

## 1 GREAT ACADEMIES STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Academy Trust has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its academies' policies and evaluate the effectiveness of each academy, its curriculum and how it promotes effective learning.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the strategic direction of the school and initially for holding the Principal to account for improving the school in accordance with any requirements of the directors, and in compliance with Trust policies.

The Governing Body is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school and holding the Principal to account for improving the school.

Governors and the Trust will be held to account for each academy's performance. The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) and the Department for Education (DfE) assume that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

The intent of this policy is to facilitate Governors getting to know about their school and to better understand the environment in which teachers teach, students learn and staff work. There is an expectation that all governors will visit the school for purposes other than attendance at scheduled meetings.

## 2 OUR AIMS

Our aims are to increase Governors' first-hand knowledge of the school and therefore better inform strategic decisions and planning. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for governors to make focused visits to school in order to have the opportunity to observe policies and plans being implemented. The findings of these visits should help the whole governing body make well-informed judgements about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the school improvement plan.

## 3 OBJECTIVES

- To establish and develop effective working relationships with staff and students
- To have a greater understanding of students' needs
- To monitor the implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- To see policies and schemes of learning in practice
- To show support and encouragement to staff and students and to recognise and celebrate success across the school.

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- To demonstrate that the Governing Body is actively contributing to the school’s self-evaluation processes.
- To enable staff to have a better understanding of the role of governors in supporting the work of the school.

#### 4 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

- On visits to GAET academies, governors are there to observe and gain insight into the work of the school. They are not to make judgements on the quality of teaching and learning.
- All visits must be planned and have a clear purpose. The date, timing and focus must be agreed at least one week in advance and include what will be observed and to whom it would be useful to talk. Visits must be agreed with the Principal beforehand.
- As far as is reasonably possible, the visit should not create additional workload for staff. See also appendix 2.
- Governors must adhere to all safeguarding protocols when participating in a visit. Governors will be subject to safeguarding vetting checks required by law and will be included in the School’s Central Record. A risk assessment will be completed by the school for any governor for whom checks are awaited.
- Governors must respect confidentiality arising from any aspect of the visit, in line with other GAET policies (particularly data protection and safeguarding).
- Governors should express their gratitude, and any positive feedback to staff and students as soon as possible, and provide informal verbal feedback to the Principal (or appropriate member of staff) at the conclusion of the visit.
- Governors should provide a written report (see appendix 1) to the Principal, the Chair of Governors and the Trust’s Director of School Improvement within ten working days of the visit. This will also be copied to the Clerk to the Governing Body for inclusion in governing body papers with the approval of the Chair of Governors.
- Any action points arising from the visit will be discussed and agreed by appropriate parties.
- If on a visit to school, governors see something which worries them they should bring this to the attention of the Principal in the first instance. If the concern relates to the Principal, it should be raised with the Chair of Governors.

#### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of;

- Each Governing Body to take a role in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this policy;
- The Principal to ensure that all students, teaching and support staff are aware of this policy and implement it accordingly;
- The Governors to act in a professional manner at all times when visiting the school and to follow the implementation guidelines;
- The Academy staff to act in a professional manner towards Governors and ensure their visit is effective and worthwhile.

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## 6. EQUALITY

The Great Academies Education Trust ensures that all pupils have equal access to the full range of educational opportunities provided. We do not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their sex, race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. The governor visits policy acknowledges the school's legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## 7 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

To be reviewed and amended by GAET officers in collaboration with the principal, or nominated representative, from each Academy. The recommendations will be submitted to the Board of Governors for consideration and, where applicable, approval.

Each academy's Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with;

- Child protection and Safeguarding policies
- Teaching and Learning policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy

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## Appendix 1

# Governor Visit Report

Academy	
Governor Name	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit	
Classes / Staff visited	
Summary of activities e.g. learning walk, professional dialogue, social event	
Outcomes	
Further Action	
Any other comments	

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Signed ..... Governor

Circulation: Principal  
Chair of Governors  
Director of School Improvement  
Clerk to governors

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## Appendix 2

Extract from 'What governing boards should expect from school leaders and what school leaders should expect from governing boards' (ASCL, LGA, NAHT, NGA April 2015)

### Visiting the school:

- Visits during the school day provide important opportunities for governors and trustees to better understand the school and the learning environment and to undertake their monitoring role.
- Visits should always have a focus which should be linked to the strategic priorities, and governors need to be clear about their role (i.e. they are not inspectors).
- School leaders should welcome governors and trustees to visit schools.
- Visits should be arranged in accordance with an agreed protocol which is communicated in advance to governors and trustees and school staff involved in visits.
- All parties need to be sensitive to the pressures of the school calendar, and governors and trustees' other commitments.

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