



PENWORTHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Governor Visits to the School Policy

(September 2022)

Updated Annually

Next review: Autumn 2023

THE MISSION

To prepare

Articulate, Questioning, Tolerant and Independent Women

for the future.

pgh**Success**



PENWORTHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

GOVERNOR VISITS TO SCHOOL POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- This policy was agreed in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, the Governing Body and the staff of the school.

2. BACKGROUND (see Annex B)

- The Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum.
- Governors are also held to account for their own school performance. Ofsted assumes that governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.
- One of the ways in which a governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and students and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.
- Visits will be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to assist the Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory duties, its role in monitoring and evaluation and to improve its understanding of the school to ensure informed decision making.

3. AIMS OF THE POLICY

- The policy aims to ensure: -
 - That governors are fully conversant with their duties in relation to school visits;
 - That teachers fully understand the purpose of governor visits;
 - That all involved understand how these visits fit into the statutory and strategic purpose of the governing body;
 - That all involved fully understand what a governor will and will not do;
 - That all involved know what will happen following a governor visit and how information will be used;
 - That all involved will understand how the success of this policy will be measured.
- School visits by members of the governing body are a key component to being an effective school governor and have potential benefits to both governors and staff: -
- Benefits to governors: -
 - recognise and celebrate success

- develop relationships with the staff
- get to know the students
- recognise different teaching styles
- understand the environment in which teachers and other staff work
- see policies and schemes of learning in action
- inform decision-making
- Benefits to staff: -
 - help governors understand the reality of the classroom
 - get to know the governors
 - understand better the governor roles and responsibilities
 - have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion

4. PURPOSE OF GOVERNOR VISITS

- Visits are undertaken to: -
 - Improve governing body knowledge of the school and the people that work in it;
 - Assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the SIP;
 - Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as SEN;
 - Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties including monitoring and evaluation;
 - Assist the governing body in making informed decisions.
- Governors will not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible or preconceived ideas.
- Governors will not visit their own daughter's class on official governor visits.
- Governors will not make any judgements about student's work, teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. Those are the responsibility of the Headteacher.

5. PLANNING THE VISIT

- Visits will be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme formally organised by the governing body or one of its committees and with approval of the Head.
- Frequency of visits will depend on the complexity of the areas of responsibility allocated to them and the availability of appropriate staff and timetabling.
- The Head will be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit.
- At least one week's notice of a visit will be provided to teachers.
- Governors will make themselves fully acquainted with Health and Safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to any visit.
- Governors will make themselves fully acquainted with safeguarding procedures prior to any visit.

6. DURING THE VISIT

- Governors will at all times report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors.
- If visiting a classroom, the governor will arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning and follow the agreed purpose of the visit.
- Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressful about having a visitor in the classroom.
- At the end of the visit governors will thank everyone concerned, including the students.
- Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.


7. FOLLOWING THE VISIT

- After visiting the school the governor will: -
 - Give some time and thought to reflection;
 - Consider what went well and what did not go so well with respect to their involvement in the visit;
 - Consider how the visit has helped them in their role as governor;
 - Consider what they would do differently in a future visit;
 - Following completion of the agreed monitoring programme the governor will report back to the governing body or committee as agreed.

8. MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE POLICY

- The success of this policy will be measured by the following:
- The extent to which: -
 - Governors become involved in visits to school;
 - Governors make more informed decisions;
 - Staff feel comfortable with governor involvement in their school;
 - Governors feel more involved in school;
 - Governors can demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, needs and priorities.

Annex A - Governor Visit Form

	PENWORTHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNOR VISIT PROFORMA
GOVERNOR	
PURPOSE OF VISIT	
LINK TO SIP	
GOVERNOR COMMENTS	
OUTCOMES AND IMPACT	
ACTIONS ARISING	
SIGNED DATED	

Annex B – The Governance Handbook 2020

All boards, whether in the maintained or academy sector and no matter how many schools they are responsible for, have three core functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Boards need to know their school if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. Many boards find that visiting their school(s), particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school, its staff, and students. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, the board can see for themselves whether the school is implementing their policies and improvement plans and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff, and parents to gather their views, though are unlikely to be sufficient for these purposes.

Boards are not inspectors, and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the headteacher. If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so.

ANNEX C - GOVERNORS CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct for School Governing Bodies (2019)

The governing body has the following core functions, as defined in Regulations:

- (a) establishing that the vision, ethos and direction of the school are clearly defined;
- (b) ensuring that the headteacher performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- (c) ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

In exercising their functions the governing body shall:

- (a) act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school; and
- (b) be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take, and in particular shall be prepared to explain decisions and actions to interested parties.

Specifically, as individuals on the governing body we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos

and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the governing body and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will respect the role of the headteacher and their responsibility for the day to day management of the school, and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing body as set out by the relevant governance documents and law.

When formally speaking or writing in our governing role, we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.

- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing body.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to do so.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.

- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's national database of governors ("Get information about schools").

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team, in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing body and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities, any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life (detailed below) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside of a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

Ceasing to be a governor

We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

Breach of this code of conduct

If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body will only use suspension / removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

The seven principles of public life

Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations.

- Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful.
- Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

(Adapted from the model code of conduct published by the NGA - 2019)