

Trustee/Governor Visits Policy

Version 4

Status:	Statutory
Responsible Board/Committee/Individual:	Trust Board
Author:	CEO
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TRUSTEE/GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

RATIONALE

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust (the Trust) believes that an important aspect within the relationship of Governors and the school should be that of 'critical friend'. It follows, therefore, that liaison visits into school should be based on mutual trust and understanding, should be conducted in an objective and professional atmosphere. Such work will inform Trustees/Governors, be supportive to staff and move events forward for the benefit of all, in particular, the pupils/students.

(Appendix 1, Benefits of Trustee/Governor Visits)

It is important that Trustees, Governors and staff remember that the purpose of these visits is not to assess the quality of teaching provision, nor to pursue issues that relate to the day to day management of the school, other than as agreed with the CEO, Headteacher or members of the Leadership Group.

The term 'visit' for this policy includes:

- a meeting with an individual member of staff or group of staff
- an opportunity to see teachers and pupils/students at work in a lesson

Visits will always have an agreed focus which could be:

- linked to a priority or activity within the school development plan
- part of a Trustee/Governor link responsibility e.g. Health and Safety, School Council, SEND Disadvantaged students
- getting to know the school, particularly for a new Trustee/Governor as part of induction

AIMS

- to observe and learn so that Trustees/Governors can better understand and support the school
- to help build good working relationships between Trustees, Governors, staff, parents and pupils/students with an emphasis on mutual respect
- to familiarise themselves with day to day practices and the ethos of the school
- to support and encourage the staff
- to help them fulfil their legal obligations as "critical friends"

GUIDELINES

Before the visit

- the purpose of the visit should be agreed and approved by the CEO (for Trustees) or the Headteacher (for Governors) in the first instance
- the visits should be co-ordinated by the PA to the CEO or Headteacher and a log of visits shared with the CEO, Board, Headteacher and the Local Governing Board
- the Trustee/Governor will liaise with the relevant member of the leadership team in order to develop a programme (focus, role and timetable)

- the Headteacher will clarify procedures for the visit such as signing in, fire drills and confidentiality issues
- the relevant member of the Leadership Team will liaise with the Head of Department, if the visit is to a subject area

During the visit

The Trustee/Governor will:

- be met and accompanied by the appropriate senior/middle leader/member of staff and introduced to relevant staff
- keep to the agreed remit and, if in lessons, not make any comments on the teaching, the standard of work or class behaviour
- talk to the pupils/students and teacher about the work/visit if appropriate (Appendix 2 for prompts). Please remember teachers are working to timetable and may not have time for an in-depth discussion
- take an interest in the environment, including display

After the visit

The Trustee/Governor will:

- produce a formal record on the standard proforma (Appendix 3)
- ensure a copy is distributed to the Headteacher, who will then distribute it to the Chair of Governors and the CEO. The Headteacher will ensure all relevant parties receive a copy of the visit notes
- report any issues/concerns as soon as possible to the Headteacher

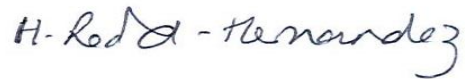
Monitoring and evaluation

The appropriate Committee will review the visits report back to the Local Governing Board and Trust Board. The review will consider:

- are we doing what we set out to do?
- are our visits achieving the potential benefits identified in the policy?
- have I learned more about the school?
- are we better informed to support decision making?
- do the staff feel supported and valued?
- have I helped the Trust Board/Local Governing Board fulfil its duties?
- have there been any unexpected benefits?
- how can we make the policy and practice even better?
- the impact of the school's development plan on learning and pupil/student progress
- could I articulate to an Ofsted Inspector how the visits are helping the leadership team and staff to achieve the school's objectives?

Policy Agreed: July 2024 (Version 4)

Signed CEO of BFLPT – Helen Redford-Hernandez:

Handwritten signature of H. Redford-Hernandez in black ink.

Date: July 2024

Signed – Chair of BFLPT – Pippa Dodgshon

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Date: July 2024

Policy to be reviewed: July 2025

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WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TRUSTEE/GOVERNORS VISITS?

For Trustees/Governors	For Staff
To establish and develop effective relationships with the staff	To get to know and build positive relationships with Trustees/Governors
To have a greater understanding of pupils'/students' needs	
To recognise and celebrate success	To feel valued
To monitor the implementation of the school development plan	To appreciate and value the role and responsibilities of all Trustees/Governors
To increase first-hand knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions	
To understand the environment in which staff work and teachers teach	To ensure Trustees/Governors understand the reality of the classroom and the school
To see policies and schemes of work in practice	
To find out what resources are used, what resources are needed and prioritise them	To highlight the need for further resources (but not lobby Trustees/Governors directly)
To show support and encouragement to staff and pupils/students	
To demonstrate that the Trust/Local Governing Board is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process	
To develop individual Trustees'/Governors' roles in terms of their specific responsibilities e.g. Health and Safety, School Council, SEND	To share an understanding of the specific area
To monitor that all staff understand their accountability and that children's welfare and progress is at the heart of all Trust provision	
To increase understanding of evidence-based practice	

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

You may like to ask pupils/students something like:

- please explain what you are learning
- what do you enjoy about this subject?
- what have you done in this subject which you are proud of?
- how do you know when you have done a good piece of work?
- how do you know how well you are doing?
- what would help you to learn more?

You may ask the teacher:

- what is it you enjoy about teaching?
- have you got any special work from the pupils/students you would like me to see?
- what will you be doing next with the pupils/students?

and

- any questions relating to the agreed focus
- how are you managing to develop the new curriculum?
- what are the challenges/
- how are you using evidence-based practice in your teaching to support learning?

**BRIGHTER FUTURES LEARNING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
TRUSTEE/GOVERNOR VISITS 2024-25**

School Visited:**Date:****Activity:** *tick any that apply*

- Discussion with School Leader(s)
- Walk round school and classrooms
- Discussions with pupils – formal
- Discussions with pupils – during walk round
- Discussions with other staff
- Observation of event – assembly/performance/rehearsal
- Look at pupils' work
- Look at any other documentation/records
- Discussion with LGB member(s)
- Discussion with any Trust advisers on site
- Other (*please specify*)

Comments relating to the impact or effectiveness of the Trust:

(Please feel free to delete any that are not relevant to your visit, and make any brief comments under any that are)

- Leadership support – may include Director of School Improvement Maria Rock/central team: finance, IT, site management or HR/Helen or Garath's visits in support of issues/training/Headteacher board meetings/support with Ofsted preparation and process

- Curriculum/delivery support – may include subject director involvement (maths/maths SATs tutor Shirley Olijnyk/ reading Hannah D' Rozario)/ Sarah Brewster Phonics/PKC impact/subject networks/sharing the development of resources with other schools in the Trust

- Evidence of impact of consultant visits – for example a focus on pupil premium, or subject delivery

- Evidence of impact on pupil well-being, personal development or behaviour – may include observations of pupils’ demeanour/report on how Character First is working/support with attendance/SEND/support from Lara Allison Trust Education Welfare officer
- Evidence of impact on staff well-being – may be feedback relating to work load/professional optimism. Specific interest in how the Trust policy for aggression against staff is being used by the school/LGB
- Any other comments

Follow Up

Name of Trustee:

Date:

TRUSTEE/GOVERNOR ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS

Trustees/Governors are established as a partnership with “the school”, which includes the leadership team, teachers, parents, pupils/students and other stakeholders.

Role:

Clear responsibility for standards which includes:

- Staffing
- Curriculum
- Budget Setting and Spending
- Target Setting

Governors also support the Trust with policy making and monitoring progress

But ...

Governance responsibilities are at policy level and **not** in the day to day running of the school.

SLT are the educational experts with their experience, training and skills.

A good relationship/partnership is crucial. Trustees and Governors act as “critical friends” to monitor, support and challenge, where necessary. Trustees also have a duty to ensure Local Governing Boards have the skills to be effective in supporting schools to improve.

Challenges should be through insightful questioning and a deep understanding of school improvement.

Trustees and Governors can ask for additional information to support them in their work, but they must be mindful of teachers’ and leaders’ workloads.

In the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust, everyone is striving for the same:

- High expectations
- High standards
- Pride in the school and pupils’/students’ achievements.