



ED0032 - Leadership and Governance



Introduction

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of oversight that we expect all Governors to follow when making visits to the school or desktop reviews.

This policy sets out the procedure which all Governors are expected to follow when visiting any of our schools and how they are expected to report back on that visit/ desktop review to the Governing Board.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that all Governors understand their role and purpose so school visits/ desktop reviews are a productive and enjoyable event for all involved.

Guidance and Scope

Governors are observers

Governing boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, Governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan (SIP).
- Observe how the school is meeting the Independent School Standards (ISS).
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice.
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of students and staff.

Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Will not manage the school the day-to-day operations of the school.

For those Governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make it clear about their purpose in doing so.

Visits programme and Oversight

All governors will carry out school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

- **Learning walks:** Where Governors will attend each school in person, with the relevant staff member to review the Independent School Standards (ISS) related to their role. During the visit, Governors will talk to a range of staff members and students.

The Proprietor (Chair of Governors)

- Carry out at least 1 learning walk in each school per academic year.

The Deputy Chair of Governors

- Carry out at least 1 learning walk in each school per academic year.

Safeguarding & Health and Safety Governors

Governors with the role of Safeguarding and Health & Safety will:

- Carry out 2 learning walks in each school per academic year (e.g. 1 learning walk in term 1 and 1 learning walk in term 3).

All other Governors

All other Governors will:

- Carry out 1 learning walk in each school per academic year.

Before a visit

Governors will:

- Notify the headteacher regarding visiting, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of school oversight.
- Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff and ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient. Generally, Governor visits are more productive when conducted during a school day.
- If required, send questions in advance to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared.
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

During a visit

Governors will:

- Always wear a visitor's badge.
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the headteacher for a specific purpose.
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them.
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a Governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so.
- Check with teachers before speaking to students.
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people.

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning unless they observe practice of concern or practice that contravenes safeguarding practice.
- Be involved with the day-to-day running of the school.
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the Chief Operating Officer or headteacher after the visit unless immediate safeguarding incident is happening.

After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable A, as appropriate. In completing the report, Governors will ensure to:

- Always use neutral language.
- Remain observational, and describe only what they see.
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role.

Once complete, Governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:

- The Proprietor.
- Chief Operating Officer.
- The Education Director.
- The Quality Assurance Officer for Education.
- The Headteacher.
- The Governance Board Meeting (Termly).

Recruitment of Governors (External)

Interview Panel:

Esland will ensure the interview panel comprises of the following:

- Chair of Governors
- Deputy Chair of Governors
- Safeguarding Governor

At least one person on the panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

Interviews:

It is essential that each member of the interview panel completes a set of interview notes and the most up to date interview questions should be used. All sets of notes should be signed by the interviewer and fully completed.

During the interview, the applicant must be asked a series of interview questions in line with current Safer Recruitment guidelines.

Appointment:

To appoint the candidate, the panel should:

- Get each member of the panel to independently score each candidate against every question asked
- Reach a consensus among the panel on the best candidate based on the evidence you have
- Make a recommendation to the full governing board/board of trustees

The full governing board/will then ratify the appointment during a board meeting.

Once the decision has been ratified:

- An offer of conditional appointment should be made, subject to any required checks

Safer Recruitment Checks:

A minimum of two references must be obtained, inclusive of the candidates most recent employer. Where the candidate has worked with children in previous roles, attempt should be made to obtain references from all care related roles.

An enhanced DBS check and childrens barred check will be completed for the successful candidate alongside Additional checks inclusive of Section 128 and Social Media checks will also be undertaken to assess a candidate's suitability for the role.

Appendix A - Example Template

Template report for a monitoring visit

Formal monitoring visits are where you discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: Planning the walk	
Name and role of Governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Independent School Standards (ISS) focus <i>(highlight the standards you focused on during your visit – standards which are not evident on physical walks to pick up on virtual).</i>	
Questions to ask Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.	

Part 2: The walk
Evidence you have seen which contributes to Standard X

General notes from discussions with students
General notes from discussions with staff
General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

What successes stood out and why?

Questions and challenges to follow up with the Headteacher/Proprietor at the next meeting