



# Athena Learning Trust Trust-wide Governor Visit Policy

## **Review**

Reviewed on: 20 October 2023

Reviewed by: Board

Review Period: Annual



## **Purpose**

Through this policy, Athena Learning Trust aims to embed effective procedures concerning governor monitoring visits. Each governor is expected to make at least one visit during the academic year, demonstrating the governing board's role in the strategic management of the school by helping to evaluate and improve practice.

Governor visits inform understanding of the school's practices and procedures, allow opportunities to speak to pupils and teachers, enable the identification of resource needs, and allow governors to see the SIP in action.

For staff, governor visits allow staff the chance to find out more about governors, provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues or questions they wish to raise, and provide an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current practice.

Governors must:

- Respect school staff and pupils.
- Support the Principal.
- Acknowledge that they represent the full governing board.

By following the agreed principles and procedures, governor visits will be pleasant, purposeful, and will significantly contribute towards school improvement.

### **1. Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013
- DfE (2020) 'Governance handbook'
- DfE (2014) 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- [Governing Board Monitoring Plan](#)
- [Governor Visit Proforma](#)
- [Link Governor Template](#)

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

Governors will be responsible for:

- Making at least one visit per academic year.
- Understanding the needs of staff members through discussions with at least one staff member per academic year.
- Reporting their observations to the full governing board during a full governing board meeting.
- Familiarising themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Facilitating governor visits.
- Discussing completed visits with governors, prior to a report being made to the full governing board.

### **Preparing for a visit**

Governors will never visit the school unannounced – they will be expected to arrange visits at least one week prior to the date of the proposed visit with the Principal. Governors will remain flexible and understand that the school must make pupils' education the priority, and that this may sometimes lead to the rearranging of visits.

Before a visit, governors will:

- Agree a clear, purposeful focus for the visit.
- Consider how the area of focus will be identified and observed during the visit.
- Discuss the context of the activities to be observed.
- Agree their role within the activities.
- Refer to their Governing Board Monitoring Plan to ensure the visit's focus is strategic and in line with the school's priorities for improvement.
- Read the documentation relevant to the focus of the visit, e.g. the school's Behaviour Policy, and prepare relevant questions, where appropriate.

### **During a visit**

During a visit, governors will:

- Adhere to their agreed role at all times.
- Make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.
- Where visiting activities involve lesson observations, not ask questions, interrupt the teacher or distract pupils during the lesson.
- Spend time in a classroom only when they have provided a clear reason for doing so.
- Adhere to confidentiality agreements.
- Adhere to the agreed times and purpose.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the pupils and the wider school community.
- Avoid visiting classrooms where their own children are present.

During a visit, governors will not:

- Make judgements concerning teaching or other areas of school provision in any official capacity.



- Pursue personal agendas during visits.
- Check on individual children or monopolise the time of staff.

### **After a visit**

After a visit, governors will:

- Thank the staff, and pupils where appropriate, involved in the visiting activities.
- Share feedback and observations on the visit with the staff involved in the visiting activity at their convenience.
- Provide feedback regarding the visit to the full governing board.

After a visit, governors will not:

- Break confidentiality agreements.

## **5. Providing feedback**

The governor will email the staff member a copy of their visit report.

Regarding visit reports, Governors will adhere to the following framework:

- Present governors' observations
- Provide positive feedback
- Raise any issues
- Invite feedback from the staff member
- Thank staff for the opportunity

Via the report, both the governor and staff members will be clear as to what information will be shared with the Principal and full governing board.

The Governor Visit Proforma will be completed as soon as possible after the visit.

The Principal and governors will discuss the observations prior to the distribution of the proforma. A copy of the completed proforma will be provided to:

- The Principal
- The subject leader
- The relevant staff members
- The clerk to governors

A copy of the report will be circulated to all governors via the Head of Governance at the next appropriate committee or governing board meeting.

The governing board will ensure all board members have the opportunity to discuss and ask questions regarding the final report and the visit undertaken.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by Trustees.

When reviewing the success of the policy, the Board of Trustees will take the following into consideration:

- Has every governor conducted at least one visit during the academic year?
- Has every governor made links with their allocated subject or area of provision?
- Has every governor met with the staff members they are linked to?
- Are visits achieving the desired outcomes?
- What worked well?
- What did not work well?
- Have there been any unexpected benefits?
- How can practice be improved?

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all governors, staff members and relevant stakeholders.