



TRUSTEE / GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

Presented to:

**Full Trustees Meeting
26 March 2020**

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Date adopted:	
Date reviewed: ²	
Date of next review: ³	

¹ This is the date the policy was approved by the meeting

² This is the date the policy was reviewed prior to its approval above

³ This is the date as set by the policy review clause or the date approved plus two years

- Headteacher also means Head of College and Principal
- School also means College, Academy or Academies
- References to School are taken to mean any school within the Four Cs Multi-Academy Trust

TRUSTEE / GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Trustees and Governors to make focused visits to Trust Schools so that they can build an effective working relationship with the staff and have a better understanding of the context in which they work. Trustees and Governors will observe policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the Trust Board and the Local Governing Committees (LGC) make well-informed judgments about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the Trust / School's relevant Improvement Plans. This process will enable the Trustees and Governors to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of pupils / students and staff and to identify further areas for development.

1.1 Visits are not about making judgements on the quality of teaching; that is the Headteacher's responsibility. Nor are they about checking on the progress of individual children or pursuing personal agendas. Visits are important to:

- Increase the Trustee and LGC understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school
- Show staff and pupils / students that those governing are interested in the life, work and achievement of the school
- Support the School
- Enable those governing to see evidence of agreed policies in action
- Gain first hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements.

1.2 Visits should:

- Be part of the Trustees and LGC monitoring role
- Increase the Trustees and LGC understanding of the Teaching and Learning process
- Enable the Trustees and LGC to ask informed questions in their meetings by gaining first-hand knowledge of the working of the school
- Allow the Trustees and LGC to have first-hand knowledge of resources purchased by the budget, are being used by the school community – particularly the students.

1.3 Each visit should have a clear focus – linked to the improvement plan – and should be a part of the self-evaluation process and provide opportunities to see policies in action.

2.0 Relationship to other policies

The focus of a visit could be on one or more of many of the policies in place in the Trust / School, on an element of the curriculum, or on a specific aspect of the School Improvement Plan. There are different types of visits undertaken, eg Audit, Monitoring, Link Governor and specific focus and purpose all of which fulfil the responsibilities of Trustee / Governor oversight.

3.0 Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher (or member of the Senior Management Team), other staff, Trustees / Local Governing Committee

The Trustees / Local Governing Committee, with the help of the Headteacher and staff, organise a schedule of visits throughout the year. The Headteacher, or a representative of, will discuss the areas of the curriculum, policies and School Improvement Plan priorities and targets to be covered each term.

- 3.1 The Chair of Trustees / Local Governing Committee or relevant Sub-Committee, in consultation with the Senior Management Team, will identify aspects of the school's work to focus on. This will enable individual Governors to deepen their understanding by focusing on areas where they have an interest or expertise. The aim will be for them to explore an aspect of the school in some detail, increasing their confidence and knowledge. In turn this will help to maximise the effectiveness of the Trust Board and Local Governing Committee and to enrich discussions about the Trust / School's performance.
- 3.2 Trustee / Governor visits will normally be supervised.
- 3.3 When organising and conducting a visit, Trustees / Governors will be courteous and considerate, at all times respecting the professional roles of the Headteacher and staff. The date, timing and focus of each visit will be agreed at least one month in advance in consultation with the Headteacher or relevant member of staff. This will include agreeing what will be observed and to whom it would be useful to talk. If time permits they will discuss the proposed agenda with any staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation/guidance. The Headteacher or relevant member of staff will make all staff aware of the visit and the expectations on them. Visitors should endeavour to arrive on time for pre-planned visits, clarify the timetable and act as an observer unless invited to participate at the invitation of the member of staff. Notetaking should be kept to a minimum in order to observe what is going on. Promises should not be made on behalf of the Trustees / Local Governing Committee.
- 3.4 At the end of each visit, the Trustee / Governor(s) will discuss what they have observed with the teacher and clarify any points they are uncertain about. They will discuss their observations with the Headteacher (or member of the Senior Management Team) as relevant. The relevant Trustee / Governor Visits reporting form for the individual school should be completed by the visitor and included as an agenda item at the next meeting for information to other Trust / LGC colleagues.
- 3.5 **Teachers and support staff** will at all times be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the Trust Board and Local Governing Committee to the schools.

They will make practical suggestions on the focus for Trustee / Governor visits so as to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with Trustees / Governors. Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum Trustees / Governors to relevant staff meetings and training sessions.

- 3.6 Questions will be invited from Trustees / Governors, while being sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

4.0 Monitoring and evaluation

Trustee / Governor visits will be an agenda item at the next relevant meeting. By reviewing the minutes of meetings when reports of visits were discussed, the Trust Board / Local Governing Committee will judge the extent to which the information gathered informed governance of the understanding of the progress made towards meeting priorities and targets. Staff Governors will feedback from colleagues. They will be asked to identify what worked well and what if anything needs to be reconsidered. They will also be asked to describe the extent to which their understanding of the Trust Board / Local Governing Committee's role has been enhanced.

4.1 Reporting back

When Trustees / Governors make visits, they do so on behalf of the whole Trust Board / Local Governing Committee. It is therefore important that the Trustees / Governors share the information gathered.

Whether written or oral, a report should:

- be mainly factual,
- not include personal judgements in areas, such as the quality of teaching, that Trustees / Governors are not required to make,
- if appropriate, include a judgement about whether policies are being implemented or targets, as set out in School Improvement Plans, are being achieved,
- If a Trustee / Governor does not feel confident about making judgements, then the report can be based on the answers and judgements made by the teachers and the Headteacher.

It is sensible to show written reports to the Headteacher to make sure they do not contain inaccuracies or matters that should be dealt with by the Headteacher.

A record of Trustee / Governor visits should be kept in the minutes of Trustee / Local Governing Committee meetings, or of committees delegated to deal with visits and included as an agenda item at the next local governing committee meeting for information to other LGC colleagues and upwards transmission to the Trust.

5.0 Review

The Trust will review this policy in line with the procedure for policy review.

Date for Review

If no other reason for review (see policy review procedure) this policy will be reviewed in the Spring term of 2023.