



Trustee's Visits Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the aims of school visits and the recommended procedures to be followed when Trustees visit the school.

Aims

The Trust Board has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor the school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Trustees are also held to account for the school's performance. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) assumes that Trustees know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Trustee can get to know the school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and students and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms. If school and classroom visits are done well they will add to Trustees' understanding of the school, its staff and its students.

Trustees' visits are an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar and will focus on an aspect of the School Action Plan or one of the Trustees' statutory duties. Each Trustee is required to make at least one visit a year during the school day and Trustees will often monitor an area in pairs in accordance with the agreed timetable.

School visits will help Trustees to:

- fulfil their statutory duty to monitor performance;
- familiarise themselves with the day-to-day practices and ethos of the school;
- observe students' attitudes, behaviour and achievements;
- give active support to the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school;
- build relationships between the Trust Board and staff, students and parents;
- increase their understanding of the curriculum and gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking; and
- evaluate resources and discuss further requirements with staff.

School visits will help staff to:

- get to know and build positive relationships with Trustees;
- appreciate and value the role and responsibilities of Trustees;
- ensure Trustees understand the reality of the classroom and the school; and
- highlight the need for particular resources.

Purpose of visit

The purpose and focus of visits will be determined by the Trustees' Standards Committee and may involve:

- looking at an aspect of the School Action Plan; and

- fulfilling the statutory duty of the Trust Board for monitoring specific aspects of the school's work (eg Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, Health & Safety, Race Equality, and Looked After Children.).

Procedures for visits to school

Before making a visit, Trustees will:

- contact the Assistant Head teacher and agree a date, time and focus for the visit;
- ensure that all staff are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

On the day of the visit Trustees will:

- dress appropriately;
- sign in and out at reception;
- be on time and re-clarify the timetable with the Assistant Head;
- act only as an observer and only participate in classes at the invitation of a teacher; and
- respect the professionalism of teachers, supporting but not interfering.

After the visit Trustees will:

- remember to thank staff and students involved in the programme;
- if possible, meet with the Assistant Head to give a short verbal report and to raise any issues;
- complete a Trustee Visit Report. The completed report should be given to the Assistant Head and then, after any alterations, the form will be circulated to the Trust Board and staff; and
- not name individual children or members of staff in the report.

Reports

Feedback from a Trustee visit will be included as an agenda item and a copy of visit reports will be sent (by the Clerk) to the Trust Board when agenda papers are distributed.

It is extremely important to have a record of visits since this is evidence to Ofsted that Trustees are actively and appropriately involved in the life of the school and that they are contributing to the school's self-evaluation process.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Trust Board will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis.

Date approved by Trust Board: Sept 2019

Date for review: Sept 2022