

Governor Visits and Allowances

Believing in Excellence means that the school has key values that all members of our school community live by. These are:

- Respect;
- Resilience;
- Responsibility.

These values apply to three important spheres of life:

- Believing in Excellence for ourselves;
- Believing in Excellence for others;
- Believing in Excellence for our environment.

Date of Policy	January 2016
Date agreed by Governing Body	January 2016
Date of next review	January 2019
Lead Member of Staff	Nigel Askew

Purpose of Governors' Visits

- To fulfil the governing body's legal duty **"to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of education achievement."** (Section 21, Education Act 2002)
- To develop governors' understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- To support the school's work
- To contribute to the governing body's monitoring role (visits are only one of the ways in which governors fulfil this role)
- To enable individual governors to ask informed and challenging questions at governing body meetings
- To see policies in action
- To demonstrate to staff and pupils that governors are interested in what goes on in school
- To give governors an enhanced sense of identity with their school and the people who work in it

Governors have the right to make formal visits to the school provided they do so in connection with their responsibilities as governors, and the visit is on behalf of, or has been sanctioned by, the governing body.

Formal visits should have a clear focus, ideally linked to priorities in the School Development Plan. Governors have limited time, therefore, time spent on governors' visits should 'add value' both to the school and to the effectiveness of the whole governing body.

Lay People

Governors visit schools as lay people, not as inspectors, even where they have personal professional expertise in the particular subject area. A visit will only ever provide a snapshot of what goes on. It may not always give a full and balanced picture of the real state of affairs. That is why it is always important that the information and impressions gained by individual governors during a visit are checked and, if necessary, revised in consultation with the headteacher, appropriate member(s) of staff or relevant manager.

Governors' school visits should not be confined to the classroom.

Ideally governors should consider a series of different types of visits, some of which are focused on the classroom but others might include, for example, the playground, the school environment, health and safety, parents'/carers' consultation evenings, meetings with senior staff; shadowing staff and/or pupils; looking at a sample of pupils' work (more able, average, less able) in a particular subject area; attending a school assembly; reporting on the school's extra-curricular activities, joining departmental scrutiny of pupils' workbooks, meeting senior staff to discuss homework setting and marking. Whatever focus is agreed, it is important that governors' visits link with issues in the School Development Plan.

Teaching and Learning

Governors do not undertake formal visits to judge the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring the quality of teaching.

Governors should use their visits as occasions on which to collect information to report back to the governing body/relevant committee on the progress of key priorities or initiatives in the school development plan. Planned and focused governors' visits contribute significantly to more informed decision-making by the governing body.

Written reports

Governors' visit reports should be quite simple, giving a layperson's account of what was seen and learnt by the governor conducting the visit and whether there are issues for the governing body to consider. Governors should record what they see and do on a standard form. Draft reports by governors should be read first by the headteacher/manager before they are circulated to other members of the governing body.

Written reports, like all other documents for the governing body, should be available for public scrutiny after the governing body has seen them. They should not name individuals eg Jennifer Jones/John Smith but should identify post holders by title. Reports may raise important strategic issues, which the governing body needs to consider.

Informal Visits

Governors on informal visits attend in a more personal capacity, much as a parent might do, but always with the knowledge and approval of the headteacher. Such visits add to individual governors' knowledge and understanding of the school and can strengthen relationships and foster trust and respect between governors and staff.

Informal visits can take many forms, for example, attending a play, concert or sports day; helping on school trips; listening to pupils reading aloud or simply running a stall at the school fair. On the whole informal visits are generally easier and less daunting than formal visits.

They should be seen as a valuable **complement to formal visits** – not an alternative.

PROTOCOLS FOR DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT

Before a visit:

- Negotiate a mutually convenient time with the headteacher or SLT member or other appropriate member of staff
- Agree level of participation by governor/s during school visits; especially visits to classrooms; involvement with pupils
- Establish a programme for the visit.
- When agreeing the programme it is important to clarify the purpose of the visit, for example
 - Overview of the work of a team
 - Implementation of a policy
 - Clarification of an issue
 - Progress of a plan or project
 - Observe working of the school at a particular time
- Ensure governor/s receives any relevant supporting information

During a visit

- Be punctual
- Don't lose sight of the purpose of the visit
- Be courteous, friendly not critical
- Listen; don't talk too much
- Observe discreetly, take minimal notes only
- Ask questions, but sparingly, so as not to distract teachers or pupils
- Get involved with activities, if you are invited but otherwise don't intervene
- **Never** comment to the teacher concerned on the conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils
- Thank staff and pupils at the end of the visit

After the visit

- Discuss your observations, including any concerns with the headteacher, SLT member or other appropriate member of staff
- Draft a short written report using the agreed pro forma as soon as possible, while the visit is still fresh in your mind.
- In your report, refrain from making judgements on teachers or individual pupils
- Show your draft report to the headteacher, SLT member or appropriate member of staff so that they can check its accuracy and advise on potential sensitivities
- Arrange for the report to be circulated to other governors via the appropriate sub-committee
- Reflect on how well the visit went so that learning can be gained for future visits
- If any issues remain unresolved, discuss them with the Chair of Governors

**CAVENDISH SCHOOL
GOVERNOR SCHOOL VISIT RECORD**

To be completed in accordance with the guidance for Governor visits

NAME(S)		DATE OF VISIT	
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PURPOSE OF VISIT

OFSTED ACTION/SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN/REFERENCE(S)

STRUCTURE/TIMETABLE OF VISIT

KEY PERSONNEL TO MEET

Position	Name	
		✓

KEY QUESTIONS/ISSUES FOR GOVERNORS TO EXPLORE

GOVERNOR'S OBSERVATIONS

ANY KEY ISSUES ARISING FOR GOVERNING BODY:

ACTION FOLLOWING GOVERNING BODY MEETING:

Signed:

Governor.....

HT/SLT.....

Date

Governors Allowances

This policy statement has been developed in accordance with the Education **Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013**. These regulations give Governing Bodies the discretion to pay allowances from the school's annual budget allocation to governors for certain allowances which they incur in carrying out their duties. The Cavendish School Governing Body believes that paying governors' allowances, in specific categories as set out below, is important in ensuring equality of opportunity to serve as governors for all members of the community and so is an appropriate use of school funds. The specific items allowable reflect this objective.

From 1st September 2014, all governors of The Cavendish School will be entitled to claim the actual costs, which they incur as follows:

1. Governors will be able to claim reasonable allowances providing the allowances are incurred in carrying out their duties, as a Governor or representative of The Cavendish School, and are within the categories agreed by the Operational Resources Committee as specified below.
2. Governors will be able to claim for the following, on a case-by-case basis.
 - Childcare or babysitting allowances (excluding payments to a current/former spouse or partner);
 - Cost of care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative (excluding payments to a current/former spouse or partner);
 - The extra costs they incur in performing their duties either because they have special needs or because English is not their first language;
 - The cost of travel relating only to travel to meetings/training courses at a rate of 25 pence per mile which does not exceed the specified rates for school personnel;
 - Travel and subsistence costs, payable at the current rates specified by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, associated with attending national meetings or training events, unless these costs can be claimed from the LA or any other source;
 - Telephone charges, photocopying, stationery, postage etc.;
 - Any other justifiable allowances.

The Governing Body at the Cavendish School acknowledges that:

- Governors may not be paid attendance allowance;
- Governors may not be reimbursed for loss of earnings.

Governors wishing to make claims under these arrangements should complete a claims form (obtainable from the School Office), attaching receipts where possible, and return it to the School within 2 weeks of the date when the allowances were incurred. All claims will be monitored by the Operational Resources committee and may be investigated by the Chair of Governors (or Chair of Resources Committee) if they appear excessive or inconsistent.

GOVERNOR CLAIMS FORM

Name:	The Cavendish School		
Address	Date:		
Post Code	Claim Period:		
I Claim the total sum of	£		
For Governor expenses as detailed below. I have attached relevant receipts to support my claim			
Signature			
	£	P	P
Child care/babysitting expenses			
Care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative			
Support for governors with special needs			
Support for governors whose first language is not English			
Travel to meetings/training courses			
Travel/subsistence to national meetings or training events			
Telephone charges			
Postage			
Photocopying			
Stationery			
Other (please specify)			
Total Expenses Claimed			
This form (with receipts for expenses attached) should be submitted to the Chair of Governors who will pass it to the Finance Team			
Chair of Governors Authorisation signature			
Date approved			
Date processed by Finance Team			