



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

For adoption by all CDAT schools

This policy is informed by the Christian values which are the basis for all of CDAT's work and any actions taken under this policy will reflect this.

'Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right'

Psalm 106:3

Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of next review
Trust Board	26.9.23	Annual	September 2024

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1. Introduction

It is essential to have in place good working relationships between CDAT schools and their local governing boards. This can be achieved by governors visiting schools in order to meet with staff and pupils and gain a better understanding of the context in which they work and learn.

Visits should have a clear purpose and be used to:

- determine if agreed policies and procedures have been implemented and are working in practice
- evaluate how resources are being used in the school environment
- gather information to assist in decision making
- develop relationships with staff and pupils
- demonstrate the LGB's interest in the life, work and achievement of the school
- experience the culture and ethos of the school
- better understand the school's strengths and monitor work linked to its development priorities.

Monitoring visits should focus on:

- strategic priorities and the implementation of key policies as agreed by the LGB
- the evaluation of progress (ie. are the things people say are happening actually happening?)
- seeking assurance that the needs of vulnerable pupils are being met (Safeguarding, SEND, Pupil Premium & LAC link governor visits)

The school will benefit by:

- gaining a deeper understanding the roles and responsibilities of governors
- building relationships, establishing good lines of communication, developing working relationships that will contribute to the leadership of the school and its successes
- highlighting the needs of the school

This policy should be read alongside the CDAT link governor role descriptions. The NGA's guidance *A Guide to School Visits* may also be useful.

2. Policy Aims

This policy aims to:

- ensure that all governors understand the purpose of school visits
- ensure that all governors understand the expectations for carrying out visits including preparation, expected conduct and reporting back to the LGB

3. Roles and Responsibilities

CDAT will:

- ensure that each school implements the Governor Visits policy
- provide guidance and support for LGBs on visiting schools

The LGB will:

- establish a programme of planned governor visits to the school at its autumn 1 meeting. Visits should be scheduled to allow governors to see relevant activities and strategic milestones.
- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure that staff have received appropriate guidance and training to ensure that visits are productive and conducted in compliance with this policy
- ensure that each governor complies with this policy and has the opportunity to make visits to the school over the course of the academic year
- link its visits to curriculum areas, key stages or aspects of the School Development Plan as agreed and share this information with staff to ensure that visits are productive and have a positive impact on school development
- ensure that the link governors for Safeguarding, SEND, Pupil Premium & LAC make visits to school to meet with the appropriate members of staff

4. Guidelines for School Visits

Visits should be arranged through the headteacher, with adequate notice, and agreed with the relevant members of staff.

Due regard should be given to:

- how the visit fits with the schedule of board and committee 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

Governors are encouraged to prepare for their visit. This may include:

- reading and familiarising yourself with the school's policy for visitors (this is different from the Governor Visits policy) that includes relevant health, safety and safeguarding instructions
- reading the background information relating to the focus of the visit, such as relevant section(s) of the School Development Plan, performance data, policies, stakeholder information
- clarifying the purpose of the visit with the headteacher and or relevant member of staff
- confirming the following with the headteacher: visit date and time, focus and activities, time for discussion after the visit

Conduct on visits

When visiting the school in a governing capacity, you 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 courteous and considerate at all times, respecting the professional roles of the headteacher and school staff
- be respectful of the school at work and allow learning and teaching to proceed without interruption
- if taking notes, be clear with everyone that this is for feedback purposes and that you are **not** making judgements (for example on the quality of teaching)

- ask relevant questions that are closely linked to the purpose of your visit
- acknowledge the staff and pupils you meet
- thank the headteacher, staff and pupils at the end of your visit
- meet with the headteacher at the end of your visit to share your observations and clarify any points about which you are uncertain

Governors are expected to behave in line with the governing board's code of conduct, being aware of the need to maintain confidentiality.

Things to look out for on a visit

- how pupils respond to their teacher, headteacher or any other visitor to the class
- whether pupils appear friendly and relaxed
- whether pupils concentrate well on their work
- whether pupils understand the lesson objectives
- pupils' behaviour within the classroom and at social times
- the school and classroom environment
- different teaching styles
- pupil groupings

Expectations following a visit

A brief report should be compiled as soon as possible using the pro-forma provided.

The report must:

- be informative and to the point
- not include any pupils' names
- set out the objectives of the visit and indicate whether or not these were met
- focus on the governor's learning about the school from this visit
- contain statements of fact about observations made during the visit
- **not** contain judgements on the quality of teaching when observing lessons
- contain information to assist the LGB's future decision making and evaluation processes

A draft will be shared with the headteacher and any other members of staff involved in the visit and, when agreed, the governor will submit a final version to be included in the papers uploaded to GovernorHub for discussion in the next governing board meeting.

Governor Visits: Report Template

Name of school:
Governor name:
Name of lead staff member:
Date of visit:
Focus of visit
<i>(eg. does the visit link into a School Development Plan priority?)</i>
Summary of Monitoring Activities carried out
<i>(eg. talking to staff and pupils, looking at classroom displays)</i>
What have I learned from this visit? What successes stood out?
Discussion points for the governing board
Any other comments
Signed:
Date: