Governor School Visits Policy and Guidance

All Endeavour Multi Academy Trust Schools

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Approved for operation within	All Endeavour Multi Academy Trust Schools
Version number	V2.0
Consulted on with recognised trade unions	N/A
Reviewed by	Trust Audit & Risk Committee
Recommended to Full Trust Board by	N/A
Date approved by the Trust Board	N/A
Risk Register Item Number	N/A
Next Review Date	Summer 2028
Review period	2 years
Policy status	Non-statutory
Location published	Internal
Owner	Executive Board
Lead	Wayne Simner

DOCUMENT HISTORY DATE	DOCUMENT VERSION	DOCUMENT HISTORY
03/07/ 2024	V1.0	New policy drafting
20/05/2026	V2.0	Scheduled Review

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1. Aims

Local governors should know the strengths and areas for development of their respective schools. This depends on governors reviewing and understanding the wide range of performance indicators presented to them by school leaders. Regular visits to schools will also enable governors to gain a deeper and more contextual understanding of the school setting.

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow when making visits to schools within Endeavour Multi-Academy Trust. Governors do not have an automatic right to enter our schools. When they do so, they are invited guests.

This policy sets out the procedures that all governors are expected to follow when visiting schools within the Trust and how they are expected to report back on that visit to the local governing board.

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

2. Guidance and scope

Focused visits (e.g. link governor visits)

Governors will take part in focused governor monitoring visits, which should be:

- For a specific purpose linked to the governor's role and responsibilities, such as safeguarding or curriculum
- In line with school development plan (SDP) priorities
- Pre-arranged with the headteacher

Informal visits (e.g. enrichment activities)

Governors will visit the school on an occasional basis as such visits enable governors to:

- Gain an understanding of the school culture
- Gain an understanding of what it is like to be a pupil in the school
- Meet informally with pupils, staff, leaders and parents/carers

Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish.

Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess or judge the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom

- Will not attempt to manage the school or interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school
- Will agree the purpose and structure of the visit with the headteacher and/or the relevant leader

Safeguarding and confidentiality

- Governors must adhere to the school's safeguarding, child protection and confidentiality policies at all times when undertaking visits
- Any safeguarding concern or disclosure made during a visit must be reported immediately in line with the school's safeguarding procedures
- Governors must treat all information they receive during visits as confidential and must not share it outside of the governing board, except where required as part of safeguarding or statutory duties

3. Visits programme

As mentioned above, there are 2 types of visits:

- **Focused visits**
- **Informal visits**

Governors will carry out school visits in line with the Trust's Local Governance Business Plan, which is reviewed annually. The plan is available on Governor Hub.

4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- Liaise with the headteacher and relevant leader(s) to schedule a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit
- Make an appointment with relevant leaders and/or members of staff to ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient; generally, visits are more productive when conducted during a school day
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands leaders and staff have on their time
- Clarify the purpose and structure of the visit in advance with the headteacher and/or relevant member of staff
- Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Ensure the Chair is aware of the visit
- Be aware of and follow the school's health and safety procedures, including signing in on arrival, wearing identification, and familiarising themselves with emergency procedures such as fire evacuation
- Governors will carry out visits with due regard to the Trust's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; they will interact with staff and pupils in a respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory manner at all times

5. During a visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits to minimise disruption for staff and pupils, and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent.

Governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the headteacher at the start of the visit, if they are available
- Always wear a visitor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit, which is available on Governor Hub.

- Avoid taking photographs and videos 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 pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff or pupils raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional, and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils
- Where a governor identifies a serious concern, they must not attempt to investigate the issue themselves. Concerns should be recorded and raised with the headteacher, chair of governors, or through the appropriate safeguarding or complaints procedures as soon as possible after the visit
- Not use personal devices to record, photograph or share information unless this has been explicitly agreed in advance by the headteacher

Governors will not:

- Judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner that would make staff feel that they are there to inspect
- Raise concerns in the moment; governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the headteacher or chair of governors after the visit
- Respond to individual complaints from parents or staff during visits

6. After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable using the template available on Governor hub. In completing the report, governors will:

- 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 relevant leader or staff member, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
- The headteacher, as a courtesy
- The chair of the governing board or the relevant committee, as agreed
- The report will then be uploaded to Governor Hub so that all governors can have access to it. Visit reports will be used to inform governing board discussions, support strategic oversight, and contribute to the monitoring of school development priorities.