

Cedars Academy

Governor Visits



Author(s):	MF
Governors Committee:	C&P
Date Reviewed:	March 2021
Next Review Due:	March 2023
Review Cycle:	Every Two Years

Copies of this policy and the policies listed above are available on the school website www.cedarsacademy.org.uk and from the school office.

This policy applies to all staff, pupils, parents/cares, trustees and partner agencies we may work with now or in the future.

This policy also applies to those students who are educated off site. For example, those students accessing local further education college provision.

1. Mission Statement

Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life*.

We are a specialist school for young people aged 3 to 19 years with physical, sensory and medical needs, speech, language and communication disorders, autism, and a wide range of other complex needs often associated with emotional vulnerability. It is within this context that we have developed our Governor Visits Policy.

2. Purpose of Policy

The governing body has responsibility for the direction, policies and standards of the academy and is accountable for its conduct and performance. Visiting the academy is an excellent way to observe how it operates on a day-to-day basis but all governor visits should be focussed and relate to the priorities in the Academy Development Plan. Governors should report back their findings, thus helping the whole governing body and its committees to make better informed judgements about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the Academy Development Plan and informing strategic decision making.

The Chief Executive, who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school, with the Senior Leadership Group, will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and Academy Development Plan to be covered each term. The policy and protocol for academy visits is formulated in consultation with the staff.

3. Annual programme of visits and learning walks

The governing body will organise a programme of visits and learning walks with the help of the Chief Executive. These should be spread throughout the year, with the aim to achieve a minimum of one visit per term. In addition, new governors will make a general introductory visit of the school as part of their induction programme.

4. Purpose of visit

The focus of a visit and learning walk could be on any policy in place in the school, e.g., teaching and learning, assessment, behaviour, collective worship. It could also focus on particular areas, such as the management of the school's resources, the condition of the buildings, safeguarding, the work of an Academy Development Team, a particular year group or class.

5. Potential benefits

to governors:

- To recognise and celebrate success of pupils and staff
- To build an effective relationships with the staff and a better understanding of the context in which they work
- To get to know the students
- To recognise different teaching styles
- To monitor policies in action
- To inform decision making
- To find out what resources are needed and prioritise them

to teachers:

- To ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- To get to know governors
- To understand better the governors' roles and responsibilities
- To have an opportunity to reflect on practice through discussion
- To highlight the need for particular resources

What a visit is not about

- Making judgements on the quality of teaching or professional expertise of the teacher, this is the role of the Chief Executive, Head of School, Head of College and Head of Services
- Checking on progress of individual children
- Pursuing personal interests and concerns
- Monopolising school/teacher time

6. Protocols for visits

Governors should, with the guidance of the whole governing body and Chief Executive, identify an aspect of the school's work to focus upon. This will help to maximise the effectiveness of the governing body team.

When organising and conducting a visit governors will be courteous and considerate, respecting the professional roles of the Chief Executive and staff. Working to the annual schedule agreed with the head and staff, they will confirm in advance with the head teacher the date, timing and focus of each visit. This will include agreeing what will be observed, whom it would be useful to talk to and agreeing any protocols to be observed whilst in the school. If time permits they will discuss the proposed agenda with any staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation/ guidance.

At the end of each visit, the governor will discuss what they have observed with the teacher and or member of SLG and clarify any points they are uncertain about. Comments should be limited to the focus of the visit. Governors visiting cannot make personal judgements or promises on behalf of the

governing body. They will discuss their observations with the head teacher and Senior Leadership Group and agree how and when they will report to the governing body on the visit.

- **Teachers and support staff** will be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school.
- They will make practical suggestions on the focus for governors' visits to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors.

Questions will be invited from governors whilst being sensitive to issues of confidentiality.

7. Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact

Governors' visits will be an agenda item at the termly meeting of the governing body. At the final meeting of each academic year the Link Governor/Gov2Go will report the number of visits conducted and the areas of focus. The Governing Body will evaluate the extent to which visits have informed whole governing body understanding of the school's work. Staff governors will feedback from colleagues and describe the extent to which staff's understanding of the governing body's role has been enhanced.

The governing body can then consider:

- Are the visits achieving the potential benefits identified?
- What worked well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can we make our practice even better?

and make changes to the policy and protocol that may be required.

8. Evaluation of the Policy

This policy and associated procedures will be evaluated every year by the MLG and SLG in collaboration with the Governing Body (Curriculum & Pupils sub-committee) to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Circumstances may require more frequent modifications.

Date: March 2021