

**The Park College**  
**Governor college visits policy**  
**October 2023**

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### **1. Aims**

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to the college. Governors are invited guests and are welcome to arrange visits.

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are expected to follow when visiting the College and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the governing board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all governors understand their role and purpose, so college visits are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

### **2. Guidance and scope**

#### **2.1 Governors are observers.**

Governors must know their college to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- › Observe whether the college is properly implementing college policies, and actions from the college improvement plan.
- › Observe how those procedures work in practice.
- › Have the opportunity to gather the views of students and staff.

#### **2.2 Governors are not inspectors.**

Governors:

- › Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning at the college.
- › Will not manage the college or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the college.

For those governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make it clear about their purpose in doing so.

### **3. Visits programme**

Governors will carry out regular college visits in order to to monitor the college's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

- › **Monitoring visits**, where governors discuss the progress of the college in a particular area with the relevant staff members.
- › **Learning walks**, where governors will go around the college with the relevant staff members to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and students.

Governors will carry out college visits according to the following schedule:

<b>Autumn Term</b>	<b>Spring Term</b>	<b>Summer Term</b>
Subject learning walk	Subject learning walk	Subject learning walk
Monitoring visit: safeguarding	Monitoring visit: safeguarding	Monitoring visit: safeguarding
Monitoring visit: QIP SAR	Monitoring visit: QIP SAR	Monitoring visit: QIP SAR
College event	College event	College event

### **3.1 Governors for health and safety and safeguarding**

These governors will attend:

- › A termly 1:1 monitoring visit with the principal.
- › Ad hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility.

### **3.2 Subject lead governors - with responsibility for a key area of the training programme**

Subject lead governors will attend:

- › A monitoring visit with the subject lead in September/February/May
- › A learning walk in October/March/June
- › A monitoring visit related a focus of the QIP / SAR

### **3.3 All governors**

All governors will:

- › Carry out at least 1 learning walk each year
- › Attend at least 1 college event in the year

## **4. Before a visit**

Governors will:

- › Arrange visits directly with the Principal.
- › The principal will coordinate the relevant staff availability. Generally, governor visits are more productive when conducted during a college day.
- › Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time.
- › Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance with the principal ahead of the visit
- › Send questions in advance to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared.
- › Be familiar with the college's safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **5. During a visit**

Governors will be supported by a member of staff at all times during their visits to minimise disruption for staff and students and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

**Governors will:**

- › Be on time and meet with the principal.
- › Be provided with a visitor's badge.
- › Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the principal.
- › Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them.
- › Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom if they wish to do so.
- › Check with staff before speaking to students.
- › Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people.
- › Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and students.

**Governors will not:**

- › Pass comment on practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning.
- › Interfere with the day-to-day running of the college.
- › Behave in a manner that would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g., sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard.
- › Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the principal after the visit

**6. After a visit**

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable [using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) or Appendix B (learning walk)], as appropriate. In completing the report, governors will ensure to:

- › 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 complete, governors will submit their reports to:

- › The Principal

## Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the college in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

### The Park College

#### Governor monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the college in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: plan the visit.	
<b>Name and role of governor</b>	
<b>Name and role of staff member(s)</b>	
<b>Date and time of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus</b> <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	
<b>Relevant college objective or priority</b> <i>This might be taken from the college Quality Improvement Plan / SAR previous principal's reports related to the college vision.</i>	
<b>Questions to ask</b> <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the QIP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	

## Part 2: in the meeting

### What is the college doing within this area of focus?

*Tips:*

- *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'*
- *Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with*
- *Remember you're not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them – you remain an observer*
- *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers and students*

### How do you know the college's actions are having an impact?

*Remember:*

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the college is having in this area*
- *Where a positive impact hasn't been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*
- *Add any further evidence you'd like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact*

### What successes stood out and why?

### Questions and clarifications to follow up with the principal

## Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk

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#### Governor learning walk

Learning walks are where you'll go around the college with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area. You're likely to talk to a range of staff members and students. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask

Part 1: plan the walk.	
<b>Name and role of governor</b>	
<b>Name and role of staff member(s)</b>	
<b>Date and time of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus</b>	
<b>Relevant college objective or priority from the College Quality Improvement Plan</b>	
<b>Questions to ask</b> <i>Note specific questions you want to ask based on the QIP / SAR/ previous principal's reports, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.</i> <i>Share these questions with the staff member you're visiting in advance, so they can prepare.</i>	

## Part 2: on the walk

### General notes from discussions with staff

*Tips:*

- *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me ...'*
- *Don't be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with*
- *Remember you're not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them*
- *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers*

### General notes from discussions with students

*Remember:*

- *Don't ask students for their views on a specific teacher*
- *Don't record students' names*

### General notes on the college environment and overall atmosphere

- *Whether the vision of the college is evident in what you see*
- *Any recommendations or suggestions about the learning environment*

What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Principal