



**CHESTERTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Chesterton Community College
Governor Involvement Policy
February 2015**

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Governor Involvement Policy

1. The purpose of this policy

The DfE Governors' Handbook (May 2013) says that "Governors need to know their school". This policy sets out our expectations of the commitment required from governors in order to be able to meet this objective. It also explains how the college will help governors to know the school, and how it will encourage and support governors to become involved, as far as they are able, in the life of the college.

2. Commitment from governors

We expect that all governors will:

- Attend meetings of the Full Governing Body and at least one sub-committee of the FGB
- Keep themselves informed of what is happening at the school, for example by reading documents distributed in advance of meetings and information on the college website
- Respond in a timely fashion to emails concerning FGB or college business.

Subject to availability, we hope that all non-staff governors will also:

- Make visits to the college, for example as a faculty link governor (see below)
- Help with staff interviews
- Assist in communicating with parents (see below).

3. Support for governors

The college will help governors to know the school by:

- Providing effective induction for new governors
- Inviting governors to extra-curricular events, such as Sports Day or the West Road concert
- Encouraging governors to communicate with parents
- Making available opportunities for non-staff governors to visit the college to see it in operation during the working day and to get involved in the life of the school.

The rest of this policy explains how each of these will be carried out.

INDUCTION

4. Objective

We want to enable new governors to have the information, guidance and support they need to be confident and effective in their role.

5. What happens when a new governor is appointed?

The Headteacher and Chair of Governors meet the new governor and welcome her/him to the school. The meeting will cover, amongst other things: basic information about the school, the composition of the governing body and its committees and the responsibilities and work involved in being a governor, including opportunities to visit the college. The meeting will also explore any particular areas of interest or expertise that the governor might have in relation to the new role.

The Clerk to the Governors will arrange for the new governor to have a tour of the school.

The Headteacher and Chair will appoint a governor mentor, to help the new governor settle in.

The Clerk will also provide the new governor with the following key documents/information:

- DfE Guide to the Law for School Governors
- Governor Development and Training Programme, New Governor training courses
- Welcome pack (via email)
- Governor Membership, Meeting planner and Committees structure documents
- Governor minutes, Calendar of events, Policies, Newsletters on the College website
- Current staff list
- School Development plan

The Clerk will provide the new governor with a checklist of key induction activities (see Annex A), which will be signed by the governor to confirm that all activities have been completed.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR EVENTS

6. Objective

We believe that education is not simply about what happens in the classroom or during the school day. The college provides a range of extra-curricular activities for students, including drama, music and sports events, and we want governors to be aware of these and to share students' enjoyment of them.

7. What will happen?

Governors will be invited to attend significant extra-curricular events organised by the college. As far as possible, governors will be given advance notification by the Clerk of the opportunities that will be available at the start of each term.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

8. Objective

We believe that effective communication between governors and parents is an important part of our role in promoting high standards of educational achievement.

9. What will happen?

Governors will be encouraged to attend college events involving parents, including parent evenings, parent forums and PTA meetings. At these events governors will seek to find out about parents' experience of the college.

10. Time commitment

We expect that each non-staff governor will attend at least one parent event each academic year.

VISITS TO THE COLLEGE

11. Objective

The purpose of governor visits is to:

- improve governor knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses
- help governors to monitor and assess priorities as outlined in the school's development and improvement plans
- assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.

For governors, visits may help them to:

- recognise and celebrate success
- develop relationships with the staff
- get to know the students
- recognise different teaching styles
- understand the environment in which teachers teach
- monitor policies in action
- inform decision making
- find out what resources are needed and prioritise them.

For teachers, visits may help them to:

- ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- get to know governors
- understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- highlight the need for particular resources.

Visits are not about:

- making judgements about the professional expertise of teachers – as the Governors' Handbook points out, governors are not inspectors
- checking on progress of individual students
- pursuing personal agenda.

Governor visits should not monopolise school/teacher time or (as far as possible) impose an additional administrative burden on the school.

Visits will be covered by a protocol (see Annex B) that is made available to visiting governors and the staff being visited.

12. Types of visit

Visits to the college may take several forms, including:

- visits to meet staff and observe the functioning of faculties, including classroom teaching where appropriate
- attending (and where appropriate participating in) other curricular activities, such as assemblies or themed Wicked Wednesdays
- meeting student representatives, for example through Student Voice or as part of Spotlights.

13. Time commitment

We expect that each non-staff governor will devote the equivalent of at least one day each academic year to visits to the college; this could be made up of one actual full day, or a couple of half days, or individual activities/visits totalling six hours.

This is not an obligation, since we recognise that those with special skills can make a valuable contribution to the college even if they are unable to visit during the working day. However, it is an expectation that will be explained to all potential governors.

Similarly, the one day is a minimum not a maximum; governors are encouraged to devote more time to visiting the school if possible.

14. How will visits be organised?

Opportunities to attend other curricular activities or to meet student representatives will be circulated to governors on an ad hoc basis. As far as possible, governors will be given advance notification of the opportunities that will be available at the start of each term.

Faculty-based visits will be organised by linking individual governors with particular faculties. At least one governor will be linked with each of the faculties in the college. If there are sufficient governors available, larger faculties can be linked to more than one governor.

The nature and timing of these visits will be agreed between the link governor(s) and the head of faculty, taking into account the development priorities of the faculty and the college as a whole. A proforma (see Annex C) will be completed in respect of each visit setting out the purpose of the visit, how it will be conducted, and how and to whom feedback will be provided by the visiting governor.

Visit reports, where produced, will be made available to members of the relevant committee of the governing body. Towards the end of each academic year, a distillation of visit reports will be produced for Full Governors.

15. Administrative matters

The Clerk to the Governors will maintain a record of visits and act as a clearing house for linking governors with faculties.

The Clerk to the Governors will ensure that all governors involved in visits where there will be student contact have been CRB checked.

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Induction checklist for new governors

Name of new governor

Induction activities (Clerk to tick each one when completed):

- The Head and Chair of Governors have met the new governor
- The new governor has had a tour of the school
- The Clerk has provided the key documents / information
- A governor mentor has been appointed to support the new governor
- The Governor mentor and the new governor have met
- The new governor has attended a committee or full governors' meeting

Signature of new governor

Date

The new governor should only sign once all elements of the checklist have been completed. The Clerk will keep a copy of the signed checklist.

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Protocol for governor visits

Purpose

The purpose of governor visits to the college is to help governors to fulfil their duties by:

- improving their knowledge of the school, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses
- monitoring and assessing the school's priorities as outlined in the development plan.

Visits may help **governors** to:

- develop relationships with the staff
- get to know the students
- recognise different teaching styles
- understand the environment in which teachers teach
- find out what resources are needed and prioritise them.

Visits may help **teachers** to:

- ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- get to know governors
- understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- highlight the need for particular resources.

Governors will **not** use visits to:

- make judgements about the professional expertise of teachers
- check on progress of their own children
- pursue personal agenda.

What will happen

The number and objective of visits will be agreed between individual governors and the head of the faculty that they are linked to. Governors who are parents will not visit lessons in which their own child is being taught.

Teachers will be given advance notification of visits, including the name of the governor and the purpose of the visit (for example, via a proforma agreed for the visit). The governor will contact the teacher before the visited lesson so that they are both clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.

The teacher will give thought in advance to how the visiting governor can fulfil a meaningful role in the lesson, rather simply observing from the sidelines. This might be, for example, by helping an

individual or small group with a worksheet, by participating in a discussion, or by carrying out another teaching assistant-type role that the teacher thinks would be useful.

Governors visit classrooms at the invitation of teachers, in order to observe and inform themselves. They will:

- Prepare for visits by gathering and reading in advance any relevant information
- Be clear about the purpose of their visit and share this with the staff concerned
- Be attentive
- Observe confidentiality
- Observe the school policy for visitors
- Establish with staff what is expected of them
- Intrude as little as possible on the teachers' time
- Talk and share their experience with the teacher and head of faculty
- Provide a written report to the relevant committee of the governing body, usually via the visit proforma. This report will be copied to the teacher and the head of faculty.

Governors will discuss their report with the head of faculty and, where appropriate, the head teacher before presenting it to the committee. The report will not:

- name individuals
- include judgements on the quality of teaching observed.

What governors will do

During a visit to a classroom, governors will make observations about such things as:

- Relationship between staff and students
- Relationships between students
- Variety of teaching styles
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of students — are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding?
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and students
- How the students are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for
- Students' work
- Displays
- Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Use of space and working conditions
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources

At appropriate times in a lesson governors will seek to talk to students, asking questions such as:

- Tell me about what you are learning today.
- Do you like (curriculum area)?
- Tell me what you most like doing in (curriculum area).
- Is there anything you don't like in (curriculum area)?

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Proforma for governor visits

Faculty:		Room:	
Date and time of visit:		Class:	
Governor:		Governor email:	

PURPOSE OF VISIT	
How were you involved in the lesson?	
OBSERVATIONS (where appropriate) eg teaching styles used, resources used, student response, progress made	
TEACHER COMMENTS Key points from discussion	
CONCLUSIONS Related to purpose of visit What was most interesting? What key questions did the visit raise for you? Any other comments?	

ACTION POINTS:

eg points for discussion with
management or to raise at FGB;
suggestions for future visits

Report to be copied to staff involved in visit and members of the Teaching & Learning
(or) committee [If another committee more appropriate than T&L, please insert]