

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**  
**JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR TEACHING STAFF**  
**LOCAL AGREEMENT**  
**“Protocol for Classroom Visits”**

In terms of the Local Recognition and Procedure Agreement, it is accepted by all signatories acting on behalf of the Council and the recognised unions that this agreement is a binding local agreement effective from 9 February 2010. This supersedes relevant provisions within the National Agreement and constitutes a formal amendment to the terms and conditions of employment for teaching employees within Perth and Kinross Council.

John Fyffe, Executive Director (Education & Children’s Services), on behalf of  
Perth and Kinross Council:

*John Fyffe*

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Douglas Stewart (EIS), on behalf of Teachers’ Trade Unions:

*Douglas Stewart*

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## The Place of the Protocol

The protocol for classroom visits should not be part of any disciplinary system but should be an essential part of the continuous improvement process of the school. Visiting classrooms regularly is an essential ingredient in building an ethos of achievement in a school. It is recommended that senior staff ring fence time for visiting classrooms regularly on the premise that this represents good practice in supporting class teachers in the classroom.

## Other Strategies for Overseeing the Work of the School

In addition to planning visits to classrooms as set out in the protocol for classroom visits, headteachers should ensure that a monitoring calendar is in place for the beginning of each term. A variety of strategies will be employed over time to obtain a picture of the quality of provision across the school. These include:

- *sampling teachers' plans and aspects of the school and department improvement plans;*
- *looking at the outcomes of assessments in terms of recorded and reported information;*
- *tracking learners' progress and attainment and identifying patterns and trends;*
- *sampling learners' work;*
- *listening and talking to learners;*
- *listening and talking to members of staff;*
- *listening and talking to parents/carers;*
- *viewing displays on classroom walls and around the school;*

- *individual meetings with staff;*
- *departmental meetings;*
- *joining staff in planning sessions.*

At all times, the use of peer support mechanisms to assist in the self-reflection and self-evaluation process should be employed as part of the range of strategies available for overseeing the work of the school.

## The School Improvement Framework

The School Improvement Framework provides the foundation for ensuring continuous improvement in our schools. It is rooted in the principles of partnership, responsibility and accountability.

The School Improvement Framework operates at various levels, includes a range of strategies and will involve a variety of staff. Activities undertaken within the framework will be carried out by all staff, including headteachers, deputy headteachers, principal teachers, class teachers, service managers and improvement officers.

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Communications Manager on 01738 476873.



Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility

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## Creating an Ethos of Achievement Protocol for Classroom Visits



**PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL**

Education & Children's Services



## Realising Potential

The most important feature identified by learners, staff and senior managers as the key to delivering a high quality experience for learners is the quality of the relationships between staff and learners throughout the school or department. The characteristics of high quality relationships are mutual respect and trust, high expectations and aspirations, and self-belief. In respecting the professionalism of teachers, it is good practice for senior staff to provide support to staff by having a high visibility in and around the school. This will involve senior staff in a range of approaches, including formal classroom visits as set out below.

## Protocol for Formal Classroom Visits

Both learners and staff have responsibilities for ensuring that a positive environment for learning is consistently established across a school. The protocol for formal classroom visits set out in this leaflet will be both flexible and proportionate. It enables teachers and senior staff to undertake regular, agreed and supportive visits to classes. The protocol identifies two types of formal classroom visit. The first has a focus on learners and the second is more focused on the craft of learning and teaching. The approach taken in any one year in a school will be agreed annually through the school's Staff Consultative Committee.

## Learner Focus

A visit that focuses on learners is an approach where senior staff undertake visits to a range of classes on a regular and planned basis. Visits should generally be short in nature. The purpose of the visit will be to focus on ensuring there are positive relationships across the school community founded on a climate of mutual respect and trust. The visits will focus on ensuring that:

- learners have positive attitudes and high expectations of themselves and others;
- learners are well prepared for learning;
- learners are engaged;
- learners are on task and well motivated;
- learners are well behaved and show consideration for others;
- learners have a sense of achievement and behave responsibly;
- learners' work is well presented.

In keeping with agreements reached annually at school level, these visits should be intimate in advance and undertaken on a regular basis. During the course of a year, all classes in the school should be visited a number of times.

During a visit, senior staff should:

- praise good work;
- check pupils' work, and
- assess the attitudes and work ethic of the class.

Senior staff should use the classroom visits as an opportunity to provide appropriate praise, encouragement and recognition to staff and pupils to build a strong ethos of achievement and teamwork across the school.

## Learning and Teaching Focus

The second type of classroom visit is a more extended visit to focus on the craft of learning and teaching. These visits can be undertaken by all staff for a range of purposes, from senior staff to teachers engaged in peer support.

Staff should be given clear notice of when the extended visit is likely to take place. The purpose and focus of the activities in the classroom should be agreed in advance. In planning a particular class visit and agreeing the focus, staff should use the Perth and Kinross Standard for Learning.

At all times, the key purpose of such visits should be to identify and share good practice as well as identifying areas for further improvement. This type of classroom visit should be seen as a supportive mechanism and staff should view it in a positive light, encompassing self-reflection and self-evaluation approaches.

It is essential that such class visits are contextualised and focus on key aspects of learning and teaching. Although an observer may make notes, a formal crit lesson approach involving the use of checklists has no part to play in this process. Staff carrying out the extended visit can observe learning and teaching as well as being involved in the activities of the class either through team teaching or taking a group of pupils or relieving the class teacher in order that he/she can carry out some other particular task. Feedback should be given as soon as possible to the member(s) of staff concerned on the outcome of the extended class visit.

The member of staff visiting the classroom for a more extended observation should be thoroughly prepared prior to carrying out such a visit. In order to carry out the visit effectively, the member of staff needs to know the classroom, the plan of work, the teaching style and methodology.