

Principles and Procedures

The Governing Board of Avenue Primary School has agreed to adopt the following principles and procedures.

The term 'we' is used throughout the documentation to represent the whole of the Governing Board.

Governing Board Meetings:

As participants we agree that:

- Punctuality is vital. This enables both start and finish to be on time.
- Where possible every meeting is attended and Governors stay for the duration.
- Only one person speaks at a time and all points of view are welcomed and considered.
- All individuals will be listened to by the meeting participants, avoiding 'jumping in immediately' and allowing time for reflection.
- No side conversations take place; this distracts others, shows disrespect and prevents others from listening.
- No personal attacks or 'unprofessional' phrases are used.
- The facilitator / clerk will manage the meeting process.
- The Chair of Governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, will manage the content of the meeting.
- Any acronyms used are explained and understood by all Governing Board members.
- The meeting should be concise and that there are no inappropriate anecdotes or personal agendas.
- Good news / debate is not presented at length but reward and success is recognised.
- The meeting is kept focussed and agenda items adhered to, in order to avoid digressions.
- At times an agenda item may need to be taken off-line for resolution to avoid designing solutions to issues and problems around the table.
- Laughter is important and meetings should be enjoyed!

Monitoring visits to the School:

All Governors are welcome to visit the school during the working day and new Governors are particularly encouraged to arrange an early introductory visit with the Headteacher. The school recognise the importance of these and understand these opportunities must be facilitated.

It is important that Governors understand that the Governors role is that of a 'critical friend' and not of an inspector. Visits should be used to learn more about the school, not to make judgements about the professional expertise of the teachers or individual members of staff. By observing and talking to pupils, talking with teachers and support staff, individual Governors can begin to get to know their school.

Important points to be aware of:

- There is no legal right to paid time off work for governors to perform their duties but many employers recognise the importance of the governor role.
- Governors visiting the school as part of their monitoring role will have a specific focus to the visit. This will be either in relation to a specific responsibility held on the Governing Board or as part of your role in monitoring some aspects of the schools' development.
- Governors may also visit in the role of 'Year Group Governor'. This should only be by invite / or prior arrangement with the Headteacher and again should have a purpose, even if it is to celebrate a success or watch a class performance.

Before the visit

- Clarify a focus for the visit. This may be suggested by the Governing Board's monitoring of the School Improvement Plan, by suggestions from the Headteacher / Senior Teacher or by discussions with the Governing Board.
- Agree with the Headteacher / Senior Teacher the final visit focus and an appropriate time to suit both the governor and the member(s) of staff who will be involved.
- Meet the responsible members of staff outside teaching hours before the visit to discuss the focus/implementation.
- Agree how you will be introduced to pupils and be involved in the lesson or activity you are observing. Try also to sort out any organisational matters such as where you should sit and whether it will be appropriate to talk to the children.
- Remember that monitoring staff performance is the role of the Headteacher, not the governors.
- Read any appropriate policy documents and/or curriculum guidance.

During the visit:

- Observe discreetly.
- Get involved with the pupils' activities when invited to do so.
- Show an interest and ask questions, but don't monopolise the teacher's time.
- Never comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Do not allow yourself to become an instrument for advancing particular issues.
- Do not express your own opinions when pressed on controversial issues.
- Class teachers may take time during lessons to have a brief discussion with you, but please do not expect this, as it is obviously not always possible or appropriate.
- Relax and enjoy your visit to the school.

After the visit:

- Discuss your observations with the relevant member of staff.
- Make notes while the visit is still fresh in your mind.
- Never include comments about individual children: if you have concerns, discuss them privately with the teacher and the Headteacher.
- Prepare a draft report of your observations and share it with appropriate members of staff and the Headteacher.
- Use the school's agreed 'Governor Visit proforma' to provide feedback regarding your visit. This is excellent practice and provides the school with useful / constructive feedback regarding your observations.

Reporting to the Governing Board:

- After a visit to the school, please be prepared to share your findings with the Governing Board / relevant committee. A short report, which can be prepared in note form, submitted to the Headteacher prior to the meeting will ensure that colleagues have had a chance to read your report prior to the meeting. This also saves on reading time during the meeting.
- Remember not to include the names of children or staff.

Finally – you are a valuable member of the school community and the staff and pupils appreciate your time commitment to the school, please remember 'Every Governor Matters'.

Date adopted: **Spring 2022**