speak to pupils about their learning.
- Formal visits to the school will focus on viewing underperforming departments.
- As well as attending a number of School Council meetings, Governors will seek the views of pupils on each visit.
- No Parent Governor will visit their child's class.

Reporting

- Have a conversation with the Subject Leader on how you feel the visit went.
- Speak to the Principal about the visit – evaluating its effectiveness.
- Fill in an agreed Monitoring visit report sheet and leave a copy with the Principal.
- Pass on a copy of the report sheet to the Clerk to the Governing Body.
- Share a summary of the visit at the next Governing Body Meeting.

Procedure for carrying out visits at St Richard's Catholic College

Our Governor visits will be organised through the Subject Leader in liaison with the Principal.

Before the visit

- *Please ensure you have completed the GEL course on Governor visits before organising a visit.*
- *The Principal should be your first contact in organising a visit.*
- *Agree a mutually convenient time to visit with the Principal/subject teacher or Subject Leader. Avoid stressful or busy periods in the school diary*
- *Clarify the purpose of the visit and agree this with the Principal and relevant staff. Agree together how best to approach the identified focus to make effective use of everyone's time.*
- *Agree how you will be introduced to the pupils and the extent to which you will be involved in any activity or lesson*
- *Agree a convenient time to discuss your visit with the subject teacher. This will also be your opportunity to clarify any issues you are unclear about.*
- *Prepare for your visit by reading any relevant documents and visiting the subject website*
- *Ensure that you are aware of the core principles underlying the Governor visits at St Richard's Catholic College as outlined in this document.*

During the visit

- ***Remember this is a visit, not an inspection.*** *Governors are visiting to learn more about the school and to gather information to inform decision making by the Governing Body. It is not the Governors' role to judge the quality of the teaching. Monitoring staff performance and the quality of teaching and learning is the job of the Principal.*
- *Remember that you are an invited guest.*
- *Be aware of, and adhere to, the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures.*
- *Be punctual, sign in and wear your Governor lanyard.*
- *Try hard not to disrupt the normal working of the school by monopolising the teacher's time.*
- *Smile and listen. Try to relax and enjoy yourself.*
- *Think carefully about what you say and do. Remember that a visit by a Governor can be stressful for staff. Be courteous, tactful, positive and interested. Avoid criticism e.g. Never make a comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.*
- *Try not to draw too much attention to yourself. Avoid overtly making notes as this can be disconcerting. Instead, write down your thoughts as soon afterwards as is practical.*
- *Remember that you are representing the Governing Body. Governors should be prepared to explain policies, but should avoid giving personal opinions which could be misinterpreted as the views of the Governing Body.*
- *Avoid making promises on behalf of the Governing Body.*
- *Only go into the staffroom if you are invited to do so.*
- *Observe previously agreed levels of confidentiality.*
- *Remember to thank the staff for supporting you in your role as Governor*

After the visit

- *If you have seen something that worries you, you would normally discuss this first with the teacher.*

- *Discuss your visit with the Principal and agree a draft of any written report with the Principal, and with staff, as appropriate. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board before you circulate your report to Governors and the Clerk.*
- *Send a note to thank the relevant staff. Be open and honest; recognise and celebrate achievement.*
- *Reflect upon your visit. Your views will inform the review of the policy and procedures.*

Reporting on your visit

Following a visit, Governors will share their impressions with the Principal in the first instance and then the Governing Body. Copies of approved and finalised written reports should be given to the Principal and Chair of Governors and subsequently made available to Governors, if desired. Reports will be kept with the Clerk to the Governors once they have been formally recorded in the minutes.

Evaluating the visit

Following a visit, Governors may reflect on the following questions:

- How did the visit go?
- Were you clear about your objectives?
- What, if anything would you do differently next time?
- Are there further areas you would like to explore?
- How has the visit helped you, the school and/or the Governing Body? E.g. in collecting monitoring evidence, in greater understanding of a particular aspect.

Monitoring, evaluation and review of this policy

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at the Full Governing Body meetings. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by a sub-committee of the Governing Body. The Governing Body will consider if Governor visits are contributing to the information that the Governing Body has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the College Improvement Plan.

GOVERNORS' VISIT REPORT (if a joint visit is made only one report is necessary)

Name:	Date:
Purpose of visit: (Previously agreed by the Governing Body with the Principal) e.g. Link Governor visit, under-performing department visit, religious ethos, support of Leadership and Management, School Council meeting.	
Links with the College Improvement Plan/SEF: (How does the visit relate to a priority in the College Improvement Plan or SEF? e.g. literacy, raising of standards or one of the four strategies) Ofsted looks at 'intent' - what pupils learn and the order in which it is taught. This will be identified in the departmental curriculum plan. You will attend the meeting when this is discussed in Term 1 or 2. What aspects of this plan are you focusing on, in this visit?	
Governor observations and comments: (e.g. What did you see, including behaviour and attitudes? How long did the visit last? How did the visit go? What did you learn? What would you like clarified? Are there any further areas you would like to explore? Ofsted looks at 'implementation' - how the curriculum is designed over time so that pupils remember and connect the steps they have been taught. Ask pupils how what they have previously learnt is helping them with the current topic. What concepts and vocabulary are specific to the subject? Do they understand them and can they demonstrate this? Ofsted looks at 'impact' - how well are pupils learning the content outlined in the curriculum. Ask staff about outcomes for PP, SEN, boys/girls, gifted and talented pupils. How is work differentiated and is it making a difference? Ask pupils whether they are confident about a recently completed topic. How do they know they understood it well (marking, homework, test results, peer support, House points).	
Any key issues arising for the Governing Body: (e.g. the way resources are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing a key policy, evidence of the impact of the Governing Body's work on pupils' achievement) What are the key points of your visit that you will report back to the next FGB meeting?	
Action following Governing Body meeting: (Record any action agreed by the Governing Body with regard to this visit)	