

# Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



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## NEW GOVERNORS' WELCOMING POLICY

(Incorporating the Governors' Visits Policy)

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**'from potential to reality'**

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## **NEW GOVERNORS' WELCOMING POLICY** **(Incorporating the Governors' Visit Policy)**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 For most new Governors, particularly those for whom joining the Governing Body at Aylesford School is their first experience of being a School Governor, there may be some apprehension and possibly trepidation.
- 1.2 It is important that new Governors are introduced to their duties in a hospitable way and made to feel welcome.
- 1.3 To this end, the following procedure should be implemented upon the appointment of every new Governor (including Teacher Governors).

### **2.0 Initial Contact**

- 2.1 Upon the appointment of new School Governor(s), the Chair of Governors and Headteacher should jointly write to the new Governor(s), giving them a preliminary welcome and invite them to an informal and short introductory meeting in order to advise them of what to expect of their first Governors' meeting to explain the role of the Governing Body and how it functions.
- 2.2 This meeting to be attended by the Headteacher (or nominated deputy) and another Governor in addition to the new Governor(s) [if possible] and should be of a relaxed and informal nature.

### **3.0 Welcome Pack**

- 3.1 The following information will be distributed as part of a pack for new Governors:-
  - List of Governors
  - Committee structure
  - Dates of all meetings
  - Terms of reference
  - Minutes of meetings in the year of joining
  - Glossary of terminology
  - SDP
  - Current SEF
  - Financial Procedures Manual

### **4.0 New Governors' First Meetings**

- 4.1 Even an experienced Governor joining the Aylesford Academy Governing Body has difficulty assimilating the names of their colleagues over the course of their first three or four meetings.
- 4.2 To help smooth this path, table name cards should be produced for all Governors and placed (in alphabetical order), on the corner of the table nearest the door so that each Governor can readily find their own name card and place it in front of them wherever they choose to sit. The name cards (tent card format) must be large enough to be read from across the table (15 - 20mm high lettering is suggested).
- 4.3 This will help all Governors to follow the proceedings and identifying who has specific responsibility what they are.

### **5.0 Involving Governors in Governance**

- 5.1 Induction to governance will be offered and further training as necessary through school and/or external training.
- 5.2 Governors will be encouraged to participate in governance via:-
- Full Governing Body meetings
  - Becoming a curriculum/focus area Link Governor
  - Reading reports/updates
  - Visiting the school
  - Being a member of one governor sub-committee (Finance and Premises or Personnel and Curriculum)
  - Joining a working party on a given topic

## Governors Visits

### 1 Background

Governing bodies have a statutory responsibility to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Visiting the school is one of the ways in which this can be achieved.

Ofsted inspection assumes and tests the knowledge that governors have of the strengths of their school and the areas that have been highlighted for development. Such knowledge depends on an understanding of the context in which the school operates on a day to day basis.

The body of this policy is accompanied by a draft pro forma for a visit (Appendix 1) and a draft *aide memoire* to assist planning (Appendix 2).

### 2 The Purposes and Benefits of Visits

There are three potential areas of benefit, summarised as follows:

Potential Benefits to Governors	Potential Benefits to Teachers and Support Staff	Potential Benefits to Students
To recognise and celebrate success	To ensure governors understand the reality of the school	To understand the role of governors
To develop working relationships with the staff	To get to know the governors	To be aware of citizenship issues involved in governance
To observe and monitor the use of resources	To understand better the roles and responsibilities of governors	To celebrate and share success
To understand the environment in which the staff work	To highlight the need for particular resources	To develop self-confidence by communicating with visitors

### 3 What Visits are NOT about

Governors' visits to the school are **not** a form of inspection in terms of making judgments about the professional expertise of the staff. Specifically they are not about:-

- Making judgments on the quality of teaching
- Checking on the progress of own children

- Pursuing personal agendas
- Wasting staff time
- Arriving with inflexible pre-conceived ideas.

#### 4 Planning for Visits and Protocols

It is clearly important that visits are planned in advance and the following provides a framework on which this planning should be based:

	<b>ALWAYS</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ arrange details of visit</li> <li>▪ agree level of confidentiality</li> <li>▪ agree purpose of visit</li> <li>▪ discuss the context of the visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ turn up unannounced</li> </ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ observe the school guidelines and rules</li> <li>▪ fulfil agreed purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ walk in with a clipboard</li> <li>▪ interrupt the teacher (during a lesson)</li> </ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ thank the host(s) and the students</li> <li>▪ discuss findings with host</li> <li>▪ agree written feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ leave without a word</li> </ul>

It is also important to discuss possible *'What ifs....?'* to agree good practice:

- What if I see children misbehaving?
- What if a student asks me something?

#### 5 Some examples of appropriate foci for visits

- A)
  - i. Environment – storage / decoration / space
  - ii. Resources – monitor use, check appropriateness
  
- B)
  - i. Observation of a group of students working together on a task
  - ii. Noting the relative numbers of questions and responses to/from boys and girls
  - iii. Observation of Literacy and Numeracy strategies in practice and the implications of these for staff and students.

#### 6 Feeding back on the visit

Feedback should be the result of a discussion with the governor designated person. Initially this will be verbal, followed by agreed written feedback (see proforma).

Feedback will be initially to the governor designated person. A copy will be sent to:

- the Headteacher
- the appropriate Line Manager

#### 7 Commitment

It is expected that two visits by link governors a year will be the minimum commitment.

#### 8 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a three year cycle.