

**MEMBER/TRUSTEE/GOVERNOR VISITS POLICY**  
**CO3**

<b>Key Manager</b>	Executive Administrator
<b>Ratified by BT</b>	Winter 2018
<b>Review Dates:</b>	Winter 2019
<b>Location of Policy:</b>	Trust wide
<b>Access to Policy:</b>	Open
<b>Policy Context:</b>	This Policy applies to all staff of the Trust and to those others offered access to such resources.

Revision History

<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sections Affected</b>	<b>Revised By</b>	<b>Approved By</b>
11/10/2018	Annual review	Complete re-write of the Policy	Executive Administrator	
Winter 2019				

**GOVERNORS VISITS**

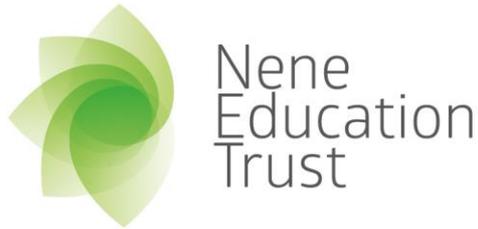
RATIONALE

Every Governing Board has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Local Governing Board are also held to account for their own school's performance. The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work. The Governing Board has appointed link governors to facilitate the liaison between the Governing Board and specific subject/curriculum areas or aspect of the work of the school.

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The role of a link governor is a source of support to the school and a source of information for the Governing Body. An integral part of the link governor role is to view lessons in particular subject/curriculum areas and to learn about the general running of the school. It is not an inspection but a fact finding and observational opportunity.

The policy includes a sample Governors' Visits report form which will help guide 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 school. It should not, however, form part of any other evidence base e.g. a member of staff's performance management.

### PROTOCOLS

All visits to be by prior arrangement with the Principal who will arrange the visit with the staff concerned. The visit to be arranged in line with the agreed cycle of reporting and also notify the chair. Written feedback, to be given to the member of staff and the Principal following the visit.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring this policy meets the needs of their school and is regularly reviewed and monitored for its effectiveness. The Principal is responsible for ensuring all staff, students and parents are aware of the policy and that the policy is fully implemented.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

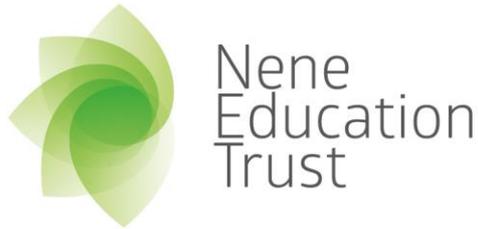
The Trust Central Team will carry out an annual review of this policy. The review will consider: Are Governors doing what they set out to do?; Are visits achieving the potential benefits identified in the policy?; Are Governors better-informed and enable to make sensible decisions?; Have Governors developed a further method of direct communication with staff?; Do the staff feel affirmed and valued?; Have there been any unexpected benefits?; How can the policy and be improved?

### TIME OFF WORK TO CARRY OUT GOVERNORS VISITS

Some governors find it difficult to take time off work in order to visit their school. Under employment law, employees are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to

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carry out their duties as a governor. There needs to be agreement between the employee and employer as to what 'reasonable time off' means in practice. It will be necessary to consider the amount of time needed to carry out the duties; the effects of an employee's absence on the employer's business; and whether time off is given to the employee for other activities. An employer is not obliged to give time off with pay.

Some governors find it difficult to get time off work during the school day: governing bodies need to be sensitive to this and ensure, as far as possible, that all governors benefit from the experiences of those who are able to get into school during the working day.

**Governor visits include:**

- Annual departmental visits by linked governors. These may or may not include time in a classroom.
- Group or Committee visits to learn about particular aspects of the school and/or the curriculum. Again, these may include time in classrooms.
- Ad hoc meetings with staff to discuss particular issues

**Other ways of getting to know school can include:**

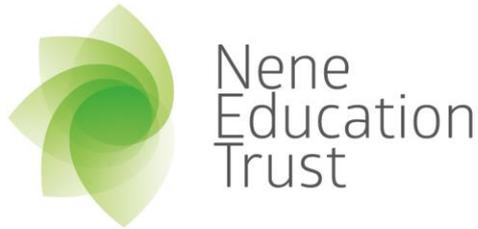
- Attending school assemblies
- Attending parents' meetings and open evenings
- Talking to students informally whenever opportunities arise
- Attending staff meetings and INSET days.
- Helping with careers activities
- Helping with learning support
- Attending extra-curricular concerts, drama productions, exhibitions and sporting events

**What visits are not**

Governors' visits are not a form of formal inspection of the school or classroom in any way. Governors are not to make judgements about the professional expertise of teachers or any other school staff as this is covered by the performance management process and statutory inspections. Nor are visits an opportunity for staff to bypass the normal channels of internal communication.

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Therefore governors should not:

- make judgements about the quality of teaching
- check on the progress of their own children or others known to them
- pursue personal agendas
- monopolise teachers' or leaders' time
- arrive in the school or a classroom with inflexible, pre conceived ideas
- become involved in matters that should be referred by the individual to their line manager

### **Some other things to look out for while in school**

- Are there clear signs of welcome?
- Is recent students' work on show?
- Are you encouraged to see all parts of the school?
- Is behaviour orderly at break times and when moving between classes?
- Are you encouraged to see examples of pupils' work and told about the progress of the class?
- Do all games and sports sessions include all the pupils in the class?
- Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and dance sessions?
- Are all pupils equally involved in all the activities, including those with special needs?
- How well do pupils get on together in class and around the school?
- What other impressions have you formed?

### **Preparing for a visit**

- Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. What are the relevant parts of the Academy Development Plan that relate to my visit? What are the relevant school Policies? What am I looking to understand as part of my delegated named governor role? How does this determine the activities I am interested in?
- Discuss the purpose of the visit and an agenda with the Principal well in advance. Make sure that the date chosen is suitable.

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- Time permitting; discuss the proposed agenda with the staff involved. If appropriate, consider how do they want governors to integrate into the lesson
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. The teacher may be able to guide you on this.
- Discuss with the Principal if any supporting information is available – Ofsted report, improvement plan, scheme of work.

### **Addressing Concerns**

If there is any aspect of the visit that is worrying, you should raise it with the Head of Department/Curriculum area or Principal first. If not satisfied with the response, it should be shared with the Chair of Governors.

## **TRUSTEE AND MEMBERS VISITS**

### **RATIONALE**

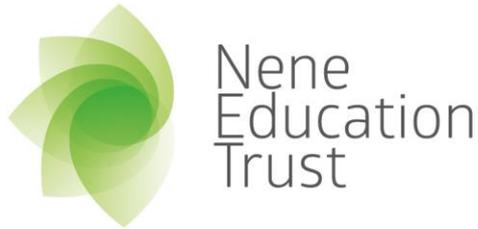
The local governing body of each school will know their school in considerable detail, as outlined in the Governors visits procedure above.

However, it is important that **Trustees and Members** also know and understand the strengths and weaknesses of each school in the MAT and how this affects the overall success of the Trust. Trustees will receive considerable information about for example, finance, staffing issues, premises, pupils' achievement and attendance, Health and Safety and Safeguarding through reports to the Board via the Trust committees and Local Governing Boards.

Trustees can also enjoy gaining important first-hand knowledge through making their own visits to the schools. Therefore it is expected that each Trustee and Member will make at least an annual visit to each school in the Trust. These visits can be informal or formal. For example, key ways of enjoying informal visits would be through attending school performances and assemblies, special interest days and weeks such as an Art or Science Week, sports days and parent forums. Even on some occasions joining in the fun and acting as judges for various competitions.

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Usually, the more formal curriculum visits, discussions with staff, observations of how subjects are taught, monitoring progress against action plans and specific areas such as Safeguarding and Health and Safety will be carried out by the local governing body with the Principal of each school. However, Trustees and Members may wish, occasionally, to accompany a senior member of staff on a formal learning walk to observe how the curriculum is offered and taught in each individual school. Link Trustees will also be invited to meet with specific members of the Central Team for the purpose of monitoring the Trust Strategic Develop Plan and reporting their findings to the CEO.

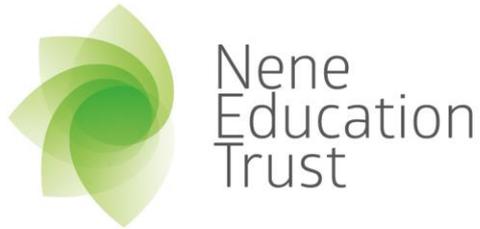
### Procedure for Trustees and members visiting individual schools in the Trust

Arrange details of a visit in advance, agreeing the purpose with the Principal;

- Always ensure that you sign in at the school office please ensure you wear your Nene Education Trust ID badge, so that it can be seen clearly by pupils and staff.
- Ensure you have noted on arrival any Health and Safety procedures (ie fire evacuation) and Safeguarding regulations
- After signing in ask to make contact with the Principal or senior member of staff who has organised the visit and who will accompany you while you are in school.
- Remember that photographs of pupils are not permitted. Please turn off mobile phones.
- If you are on a more formal visit such as a learning walk, please try to be unobtrusive and not disturb lessons.
- Acknowledge the teacher with a nod and a smile if entering a classroom and on leaving it.
- If you do speak to a pupil tell them who you are, for example, 'I am Mrs Smith. I am a Trustee of your school's Academy and I am interested to see how you learn.'
- Thank the Principal for the visit and ensure that you sign out when you leave.
- Trustees and Members are expected to provide at least written, feedback to Principals and the CEO regarding their visit.

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## APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 - Governor Visits objectives/procedures

Appendix 2 - Record of Governor's Visit (Secondary)

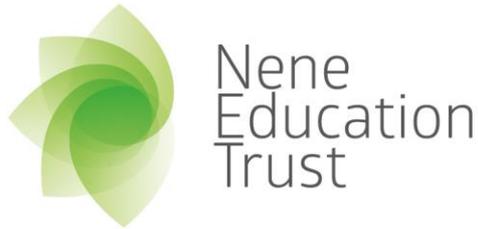
Appendix 3 - Record of Governor's Visit (Primary)

Appendix 4 – Example of questions Governors may wish to pose during a visit

Appendix 5 – Record of Members and Trustees Visit

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## APPENDIX 1

### **Governor Visits Objectives/procedures**

To establish and develop effective relationships with the staff
To have a greater understanding of pupils' needs
To recognise and celebrate success
To monitor the implementation of the School Development Plan
To increase their first-hand knowledge of the school which will inform strategic decisions
To understand the environment in which staff work and teachers teach
To see policies and schemes of learning in practice
To find out what resources are used, what resources are needed.
To show support and encouragement to staff and students
To demonstrate that the Governing Board is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process
To develop links with a class, year group or subject area
To develop individual Governor's roles in terms of their specific responsibilities e.g. Special Needs, Literacy etc

### **Responsibilities of visiting Governors and Staff**

- (a) Governors will express their gratitude, and any positive feed back to staff (and pupils) as soon as possible and provide informal verbal feedback to the Headteacher at the conclusion of each visit.

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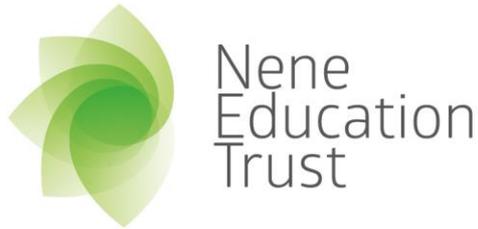
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- (b) Governors to provide written report for file with Clerk; (see sample report form below)
- (c) Governors and staff will respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit;
- (d) Any action points arising from the visit will be discussed and agreed by appropriate parties.

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APPENDIX 2 (Secondary)

**Manor School Sports College – Governor visit record 2018/2019**  
**(specific role ie culture and wellbeing, LAC, SEN etc)**

**ANY SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS MUST BE REPORTED TO THE  
SCHOOL DSL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHOOL PROCEDURE BEFORE  
YOU LEAVE THE SCHOOL SITE**

<b>Name of Governor</b>	
<b>Date and Time of Visit</b>	
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	

<b>Links with Academy Improvement Plan (AIP)</b> <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the AIP)</i>	
<b>Governor challenge – observations and comments about the visit</b> (eg how long did the visit last? what did you observe? what did you learn? What good practice was seen? What would you like clarified?)	

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**Any key issues arising for the Governing Board?**

(eg The way resources are allocated, the way the school communicates, progress in implementing the key policy)

**Follow up action**

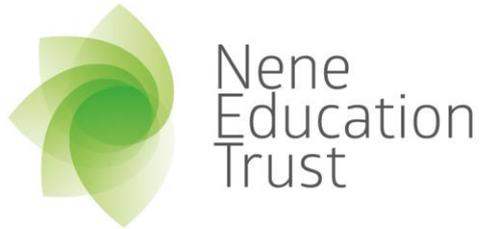
(record any action agreed by the Governing Board with regard to this visit)

**Forward to:** Principal for checking as draft. Will then be circulated to Governors by Manor School clerk

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**Manor School Sports College – Governor visit record 2018/2019  
(Departmental visit)**

**ANY SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS MUST BE REPORTED TO THE  
SCHOOL DSL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHOOL PROCEDURE BEFORE  
YOU LEAVE THE SCHOOL SITE**

<b>Name of Governor</b>	
<b>Date and Time of Visit</b>	
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus of the visit</b>	
<b>Links with Academy Improvement Plan (AIP)</b> <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the)</i>	
<b>Preparing for the visit</b>	
<b>Questions to ask teaching staff</b>	<i>You may wish to link these questions to the Academy Improvement Plan</i>

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<b>Questions to ask students</b>	<i>Can you show me....? How do you learn ....?</i>
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<b>During the visit</b>	
<b>Notes from discussions with teaching staff</b>	
<b>Notes from discussions with students</b>	

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<b>Comments on the learning environment and student behaviour</b>	
<b>Comments on the physical environment – such as engaging displays, tidiness of classrooms and corridors</b>	
<b>What stood out on the learning walk, and why?</b>          <b>Questions for the Principal or senior leadership team arising from the learning walk</b>	

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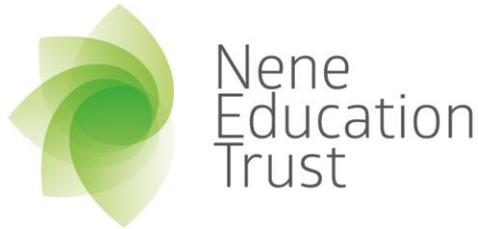
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<b>Forward to:</b> Principal for checking as draft. Will then be circulated to Governors by Manor School clerk	

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Appendix 3 (Primary)

**Nene Education Trust – Governor visit record 2018/2019 (specific role ie culture and wellbeing, LAC, SEN etc)**

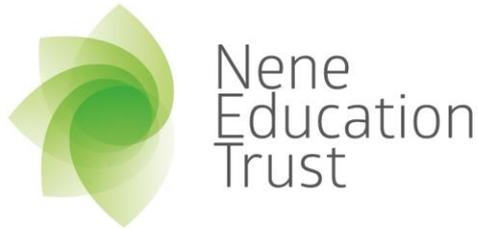
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<b>Name of Governor</b>		<b>Name of School</b>
<b>Date and Time of Visit</b>		
<b>Purpose of visit</b>		

<b>Links with School Development Plan</b> <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the SDP?)</i>	
<b>Governor challenge – observations and comments about the visit</b> (e.g. What did you observe? What did you learn? What good practice was seen? What would you like clarified? What did you see that links to the SDP?)	
<b>Any key issues arising for the Governing Board?</b>	
<b>Follow up action</b> (record any action agreed by the Governing Board with regard to this visit)	
<b>Forward to:</b> Principal for checking as draft. Will then be circulated to Governors by Clerk.	

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**Nene Education Trust - Governor visit record 2018/2019  
(Departmental visit)**

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YOU LEAVE THE SCHOOL SITE**

<b>Name of Governor</b>	
<b>Date and Time of Visit</b>	
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	
<b>Agreed focus of the visit</b>	
<b>Links with School Development Plan (SDP)</b> <i>(How does the visit relate to a priority in the SDP?)</i>	
<b>Preparing for the visit</b>	
<b>Questions to ask teaching staff</b>	<i>You may wish to link these questions to the SDP</i>

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<b>Questions to ask children</b>	<i>Can you show me....? How do you learn ....?</i>
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<b>During the visit</b>	
<b>Notes from discussions with teaching staff</b>	
<b>Notes from discussions with children</b>	
<b>Comments on the learning environment and child behaviour</b>	

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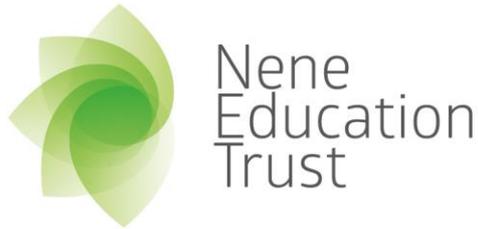
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<b>Comments on the physical environment – such as engaging displays, tidiness of classrooms and corridors</b>	
<b>What stood out on the learning walk, and why?</b>	
<b>Questions for the Principal or Senior Leadership Team arising from the learning walk</b>	
<b>Forward to:</b> Principal for checking as draft. Will then be circulated to Governors by Clerk.	

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## Appendix 4 – examples of questioning for Governors

### **To ask pupils**

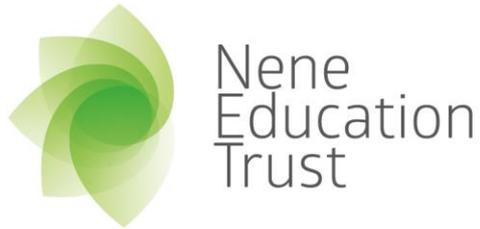
- Tell me about what you are learning today
- Do you like (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Tell me what you most like doing in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Is there anything you don't like in (select curriculum area being monitored)
- Do you get regular homework with feedback from your teacher?
- Do you know your targets?
- Do you know how you can improve/what your next target is in (select curriculum area being monitored)?

### **To ask subject leaders**

- What is your vision for the subject?
- What were the Ofsted findings about the subject?
- What are the strengths of the subject and areas for development? How do you know?
- How do you keep a track of standards and progress across the school in this subject?
- What improvements have you made/planned for this year in the subject?
- What resources does the school have for the subject and how are these organised?
- How do you help develop other teachers' skills in teaching this subject?

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Appendix 5

**Nene Education Trust – Member/Trustee visit record 2018/2019**

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	
<b>Date and Time of Visit</b>	
<b>Purpose of visit</b>	
<b>Links with Trust Strategic Development plan Academy</b>	
<b>Trustee activities undertaken (questions and challenge about the visit)</b>	
<b>Any key issues arising for the CEO/ Trust Board?</b>	

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**Follow up action**

(record any action agreed by the CEO/Trust Board with regard to this visit)

**Forward to:** CEO for checking as draft. Will then be circulated to the Trust Board and Central Team

**Comment by Executive Team**

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