

Title of Policy/Procedure	Visiting the School and Classroom for Trustees and Governors
Reviewer(s):	Head of Governance ESS Committee
To be read in conjunction with the following policies:	Trustee/governor code of conduct
Consultation Process	Consulted with LGBs and ESS committee
Policy Date:	May 2023
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This policy has been ratified by:	ESS Committee

Visiting the School and Classroom Policy

for Trustees and Governors

Policy aims

This policy aims to ensure that all governors/trustees understand:

- the purpose of monitoring visits
- the expectations for carrying out visits including preparation, expected conduct and reporting back to the Trust board/Local Governing Body

Introduction

The Trust board and Local Governing Body (LGB) have three core functions:

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

Trustees and governors draw on a range of evidence in order to carry out these functions and one source of information is their own visits to their school. This protocol applies to school visits made for the purpose of governance and not to visits to the school site that individuals may make in other capacities e.g. as parents or members of staff.

Purpose

Monitoring visits provide the Trust Board/LGB with essential information about how their strategy is being implemented and how issues discussed at Trust Board/LGB level translate into the everyday life of the school.

Visiting school on a planned, regular basis allows governors and trustees to:

- better understand their school's strengths and areas for development
- determine if agreed policies and procedures are working in practice
- identify how resources are being used
- show staff and pupils that they are interested in school life, work and achievements
- experience the culture and ethos of the school

Monitoring visits should have a strategic rather than operational focus. In practice, this means visits should focus on:

- Strategic priorities and key policies agreed by the Trust Board/LGB.
- The evaluation of progress: are the things people say are happening actually happening?
- Seeking assurance that the needs of pupils are being met (such as safeguarding and SEND).

There may be opportunities to visit your school on an informal basis, such as attending performances or events. Whilst these visits are valuable, they are not a substitute for scheduled visits with a clear focus linked to strategic priorities.

Frequency of visits

The frequency of governance visits should be in accordance with the schedule established by the Trust Board/LGB and agreed with school leaders and relevant staff. Visits should be scheduled to allow governors/trustees to see relevant activities and strategic milestones.

Scheduling visits

The Trust Board and LGBs should plan a schedule of visits for each academic year. Visits should be arranged through the headteacher, with adequate notice, and agreed with the relevant members of staff. This will help ensure that the timing of visits allows governors/trustees to see relevant activities.

When making these plans, they should consider:

- Strategic milestones (things that are expected to have happened) – these should be outlined in the school development/improvement plan or trust strategy document.
- How the visits schedule fits with the schedule of meetings, to allow for timely feedback and discussion.
- How to avoid visits clashing with important events and/or busy periods in school life.
- The workload implications for staff who are likely to be involved in the visits.
- The Trust board's/LGB's own capacity to fulfil the schedule: is it manageable?

Before the visit

Governors and trustees should:

- Read BKAT Visiting the School and Classroom Policy to familiarise themselves with procedure and conduct expected.
- Read the school's policy for visitors that includes relevant health, safety and safeguarding instructions.
- Read background information relating to the focus of the visit, such as relevant section(s) of the strategic plan, improvement/development plan, performance data, policies, stakeholder information.
- Clarify the purpose of the visit with the head teacher and or relevant member of staff.
- Confirm the visit schedule and activities.

Governors/ trustees are also expected to behave in line with the BKAT governor/trustee code of conduct, being aware of the need to maintain confidentiality.

When visiting the school in a governing capacity, governors/trustees should:

- arrive in good time and follow the school's procedures (such as signing in and producing identification)
- adopt a friendly approach that puts everyone at ease
- be respectful of the school at work and if you wish to take notes, check that those you are with are comfortable with this
- if you are taking notes, be clear with everyone that this is for feedback purposes and that you are not recording judgements (for example on the quality of their teaching)
- ask relevant questions that are closely linked to the purpose of your visit
- acknowledge the staff and pupils you meet

School Name

Example Trustee/Governor Visit Form

Name:	
Date of Visit:	
Focus of Visit SDP priority	
Class/ Staff Visited	
Summary of activities:	
Agreed strengths:	
Agreed areas for development:	
Evaluation:	
Agreed actions:	

Signature of Governor:	Signature of member of staff:
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