

SAET Director & Governor Visits Protocol

To be effective Directors need to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the trust. Directors acquire this knowledge in many different ways:

- Reports from the CEO, Headteachers and senior staff from schools.
- Internal /external reports.
- Test and examination results.
- Behaviour and attendance data.
- Progress data

The following acts to ensure a consistent standard / expectation when visiting schools for both Directors and school leaders.

First-hand knowledge can only be gained by Directors visiting schools. Regular planned visits give Directors an insight and understanding about the schools in the trust and help to strengthen the body's strategic role.

The following advice and information on Directors school visits is based on good practice. This paper is concerned with formal visits in which Directors act as representatives of the trust body which has a corporate responsibility for the overall conduct of schools.

Purpose of visits

- to develop Directors understanding of the trust / school's strengths and weaknesses;
- to support the trust / school's work;
- to contribute to the Directors monitoring role;
- to enable individual Directors to ask informed and challenging questions;
- to help Directors understand the teaching and learning process;
- to see policies in action;
- to demonstrate to staff and students that Directors are interested in what goes on in school;
- to give Directors an enhanced sense of identity with the trust / schools and the people who work in it.

Formal visits will have a clear focus, linked to priorities in the Trust Improvement Plan. Directors have limited time, therefore, time spent on visits should 'add value' both to the trust / school and to the effectiveness of the whole Directors Board.

Directors visit the school as lay people, not as inspectors, even where they have personal

professional expertise in the particular subject area. A visit will only ever provide a snapshot of what goes on. It may not always give a full and balanced picture of the real state of affairs. That is why it is always important that the information and impressions gained by individual Directors during a visit are checked and, if necessary, revised in consultation with the CEO.

Directors should use their visits as occasions on which to collect information to report back to the board on the progress of key priorities or initiatives in the trust / school development plan.

Visits will be arranged at mutually agreeable times. The clerk to the governor's will liaise with the CEO (PA) to fix times and dates of visits to ensure the availability of staff.

Written reports

Directors visit reports should be quite simple, giving a layperson's account of what was seen and learnt by the Director conducting the visit and whether there are questions for the board to consider.

Draft reports by Directors should be read first by the CEO and then **shared and minuted** at a board meeting.

Remember that ultimately all written reports, like all other documents for the board, can be available for public scrutiny. They should not name individuals but they will identify post holders by title. Reports should not make judgements but they may raise important strategic issues, which the board needs to consider.

Appendix 1

Director/Governor formal visit record

Name of Director / Governor	
Date and Time of visit	
Link with the School Improvement Plan (SIP) How does the visit relate to a priority in the School Improvement Plan?	
Director / Governor observations and comments E.g. How long did the visit last? What did you observe? What did you discuss? What did you learn? What would you like clarified?	

Follow up action Record any action agreed with regard to this visit.
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Copy this to the CEO office, then to be give to the LGB Clerk /SAET Board Clerk and visit to be shared / minuted at next appropriate SAET Board or LGB meeting.