



Governor Visits Protocol

October 2019

SALT Vision Statement:

“Be Extraordinary”

Mission Statement:

We believe that young people achieve their fullest potential when they have a vision of everything their lives could become. The Bible (John 10:10) quotes Jesus as saying, “I have come that they may have life and may have it in all its fullness”. As academies, we commit ourselves to inspiring our students, and equipping them with the resilience and determination to unlock their unique gifts and realise their highest aspirations. We aim to achieve this through following distinctively Christian principles, and focusing on four key areas, service, achievement, leadership and teamwork.

Reviewed and approved by Sentamu Academy Learning Trust Board of Directors on 15 October 2019

Next review due October 2022

Sentamu Academy Learning Trust

Protocol for Governor Visits to SALT Academies

“Individual Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the academy whenever they wish. However, they need to be able to visit from time to time in order to develop their understanding of the academy. These visits enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the academy. Governors should arrange their visits with the Clerk, who will report this to the Principal who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the academy. The Local Governing Committee should plan visits to cover a wide range of academy work and each visit should have a clear purpose. Visits by Governors can be useful and informative. They do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Principal”. A Guide to the Law for School Governors 2010

Staff and Governors need to work in partnership as both are accountable and as they work towards the same goal. To do this, Governors need to see the academy in operation. The following guidelines are necessary to ensure everybody knows what is expected of them and why. The protocol applies to formal visits by Governors to the academy; these are identified in the Governors’ Monitoring Schedule. They do not apply when Governors help in the academy; at these times they are in the academy in their capacity as volunteer helpers and not as Academy Governors.

Guidelines

1. All visits by Governors to the academy (dates, times and purpose) should be arranged in advance and confirmed with the Clerk & Principal; this will help to avoid particularly busy or stressful times;
2. The Principal will communicate the dates, times and purpose of visits by Governors to all staff via staff briefing;
3. Whenever a Governor is attending a meeting on behalf of the Local Governing Committee they should introduce themselves to the person leading the meeting or be introduced by another member of staff;
4. Classroom visits can help Governors to understand aspects of the curriculum, school organisation or government strategies. However, it is not part of their role to judge the quality of teaching and learning in an individual class. Governors should not make notes when visiting classrooms;
5. Governors need to observe confidentiality and not discuss anything they have seen with anybody other than the Principal and, if appropriate, the Local Governing Committee;
6. Should a Governor have concerns about anything they have seen during a visit, they should discuss them as soon as possible with the Principal. These could, for example, be health and safety issues.

They can then be addressed immediately;

7. Governors should supply a brief written report of their visit to the Local Governing Committee on the appropriate form (see Appendix A). No child should be named in an observation report. Before being submitted to the Local Governing Committee a copy of the report should be shown to the staff member who was present at the meeting and also shared with the Clerk. The report will then be shared with the Local Governing Committee. This means there is a formal record. It avoids situations where reports could compromise other work of the Local Governing Committee.

Further Notes for Governors

Why are you visiting?

- To get to know your school better;
- To build up relationships with staff and pupils;
- To recognise and celebrate success;
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking;
- To learn about a particular area such as the building or an aspect of curriculum;
- To contribute more effectively to the Local Governing Committee's monitoring role;
- To support the work of the academy through examination of its current practice;
- To show the pupils and the staff at the school that you are interested.

Before making a visit Governors will:

- Contact the Clerk & Principal and agree a date, time and focus for the visit;
- Clarify the etiquette, courtesies and expectations for the visit;
- Plan which classes will be visited (if that is part of the visit focus);
- Draw up a timetable for the visit with the Clerk & Principal;
- The visit contact at the academy will ensure that all staff affected are aware of the visit and the expectations on them.

What shouldn't you do?

- Go in like an Inspector;
- Interfere with the organisation of the class;
- Try to talk to teachers or pupils while teaching is going on;
- Make promises to staff on behalf of the Local Governing Committee;
- Observe in the same class as your child.

What should you do?

- Prepare for your visit by reading background documents relevant to the purpose of your visit;
- Remember you are there to learn and observe, not judge;
- Make a point of listening rather than talking;
- In a classroom, wait to be given the opportunity by the teacher if you want to ask him/her any

questions;

- Ask the teacher if it's okay if you want to talk to pupils;
- Put people at ease by being positive about what you see;
- Thank staff for the opportunity to see them at work;
- Respect staff privacy – only spend time in the Staff Room if you are invited;
- Evaluate your visit as a record of your Governor monitoring.

After the visit the Governor will:

- Remember to thank the teachers and students;
- Meet with the Principal to give a verbal report, and to raise any issues that arose;
- Complete the Governor Visit Proforma, reporting on the focus. The completed form should be given to the Clerk and staff member and then, after any possible agreed alterations, the form will be circulated to the Local Governing Committee;
- Governors must report without giving opinions.

Informal Visits

Visits may also take place in an informal capacity. It is vital that everyone is clear about the capacity in which they are visiting and not to confuse the role.

- Chair making a regular visit to the Principal;
- Volunteering at academy events/trips/in the class;
- Obtaining information from the office relating to meetings;
- Attending academy performances/parent evenings;
- As a parent to speak to a teacher in relation to your own child.

ANNEXE - Classroom Visits – What to look for and questions to ask

Aims:

- To know and understand the level of enjoyment students have for a subject;
- Understand what students like best/least in the academy;
- Know the standards of achievement in a subject area;
- Review the progress made in line with current school improvement priorities,
- Gather the views of staff, pupils and parents,
- Know what steps are being taken to improve standards;
- Know how well strategic policies approved by governors are working;
- To report main findings back to the Local Governing Committee.

Observations to make when visiting a classroom:

- Relationship between all staff in the classroom and students;
- Relationship between students;
- Variety of teaching styles;
- Availability and role of support staff;
- Behaviour and attitude of students – are they attentive, motivated, listening, questioning, responding;
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and students;
- How students are grouped;
- How different abilities are catered for;
- Student's work;
- Displays;
- Ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident (are expectations high, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent);
- Use of space and working conditions;
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources;
- Health and safety regulations practiced i.e. fire exits kept clear.

Typical Questions to ask students:

- Tell me about what you are learning today;
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored);
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored);
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored);
- Do you know how you can improve/what your next target is in (select curriculum area being monitored).

Typical Questions to ask curriculum leaders:

- What is your vision for the subject? Do you have a set of minimum expectations?
- What were the last Ofsted findings about the subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the academy in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?

- What resources does the academy have for the subject and how are these organised? Are there any additional resource needs?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?

APPENDIX A

SLT/Governor Link Meeting Record

| | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| Code/title: | | Date: | |
| Governor: | | SLT member: | |

| DISCUSSION | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Issues discussed and Outcomes | Actions agreed | SIDP code |
| | | |

Evidence of distinctively Christian ethos and values:

