

Newham Community Learning - trustee and governor school visits: code of conduct

Last updated: September 2022

Applies to: Newham Community Learning

Approved by: CEO, September 2022



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1. Code of conduct for school visits

1.1. Overview

Trustees and governors do not have a statutory right of access to the school. However the DfE *recommends* and Head teachers often encourage trustees and governors to visit the school during the day to observe it in operation. Trustees and governors should remember that visits can create quite a lot of extra work for staff and that some teachers might be apprehensive when governors sit in on lessons. *Trustees and governors should always remember that they are visiting the school as a critical friend and a source of support to staff.*

Whilst not a statutory requirement, the DfE *recommends* that the Trust Board draws up a policy/code of conduct for trustee and governor visits to the Trust's schools.

Newham Community Learning has a *trustee and a governor code of conduct in place* (available on the [Governance Page](#) of the Trust website) that applies to all trustees and governors, and covers all their activities. In addition, the following guidance applies when arranging and undertaking visits to any of the Trust's schools:

1. Visits should be undertaken as part of a strategic programme to:
 - improve trustee knowledge of the schools, their staff, needs, priorities, strengths and weaknesses;
 - monitor and assess the priorities as outlined in the Trust's/school improvement/development plan;
 - assist the Trust Board and the local governing bodies to fulfil their statutory duties.
2. Before visiting any Trust school, trustee or governor should:
 - inform the school of the visit and seek approval of the arrangements (including any requests to meet with individual members of staff and classroom observations);
 - share with the relevant staff any questions or issues that they would like to raise;
 - ensure that they are familiar with health and safety procedures including what to do in the event of a fire.
3. After visiting any Trust school, the lead trustee or governor should:
 - complete the School Visit Form outlining the objectives and results of the visit (available as a Google Form on the [Governance Page of the website](#));
 - report back to the committee or Trust Board or to the local governing body as appropriate;
 - provide constructive feedback to school staff as appropriate.



Trustees and governors are always conscious of the strategic nature of their roles, and do not become involved in operational matters as a result of the visits.

1.1.1. Possible questions that trustees or governors may wish to ask during a visit

Trustees and governors should have a clear focus or objective for the visit. Within this context, they should prepare for the visit and think about whom it might be appropriate to meet, what questions might be asked and what activities to request, for example observing a lesson, talking to a group of pupils or attending a school council meeting. At this point it may be useful to do one or more of the following:

- talk to the CEO/Head teacher at the school/schools to which the visit is planned;
- look at past reports/papers relevant to the area;
- look at guidance on the internet

General questions might include:

- Are there any statutory requirements for this area of work/responsibility?
- What are the main improvements/objectives/targets of the school for this area?
- What actions are you taking to meet these improvements/objectives/targets?
- How are you monitoring the school's progress in this area?
- How will you know when you have met the improvements/objectives/targets for this area?
- Are there any barriers to meeting the improvements/objectives/targets?

Trustees and governors should also ask about Trust/school policies in place in their area. Questions around this might include:

- Who should be aware/implement this procedure/policy?
- Who in the school is accountable for/monitors whether the procedure/policy is effective **or** how do you know the procedure/policy is working?
- What issues are there for staff/ senior managers in this area of work?

1.1.2. How and to whom trustees and governors report

Based on the nature of the visits, the trustee or governor will report back to the relevant Board committee, full Trust Board or to the local governing body.

All reports are held within Google Forms in the Trust's admin account -

ncl.admin@newhamcommunitylearning.org and are available to all members of the Central Team.

