



DURHAM JOHNSTON
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
— DARE TO BE WISE —



Governors Handbook 2025-2026

Governors Handbook 2025 - 2026

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Section 1: Governing Body

The Role of the Governing Body

Governors are responsible for:

- The strategic direction of the school, working closely with school leaders.
- raising standards of academic achievement and pastoral support.
- recruitment of staff.
- representing the views of the local community.
- managing school budgets and risk assessments.
- taking a strategic overview of staff appraisal.
- promoting the values and ethos of the school.

The Governing Body's role does not extend to operation decisions or to act in the role of an inspectorate.

The School Governing Body

There are a number of different categories of governor. The Instrument of Governance provides for the governing body to consist of the following:

Parent governors	6	Parents, including carers, of pupils are eligible to stand for elections as governors. Parent governors are elected by the parent body. If insufficient parents stand for election, the governing body may appoint parents.
Local Authority	1	LA's are encouraged to appoint high-calibre governors to schools that need the most support and to appoint candidates irrespective of any political affiliation or preference. Authorities may appoint minor authority representatives, e.g. district and parish councillors, as authority governors.
Staff governors	2	The Head is a staff governor by virtue of their office. Other staff, both teaching and support, may become governors as long as they are paid employees (volunteers do not qualify). Staff governors are elected by the school staff. In event of more than one candidate is nominated then a ballot will be held.
Co-opted	7	<p>Community governors are appointed by the governing body to represent community interests. They can be individuals who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Live or work in the community served by the school• Are committed to the good governance and success of the school even though they do not work or live close to it. <p>The definition of community governor is wide. People from a business or professional background can be appointed as community governors.</p>
Associate (student) governors	2	Students (Year 12) are elected to a one-year term of office by their peers and formally appointed by FGB. They do not have voting rights. They attend full Governing Body meetings and Pupil and Staff Wellbeing sub-committee meetings,
Observers	6	Senior school staff and other invited individuals who are present at and help service the sub-committees of the Governing Body. Observers do not have voting rights.

The Clerk to the Governors

The governing body has a dedicated, trained clerk, who is answerable to the governing body. The chair of governors, the Headteacher and the clerk to the governors meet often to plan the agenda of the full governing body meetings and the process of school improvement through the school development plan and policy formation and update. The clerk needs to be on good terms with all members of the governing body and the chair. Equally importantly, the clerk must be on good terms with the Headteacher as it is necessary to refer to the Headteacher on a number of issues and to keep the Headteacher informed about relevant governing body matters from time to time.

Confidentiality

As a member of the governing body, you will have access to, or overhear information regarding students, staff and the internal workings of the school. **Governors are expected to observe absolute confidentiality regarding school matters at all times. If you are approached when any form of external query regarding an issue, please utilise the communication systems used by the school. Your role as a Governor is outlined clearly in the Governing Body's Code of Conduct, which is updated annually and based upon the model suggested by the National Governors Association.** The Code of Conduct is discussed and agreed at both the first and final Governing Body meetings of the year.

Data Protection

The EU General Data Protection Regulation was fully implemented on 25th May 2018.

It is enforced by The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO has the power to conduct criminal investigations and issue fines.

The regulation contains new rights for people to access the information that companies and organisations hold about them, obligations for better data management for businesses (and schools), and a new regime of fines.

GDPR and other data protection laws rely on the term 'personal data' to discuss information about individuals. There are two key types of personal data in the UK and they cover different categories of information.

Personal data can be anything that allows a living person to be directly or indirectly identified. This may be a name, an address, or even an IP address. It includes automated personal data and can also encompass pseudonymised data if a person can be identified from it.

GDPR categorises sensitive personal data as being in 'special categories' of information. These include trade union membership, religious beliefs, political opinions, racial information, and sexual orientation.

All staff and members of the Governing Body have responsibility for ensuring compliance with GDPR.

The enforcement date for GDPR may have already passed but data protection is continuously evolving. It will never be completely possible for businesses (or schools) to be fully "GDPR compliant".

The school has undertaken a large amount of work towards compliance. This includes whole staff questionnaire investigations and training, redevelopment of core documents and policies and extensive data mapping and data ecosystem analysis. There is a dedicated team of staff in school to advise on GDPR issues. They can be contacted, by email at the following address:
gdperteam@durhamjohnston.org.uk

Safeguarding

All governor appointments are subject to satisfactory enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance. If governors become aware of any safeguarding issues regarding the school community, they should contact the school's designated safeguarding lead immediately. In addition, Governors should familiarise themselves on an annual basis with the Department for Education's updated guidance on 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and should access training in the autumn term that is provided annually by the school.

The school has a culture of safeguarding and the safeguarding of children is a standing item on each Governing Body committee meeting agenda.

Business/ Pecuniary Interests

All governors are required to complete a business and pecuniary interests form on an annual basis. In order to ensure that there is no likelihood of a conflict of interest arising, governors should inform the clerk to the governors of the following when completing the form:

- Employment with a local or public authority
- Private practice of any profession
- Engaging in trade or business

Every committee or full governing body (FGB) meeting will have, as an agenda item, an opportunity for attending governors to declare an interest in any of the items on the particular agenda. You are required to complete this document at the beginning of each academic year.

The Committee Structure

The governing body reviewed the committee structure in 2015/2016 with a view to improving the monitoring and evaluation of the school's progress in relation to the school development plan (SDP). The following committees have a direct link to SDP priorities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum and Standards – which focuses upon the Quality of Education provided by the school for all students and inclusivity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil and Staff Wellbeing – which focuses upon attitudes & behaviour, personal development, equalities, inclusivity and safeguarding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance, Grounds, Premises, and HR – which focuses upon school finance, estates and staffing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The full Governing Body (Operational & Strategic Meetings) – which focuses upon key decision making, school improvement, training and the local and national context.

There are a number of statutory committees, which are convened as required:

- Capability, Capability First Appeal and Capability Final Appeal
- Pupil Discipline
- First/Budget, First/Pay Review and First/Pay Appeals
- Head's Performance Review Group

Attendance at Meetings

A record is maintained of attendance at meetings which is published on the school website. It is an expectation that apologies are given when not attending a meeting with the reason provided. The meeting will decide whether or not to accept the apology. Failure to attend and to give an acceptable apology results in the absent governor being recorded as a non-attendee. Such events are counted against the governor in certain circumstances, potentially resulting in the governor being suspended from the FGB.

Cycle of Meetings

The Governing Body meets in full six times a year, three of which are strategy, training and planning meetings. The other committees meet three or four times per year. A schedule of meeting dates is provided at the start of each academic year. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair of Governors if the need arises. The cycle of meetings is shared with Governors at the summer term's strategic meeting. If there is ever a requirement for emergency action, the First Committee of the Governing Body, consisting of the Chair and separate Chairs of each Committee, may be convened.

Terms of Reference

The committee structures and their terms of reference are reviewed and developed annually (at the end of the academic year) to ensure that the governing body is in an appropriate format to carry out their responsibilities in the ever-changing educational context. **They are ratified in the final governing body meetings of the summer term. The Clerk shares a generic version in May and we review our terms in the July strategic meeting.**

Agendas

The meetings follow a standard format and agenda. The clerk to the governors sends out the agenda and accompanying papers seven days prior to each meeting where possible. It is the responsibility of the chair of each sub-committee to set the agenda, in consultation with the relevant school staff, in time to meet the deadline dates. If you wish to have an item added to the agenda, you need to contact the clerk or relevant chair of the committee or FGB before the papers are sent out. To ensure a high level of discussion and challenge, a survey/questionnaire is sent out with each agenda to ensure that Governors have an overview of key materials in advance and meetings focus in depth on issues identified in advance where possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

School governing bodies provide a strategic and policy framework within which schools are run. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and staff to guide and advise governors, implement the plans and deliver the curriculum.

The governing body is responsible for raising expectations, acting as a critical friend to the school and holding it to account. As unpaid, voluntary public servants, a school's governing body helps to sustain the school's identity and provide a link with the community it serves. The governors can be seen as trustees for the performance of the school, in the interests of current and future students. In everything they do they must, by law, aim to promote high standards of educational achievement at the school. Governing bodies delegate many of their responsibilities to the Headteacher, but there are some areas of responsibility that they cannot, by law, delegate or which they may choose not to delegate. Although decisions may be delegated, the governing body as a whole remains responsible for any decision made under delegation.

Governor Support

The Headteacher is the governing body's principal educational adviser. The clerk to the governors provides support to governors and endeavours to ensure that they work within current legislation and the framework of their Instrument of Governance.

The governing body subscribes to the Education Durham Governance Services (EDGS). All new governors receive a welcome pack from the LA. All governors receive a termly newsletter from Governors' Services and have access to a range of training materials and committee related documents via the **GovernorHub**.

A link to the current Governance handbook published by the DfE is available below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Governor Training

Education Durham Governance Services provide a number of training courses for new and experienced governors, details of which are published in the termly magazine. The school actively encourages all governors to take advantage of these training courses, which are provided free of charge. Governors may also take advantage of training modules offered by the National Governors Association. Governor training is a standing item at meetings of the full governing body and is reviewed in the final strategic meeting of each school year. The Governing Body appoints a governor with responsibility for governor training opportunities.

Governors' Allowances

The Education (Governors Allowance) Regulations 1999 allow maintained schools to extend their schemes for paying governors' expenses, including childcare costs, from the school's delegated budget. However, the governors of Durham Johnston have agreed that they will not, in normal circumstances make any claims under these provisions.

School Policies

Policy formation and approval is an important element of the governing body's functions. There are a number of statutory policies that schools must have in place, as well as other policies which aid in the effectiveness of the school. These policies are reviewed on a regular basis and are updated regularly on the school website.

Some of the policies – i.e. Pay Policies are provided by the LA – who have negotiated the terms within them with the recognised trade unions. Under these circumstances these policies are usually adopted without any amendments. Other policies are based on the school context and are therefore produced by the school staff; these should be in an agreed standard format. A schedule of policy review has been developed and is available from the clerk to governors. Policies initially go to the appropriate committee for their discussion. They will then be presented to the FGB with the committee's recommendations. As a Local Authority school Durham Johnston works within the Human Resources policies developed by DCC.

Governors wishing to see a policy can request a copy from the clerk or the school.

Visiting the School/Links with lead teachers

Although technically no governor, including the chair of governors, has any right to be on the school premises, the school welcomes governor visits. However – permission should always be sought from the Headteacher or a delegated member of staff. Governors do not have the right to sit in on lessons or to make judgements about the quality of teaching provision. They are, however, asked to hold senior

teachers to account in key areas of the wider school's provision and implementation of strategic goals. Please see our governing body's overview of links to see how governors are linked to key strategic areas of provision, such as the curriculum. Governors should work in the same parameters as their wider governor role and should not view their role as one of inspection.

What is the purpose of a school Governor visit?

'Monitoring visits' are where governors go into school to:

- See how a specific aspect of the school works in practice
- Check progress is being made towards the school's strategic objectives
- Ask about and witness whether the things people say are happening, are actually happening

The Governing Body will assign you to a particular area of the school (you might be formally appointed as a 'link governor', but not always). You'll usually go in and meet the staff member responsible for this area at key points during the year and share key developments with the appropriate committee. For example, the literacy link governor will meet the literacy subject lead. These visits are pre-arranged, and if you wish to spend time in a classroom, the school needs to be very clear why you're there. Most Governors visits will involve an agreed programme of meetings with the relevant staff member, where you'll sit down and discuss the school's progress in the area of focus. What you should do while visiting

What should you do when visiting?

- Find out more about the school from senior leaders
- Talk with pupils, staff and parents to gather their views
- Look for evidence that the school is implementing the policies and actions in the school improvement plan
- Learn how these policies and actions work in practice
- Demonstrate to staff that accountability is robust in your school
- Consider the extent to which all school staff are all working towards the Governing Body's vision for the school

What should you avoid when visiting?

Make sure that you:

- Don't comment on the quality of teaching or extent of learning. You're not an inspector and should avoid that approach, even if you have experience of working in a school.
- Don't interfere with the day-to-day running of the school. You're not a school leader and the role of the Governing Body is strategic; school leaders manage the day to day operations of the school.

School Events

Governors are invited to all special events and receive copies of any relevant publications from the school. Governors are actively encouraged to support and participate in extra-curricular activities.

The School Improvement Plan

The school improvement plan (SIP) identifies the key priorities for the forthcoming three years and provides action points to support these priorities. The governors and staff review the document on an annual basis and key items are delegated to governor sub-committees. The School Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation documents will be shared at the first full governing body meeting of the year and updated and reviewed at the final meeting of the academic year.

Summary of Examination Results

After the public examination results have been published, the school carries an in-depth review of the school's results. The Curriculum and Standards Committee and full Governing Body receive a detailed presentation of this analysis. The data is also published on the school's website.

Section 2: The School

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School is an 11-18 comprehensive with approximately 1691 young people on roll and an intake of 265 into each year group in the main school with between 150 and 190 students in Years 12 and 13.

Durham Johnston is an extraordinary school and one of the few genuine comprehensive schools in Britain with young people from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities working together. Staff are highly skilled and are equally at home with those students who are struggling to learn as with some of the best young minds in the country. We appoint staff who are committed to their jobs and prepared to throw themselves into school life. We know that a teacher's responsibility extends well beyond the walls of a classroom. Staff play an active role in staff teams and make good working relationships with young people, leading them to the highest standards of achievement. The school's support staff facilitate this and help us improve our standards of service.

The school is proud of its traditional ethos and celebrates stability and reliable excellence. The maintenance of a happy, orderly and successful community built upon classroom excellence, long term commitment and strong personal relationships is pivotal to our success.

Education is taken seriously at Durham Johnston. Students are expected to strive for the highest standards and to grow into good citizens. The school aims to transform lives through learning and our new buildings inspire us to even greater heights. It is very important that school governors share this ethos.

Secondary School Admissions, County Durham

The school's Pupil Admission Number (PAN) is 265 for each 11-16 year group. The PAN was agreed by governors in January 2020. The LA is responsible for setting the admission policy and criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in County Durham. Further information is available on Durham County Council's website <https://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

Section 3: School Details

School Day

The school day begins at 08.20 and ends at 14.45. Lunchtime is from 12.00 – 12.45 for students in years 7, 8, 12 and 13 and from 13.00 – 13.45 for pupils in years 9, 10 and 11.

The School's Leadership Team

Title	Name	Responsible for:
Headteacher	Rosslyn McFadden	The strategic direction of Durham Johnston and operational oversight of all areas
Deputy Head	Julie Bell	Strategic Oversight of Pastoral Care, Safeguarding and Inclusion, Attendance and Behaviour, Personal Development and Wellbeing.
Assistant Head	Helen Davies	Quality of Education and Inclusion (SENCO)
Assistant Head	Catherine Robson	Personal Development, Staff Wellbeing and Attendance
Assistant Head	Jonathan Wilbraham	Quality of Education and Head of Sixth Form
Associate Assistant Head	Anna Colquitt	Quality of Education Pedagogy, Professional Development and Training
Associate Assistant Head	Stephen Horn	Quality of Education Assessment, Reporting, Exams and Logistics
Associate Assistant Head	Tom Patterson	Quality of Education Strategic and Operational Leadership of Curriculum
Associate Assistant Head	Polly Urwin	Quality of Education Strategic and Operational Leadership of Curriculum
Associate Assistant Head	Michael Simpson	Behaviour and Attitude, Designated Teacher, Key Groups and KS3 Lead
Associate Assistant Head	Stuart Bowman	Behaviour and Attitude, Designated Safeguarding Lead and KS4 Lead

Curriculum Years 7-11

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)

During this Key Stage pupils will study English, Mathematics, Science, Languages, History, Geography, RE, PE, Technology, Music, Art, and Computing.

Students will choose an additional language in Year 8 which continues into Year 9. It is in Year 9 that students make their choices for KS4.

Key Stage 4

At KS4 as well as the core curriculum and the other KS4 subjects a number of additional subjects are offered, these change with demand, but would typically include at GCSE, Business Studies, Computer Science, Photography, Performing Arts

and a variety of technology subjects. We value Modern Foreign Languages and almost all of our students take at least one language at GCSE.

When young people join us in Year 7 at Durham Johnston they are taught in mixed ability groups for all subjects apart from Maths and English in which they are taught in sets according to their ability in the subject. Setting increases from Year 8 upwards and we review our arrangements regularly to make sure all pupils are in the right teaching group.

The Learning Support department is committed to enabling young people to have a full, happy and successful time at Johnston. The core purpose is to assist students with SEN and additional needs to fulfil their potential. With this aim, staff are able to identify the needs of these students in several ways and then use this information to offer tailored intervention and focused support.

Sixth Form Curriculum

Our reputation is built on the firm foundations of high quality teaching, careful monitoring of each student's needs and strong pastoral support.

Every Sixth Form student at Durham Johnston has:

- an individually negotiated timetable
- a well-planned programme of academic work
- built-in development of study skills in all courses
- guidance and careers advice
- the opportunity for work experience
- links with employers and higher education
- opportunities for physical recreation and community service
- the opportunity to learn new foreign languages
- the opportunity to improve computer literacy
- the opportunity to develop undergraduate level skills through completing an Extended Project
- an entitlement to continuing personal development

Sixth form students need to achieve the best they can so that the right platform is built for the future. The outstanding achievements of Durham Johnston sixth formers, both at school and after they leave, are testaments to their commitment and our education.

Term/holiday dates for the academic year 2025-26

Holiday / Inset	Date School Closes	Date school re-opens
		Wednesday 3 September 2025
Autumn Half Term 2025 (1 week)	Friday 24 October 2025	Monday 3 November 2025
INSET (School closed Fri 28 Nov)	Thursday 27 November 2025	Monday 1 December 2025
Christmas 2025 (2 weeks)	Friday 19 December 2025	Monday 5 January 2026
Spring Half Term 2026 (1 week)	Friday 20 February 2026	Monday 2 March 2026
Easter 2026 (2 weeks and 1 day)	Thursday 2 April 2026	Monday 20 April 2026
May Day 2026 (School closed Mon 4 May)	Friday 1 May 2026	Tuesday 5 May 2026
Summer Half Term 2026 (1 week)	Friday 22 May 2026	Monday 1 June 2026
Summer 2026	Friday 17 July 2026	Thursday 3 September 2026

Section 4: Link Governor School Improvement Focus: Policy and Protocols

It is very important that governors work with school leaders to discuss, improve and refine policies. A governing body has three main roles. They are to support the strategic direction of the school, to ask as a critical friend of school staff and leaders and to ensure accountability. Those roles are:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;*
- 2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and*
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.*

Each governor is linked to a key area of the life of the school. Link governors visit the school and work with senior teachers and teams. Working with senior leaders and teams within the school helps governors to develop an understanding of strategic decision making and to ensure that decisions are being made in the best interests of the school community. It is important that governors talk to those responsible for decisions that take place across the school, in the classroom and between the school and a range of stakeholders and external agencies. This, in turn, increases the governing body's first-hand knowledge of the school and helps to inform strategic decision making.

Through spending time in school with school staff and leaders, governors will have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented, which will help make governors to make well-informed judgements about progress being made towards the priorities and targets identified in the school improvement plan. The number and frequency of visits might vary dependent upon the roles that governors have, but all governors have the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of wider school issues and their specific area of responsibility.

Visits should generally relate to the priorities determined by the School Improvement Plan and cover a wide range of activities so as to be beneficial and time efficient. Each visit should be agreed in advance and have a clear purpose that is linked to the governing body's cycle of meetings.

The potential benefits of visiting to discuss a key area of school improvement and meeting with post holders

There are many benefits for both the school and governors in meeting with key members of staff.

Governors may:

- Recognise and celebrate success
- Develop positive relationships with staff
- Get to know some of the young people at the school
- Gain a greater understanding of school improvement and school issues
- Recognise the wide variety of different teaching and leadership styles

- Understand the environment in which teachers teach and make decisions
- Discuss policies in action
- Monitor policies in action and how the wider school approach is interpreted at departmental level
- Find out what resources are needed and prioritise them
- Deepen understanding and increase confidence and knowledge of how the school functions
- Help to inform decision making and governing body expertise

School staff may:

- Ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom, wider school and their involvement with external agencies or stakeholders
- Get to know governors and develop positive relationships that can drive school improvement
- Understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities and the three main roles outlined above
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- Highlight the need for particular resources
- Share and celebrate their success
- Identify the extra-curricular opportunities for students
- Share the unique nature of their subject
- Share their thoughts about the school's ethos
- Ensure governors understand the reality of what is and isn't possible in a school
- Share their thoughts on issues associated with workload and well-being
- Get to know governors and the role they play in school life
- Understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- Have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

However, governor visits are not

- A form of inspection to make judgements about professional expertise
- An opportunity to check on the progress of a governors' own children; this goes against the Governor Code of Conduct agreed to by all governors. (Please see the Governor Code of Conduct, updated Summer 2021).
- An opportunity to pursue a personal agenda or make operational decisions
- The chance to monopolise school or teacher time with a particular issue that is interest to them, but not a significant part of school improvement
- An opportunity to be critical of a particular aspect of provision or the wider school
- An opportunity to advance their own views on how a school should be run or their own experience of education

Roles and responsibilities of governors, head teacher and other staff

Durham Johnston's governing body allocate governors to specialist areas of school provision at the beginning of a governor's tenure. This process is reviewed at the start of each new school year. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors, during the usual course of governor meetings and briefings, guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies, school improvement plan priorities and targets.

Monitoring and review of governors' school visit policy

This policy should be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure that:

- Governors are fulfilling their 3 main functions
- visits are achieving the potential benefits identified
- any unexpected benefits are identified
- practice is reviewed regularly
- Governors gain a more detailed understanding of how the school functions
- Governors feel confident in both asking and answering questions related to the school.
- governors have the opportunity to refine the process and to access any training that may be appropriate

Governor Preparation for a visit

The following is intended to offer general advice for all governors so that all involved are comfortable and fully prepared. Governors should:

1. Clarify the purpose of the visit. Most governor visits are to do with finding out about a distinct areas of school life based upon school improvement priorities. It will involve meeting with senior leaders and a range of staff and governors should discuss their visit in advance so that understand the key issues but can also ask questions based upon the agreed Ofsted recommendations regarding the information that governors should seek.
2. Discuss an agenda with the Headteacher, and or senior leader at least one week prior to the visit. You may want to talk over the area of school life that you are linked to with key school staff.
3. Think about what you will ask. This list might help:
 - *Safeguarding concerns*
 - *Particular subjects, key stages or classes.*
 - *The use made of the building or the site.*
 - *The condition and maintenance of the premises.*
 - *The performance of key sub-groups that the school has a statutory responsibility to report on.*
 - *The impact on the school of any changes e.g. reduced classes in key stage.*
 - *Impact of specific targets identified in the School Improvement Plan.*
 - *Impact of Staff Development Training.*
 - *The curriculum offer over 3, 5 or 7 years*
 - *The general quality of education provided.*
 - *Particular subjects, key stages or classes.*
 - *The personal development of students and extra-curricular opportunities*
 - *Special educational needs and disadvantaged students.*
 - *The support for students with complex needs or a particular vulnerability.*
 - *Literacy and numeracy.*
 - *The well-being and workload of staff.*

During the Visit

- Remember you are making the visit on behalf of the governing body.
- Governors do not make judgements or promises - it is a visit, not an inspection
- Be punctual, courteous and considerate at all times, respecting professional roles. School staff are expected to conduct themselves in this way too.
- Governors do not need to visit classrooms, but if you and the senior leader agree that you will, the senior leader will arrange:
 - how you will be introduced
 - what you will do in the classroom
 - what involvement you will have with children.
 - How you will interact, don't interrupt - listen to staff and pupils

Teachers and support staff will at all times be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school.

Governors are expected to ask questions, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

After the visit

- Follow your agenda and clarify any issue you are unclear about.
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved
- Thank senior leaders and any other school staff who are involved for supporting you in your role as a governor. Be open, honest & positive.
- Make notes as soon as possible after your observation while it is still fresh in your mind. Email the report to the Headteacher's PA who will forward to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. (j.bewley@durhamjohnston.org.uk)
- Reflect on the visit, for example you might to reflect on the following: how did that go? Has the visit helped me to establish positive relationships? Have I learnt more about the school? Have I gained more confidence in my role as governor? What have I learned about this area of school life? What could I share with an inspector about this area of school life?
- Please complete the relevant form in advance and then add additional detail after your visit so that challenge and questioning are recorded.

At the next appropriate Governing Body meeting

- Discuss your findings and how they can be linked to school improvement.
- Identify any additional questions or issues that you feel should be considered as a consequence of your visit.
- Be prepared to answer questions from other school governors regarding your visit.
- Deepen their understanding and increase confidence and knowledge of how the school operates
- Gain information that helps to inform decision making and to raise questions at Full Governing Body meetings.

Governor visits and feedback will feature as standing items on each of next year's committee meeting agendas.

Link Governor Roles 2025-2026

A link governor is a member of the governing body appointed to oversee a specific aspect of the work of the school. Link governor roles are aligned with key areas of school improvement and involves working with key staff members, developing knowledge of the specialist area that they are linked to, ensuring that the school has relevant policies and actions in place, monitoring the implementation of policies and reporting back to the wider governing body.

A list of Link Governor roles can be found on GovernorHub or by request via school.

Appendix A: Current Membership

Co-opted Governors

Mr Alistair McCall
Dr Victoria Maltman (Chair)
Professor Simon Morris
Mr Benjamin Westwood
Mrs Kath Sims-Williams
Dr Sandra Whitton (Vice-Chair)
Mrs Claire Young

Parent Governors

Dr Mauricio Armellini
Mr Mark Burdon
Mr Craig Davies
Dr Victoria Maltman (Chair)

Local Authority Governor

Councillor Elizabeth Scott

Staff Governors

Mrs Rosslyn McFadden
Miss Beth McKenzie

Student Associate Governors

Appointed in September and will serve a one-year term of office

Annual Schedule of Meetings 2025-2026

This is published via GovernorHub



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Website: www.durhamjohnston.org.uk