

Barnburgh Primary Academy



GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Barnburgh Academy Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its Academy's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the Academy and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their own Academy's performance.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the Academy, and will test that assumption during a Academy inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their Academy is to visit during the day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the Academy and the classrooms.

If Academy and classroom visits are done well, they will add immeasurably to Governors' understanding of their Academy, its staff and its pupils.

This model policy has drawn on other Academics' policies and on recommendations from Headteachers and Governors. It also includes a Governors' Note of Visit report which will help provide discussion on the issues raised and also provide a formal record for Ofsted of the Governors' structured involvement in the work and life of the Academy. It should not, however, form part of any other evidence bases e.g., a member of staff's performance management.

AIMS

By visiting the Academy and becoming better informed Governors will be:

- more aware of the needs of the Academy
- more able to approach staff to meet those needs.
- well placed to bring to the Local Authority any matters of concern.
- in a good position to support the Academy in its community
- learn so that they can increase the Governing Body's first-hand knowledge base, informing strategic decision making.
- keep under review the way in which the Academy is operating.
- experience the impact and progress of the implementation of the Academy improvement plan and Academy policies.
- demonstrate to staff that the Governing Body takes its responsibilities very seriously.
- establish and develop good professional relationships with staff, especially those that are linked with your individual area of responsibility, e.g. literacy, numeracy, Special Needs or Health and Safety.
- see in context some of the monitoring systems employed by the Academy.

- demonstrate that the Governing Body is contributing to the Academy's self-evaluation process.
- show support and encouragement to staff and children.

TYPES OF VISIT

LINK GOVERNOR VISITS (LGV)

Where a governor will visit a member of staff to carry out a monitoring/challenge visit based on their area of responsibility.

ACADEMY EVENT VISIT (AEV)

Where governors are invited and encouraged to attend whole Academy events, such as celebration assemblies, concerts, Express events etc.

ACADEMY ACTION VISIT (AAV)

Where governors carry out an action to support the Academy usually in exceptional circumstances and usually reactive rather than planned.

LINK GOVERNOR VISIT (LGV)

An LGV supports our Governing Body to oversee the direction and policies of the Academy, monitor its standards and hold the Academy accountable for its conduct and performance. An LGV will be organised and structured by individual governors via email with key staff members. The headteacher (Mrs Potts) and governor responsible for governor visits (Neil Merriman) will be cc'd into all correspondence. All organised visits will be recorded on the whole Academy calendar by the key staff member involved in the visit.

Why an LGV should be undertaken:

An LGV should be undertaken as part of the strategic programme to:

- Improve Governor knowledge of the Academy, its staff, needs, priorities, strengths and areas for development
- Monitor and assess the priorities as outlined in the Academy improvement plan
- Help the Governing Body fulfil its statutory duties.
- Acquire knowledge to enable the Governing Body to challenge as appropriate.
- Identify governor training.

A critical friend who will:

- Monitor and evaluate plans, budgets, standards of education and achievement.

A way to hold the Academy to account by:

- Providing a clear objective for the visit linked to Academy improvement.

- Specific questions relating to the objective.
- Providing a summary of the visit, from which all governors are encouraged to question and challenge.
- Identifying further actions which will contribute to the cycle of monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

How an LGV should be undertaken:

1. At Barnburgh Primary Academy governors are linked to specific responsibility areas, including statutory responsibilities, in response to their annual skills audit. This will require all individual governors to visit the Academy throughout the year, to monitor, support, evaluate and report the effectiveness of their responsibility areas.
2. LGVs will be recorded on the whole Academy calendar in line with Academy improvement priorities, Local Authority agenda items and the Academy monitoring calendar.
3. An LGV can include a meeting with a member of staff, a meeting with pupils, an observation of classroom practice, a learning walk, a site walk, looking in books etc. Activities will be agreed prior to the visit.
4. Prior to an LGV, the governor with responsibility, is required to email the relevant staff member confirming dates, times, visit objectives and key questions.
5. On the day of the visit, the governor is required to sign in using the electronic monitoring system at Reception using their lanyard prior to meeting with the staff member.
6. During the LGV, the governor should monitor, support and evaluate against the objectives of the meeting. This is achieved by asking the previously agreed questions, noting the responses, seeking clarity and where appropriate drilling down further.
7. Within 2 working days the governor should email the member of staff, to thank them for their time and assistance during the meeting.
8. Following the meeting the governor has 5 working days to complete the Note of Visit form (APPENDIX 1) and email it to the governor responsible for governor visits, the chair/Co-Chairs of governors and the headteacher.
9. The chair/Co-Chairs of governors and headteacher will proof read the Note of Visit and then give permission to the governor responsible for governor visits to upload electronically in the Academy Teams Files.
10. The Note of Visit will be added to the Barnburgh Schedule and Governance Information spreadsheet held centrally by Leger Education Trust.
11. The Academy administration team and/or the clerk assigned to the Academy will ensure the Note of Visit is entered on to the agenda for the next AGB meeting.

ACADEMY EVENT VISIT (AEV)

An AEV is where governors are invited and encouraged to attend whole Academy events such as celebration assemblies, concerts, Express Events etc.

Why an AEV should be undertaken

A SEV should be undertaken to:

- Demonstrate support for the Academy
- Raise the profile of governors with all stakeholders
- Gain a better understanding of the life of the Academy

How an AEV should be undertaken:

1. Most Academy events will be recorded on the whole Academy calendar for Governors to invite themselves to.
2. On occasions, where an event takes place that is not on the calendar, Governors will be invited verbally or via email.
3. On the day of the visit, the governor is required to sign in using the electronic monitoring system at Reception using their lanyard prior to meeting with the staff member.
4. Following the meeting the governor has 5 working days to complete the Note of Visit form (APPENDIX 1) and email it to the governor responsible for governor visits, the chair/Co-Chairs of governors and the headteacher.
5. The chair/Co-Chairs of governors and headteacher will proof read the Note of Visit and then give permission to the governor responsible for governor visits to upload electronically in the Academy Teams Files.
6. The Note of Visit will be added to the Barnburgh Schedule and Governance Information spreadsheet held centrally by Leger Education Trust.
7. The Academy administration team and/or the clerk assigned to the Academy will ensure the Note of Visit is entered on to the agenda for the next AGB meeting.

ACADEMY ACTION VISIT

An AAV is where governors respond to an exceptional incident. This will usually not be planned.

Why an AAV might be undertaken

A SAV might be undertaken to:

- Demonstrate support for the Academy in an adverse situation
- Raise the profile of governors with all stakeholders
- Gain a better understanding of the life of the Academy

How an AAV should be undertaken:

1. Most AAVs will take place in response to an emergency situation.
2. On the day of the AAV Governors must sign in at Reception
3. Following the AAV governors have 5 working days to complete the Note of Visit form (APPENDIX 1) and email it to the governor responsible for governor visits (Neil Merriman), the chair of governors (Janine Reid) and the headteacher (Jo Potts).
4. The chair of governors and headteacher will proof read the Note of Visit and then give permission to the governor responsible for governor visits (Neil Merriman) to distribute and file the Note of Visit.

WHAT ARE GOVERNORS' VISITS NOT ABOUT?

The main point to emphasise is that Governors' visits are not a form of inspection in terms of making judgements about the professional expertise of members of staff, especially with regard to the quality of teaching.

A Governor's visit is also not about:

- Checking on the progress of your own or known children
- Monopolising staff time
- Arriving with inflexible or pre-conceived ideas
- Pursuing personal agendas or issues.

APPENDIX 1 – EXAMPLE OF ISSUED NOTE OF VIST FORM

NAME:	GOVERNOR RESPONSIBILITY LINKED TO THIS VISIT:	DATE:	TIME:
WHAT TYPE OF VISIT ARE YOU MAKING?	LGV	AEV	AAV
WHICH AREA OF ACADEMY OR STAFF MEMBER ARE YOU VISITING?			
CONTEXT FOR THE VISIT:			
PREPARATION FOR MEETING including questions you may want to ask:			
SUMMARY OF THE VISIT including strengths and areas for development:			
IS A FOLLOW-UP VISIT REQUIRED? Explain your response and include any dates where appropriate.			
SIGNED:			

APPENDIX 2 – EXAMPLE NOTE OF VISIT COMPLETED FORM

NAME: Neil Merriman	GOVERNOR RESPONSIBILITY LINKED TO THIS VISIT: Health & safety	DATE: 15.01.21	TIME: 05:30
WHAT TYPE OF VISIT ARE YOU MAKING?	LGV	AEV	AAV
WHICH AREA OF ACADEMY OR STAFF MEMBER ARE YOU VISITING?			
Whole Academy site check and risk assessment with George Johnson (site supervisor) and remotely with Jo Potts (headteacher)			
CONTEXT FOR THE VISIT:			
To carry out a risk assessment after heavy snow fall on today (Thursday 14 th January). The outcome of the assessment will determine if the Academy is safe to open for children and teachers			
PREPARATION FOR VISIT including questions you may want to ask:			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the access roads and paths to Barnburgh village passable and safe? 2. Is the immediate access outside of the Academy safe including staff car park? 3. Can paths be cleared and (in time) for opening to ensure a safe entry into the building for all? 4. Is the Academy safe to open from a central heating perspective and incoming supplies needed? 			
SUMMARY OF THE VISIT including strengths and areas for development:			
<p>I completed a drive around the village to ensure all routes were passable by car/bus and foot and established that all routes were passable. I met Mr Johnson at the Academy and immediately video called Mrs Potts and together carried out a Academy site walk to assess the feasibility of all paths been cleared of snow in time and safely to ensure the Academy could open. With cleaning staff already inside, the kitchen staff en-route after an incoming phone call to Mr Johnson and the Academy toasty warm, a confident and mutual decision was made to open the Academy</p> <p>The impact from this visit meant that the Academy could open and allowed the children of the critical key workers to attend, meaning their parents could still go to work and add to their already huge contribution to this pandemic.</p> <p>We haven't had bad snow for several years in the village now and the visit underlined the importance of processes and due diligence needed when it comes to the risk assessment and safety of the staff and children</p>			
IS A FOLLOW-UP VISIT REQUIRED? Explain your response and include any dates where appropriate.			
This visit was made in response to exceptional weather conditions. It does not require a follow up visit. However, a repeat visit of this type may be required if we experience similar weather conditions in the future.			
SIGNED: <i>N. Merriman</i>			

