The Chalfonts Community College

Success is an Attitude!

Governor School Visits Policy

Last Reviewed on:	September 2026
New Review due:	September 2028

Contents

1. Aims....2
2. Guidance and scope....2
3. Visits programme....2
4. Before a visit....3
5. During a visit....3
6. After a visit....4
Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit....6
Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk....10
History....14

1. Aims

This policy aims to set out the framework for governor visits to the school

This policy sets out the procedure which all governors are encouraged to follow and how they can report back on that visit to the 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

This policy takes account of best practice and guidance from the Academy Trust Governance guide and the NGA Code of Conduct

2.1 Governors are observers

Boards must know their schools in order to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school improvement plan
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

2.2 Governors are not inspectors

Governors:

- Will not assess the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom
- Will not manage the school or manage the day-to-day operations of the school

For those governors who wish to spend time in a classroom, they will make it clear about their purpose in doing so.

3. Visits programme

Governors will carry out regular school visits in order to meet the board's statutory obligation to monitor the school's effectiveness.

There are 2 types of visits:

Formal monitoring visits, where governors discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member

Learning walks, where governors will go around the school with the relevant staff member to get a feel for a particular area and are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils

3.1 Governors for health and safety, special educational needs, and safeguarding

These governors should attend:

- A termly 1:1 monitoring visits with corresponding staff leads
- Ad hoc meetings as required or requested on issues specific to their areas of responsibility

3.2 Subject link governors

Subject link governors should attend:

- A monitoring visit with the subject lead in September/February/May to include a learning walk

3.3 All governors

All governors should try to carry out at least 1 learning walk each term

4. Before a visit

Governors will:

- **Notify the Principal and the chair** before scheduling a visit, even if the Principal will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of courtesy
- **Schedule an appointment with relevant members of staff** in order to ensure visits are scheduled for times that are mutually convenient.
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time
- **Clarify the purpose of the visit in advance** with the chair, the Principal and/or relevant member of staff ahead of the visit
- **Send questions in advance** to the staff member so everyone can feel properly prepared
- **Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures**

5. During a visit

In order 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 Principal/relevant member of staff ahead of the visit

- Always wear a governor's lanyard and ID badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit. Photographs and videos are to be avoided unless specifically agreed with the Principal 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 raise with the relevant people
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, bearing in mind the standards of dress set for teachers and pupils

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, 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 than would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the chair of governors or Principal after the visit

6. After a visit

Governors should complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable [using the form attached as Appendix A (monitoring visit) or Appendix B (learning walk)], as appropriate. In completing the report, governors will ensure that they:

- Use neutral language at all times
- 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:

- A more experienced governor for feedback - if they've been in place for less than 6 months
- The relevant staff member, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
- The chair of the governing board and/or the relevant committee, as agreed, with a copy to the Principal

#

Appendix 1: Template report for a monitoring visit

Use formal monitoring visits to discuss the progress of the school in a particular area with the relevant staff member. Use this form as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: plan the visit	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.	E.g To discuss the school's new strategy to improve attainment of Key Stage (KS) 3 boys.
Relevant school objective or priority This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.	

Questions to ask Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit. Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.	What is the process for supporting pupils who need extra help? Have teachers had any training to help them put this into practice? Visit The Key's governors' question bank for questions specific to the purpose of your visit.

Part 2: in the meeting
What is the school doing within this area of focus? *Tips:* · *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who' and 'where'* · *Do not be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with* · *Remember you are **not** there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them – you remain an observer* · *When writing the report, use neutral language and do not name individual teachers and pupils*

How do you know the school's actions are having an impact?

Remember:

- *Include specific evidence that demonstrates the positive impact the school is having in this area*
- *Where a positive impact has not been made yet, note down why that is and what steps are being taken to make progress*
- *Add any further evidence you would like to see to help you make a better assessment of the impact*

What successes stood out and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Principal or chair of governors

Appendix 2: Template report for a learning walk

This is used when a learning walk takes place. This is where you will go around the school/subject area with the relevant staff member to get a first hand experience and develop governor understanding for a specific area. You are likely to talk to a range of staff members and pupils. Use this as a reminder of what to look for and what to ask.

Part 1: plan the walk	
Name and role of governor(s)	
Name and role of staff member(s)	
Date and time of visit	
Agreed focus *Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that have not been agreed with the member of staff.*	
Relevant school objective or priority *This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.*	

Questions to ask *Note specific questions you want to ask based on the SIP, or points to follow up on from a previous visit.* *Share these questions with the staff member you are visiting in advance, so they can prepare.*	Ask staff: what do you do if you think a student needs further support? Ask pupils: if you need help with something, what do you do? Visit The Key's governors' question bank for questions specific to the purpose of your visit.

Part 2: on the walk
General notes from discussions with staff *Tips:* · *Ask open questions beginning with 'what', 'how', 'when', 'how often', 'why', 'who', 'where' and 'can you show me…'* · *Do not be afraid to clarify any terms or acronyms you're not familiar with* · *Remember you are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them* · *When writing the report, use neutral language and don't name individual teachers*

General notes from discussions with pupils

Remember:

- *Do not ask them for pupils' views on a specific teacher*
- *Do not record pupils' names*

General notes on the school environment and overall atmosphere

Note:

- *Whether the governors' vision of the school is replicated on the ground*
- *Any issues with the school site you see e.g. broken equipment or lack of resources*

What successes stood out on the learning walk and why?

Questions and clarifications to follow up with the Principal or chair of governors

History

Date	Issue	Status	Comments
November 2021	1	New	
January 2023	2	Update	Date Change
September 2024	3	Update	Date Change
September 2025	4	Update	Date Change / New Format
September 2026	5	Update	Date Change