

GOVERNOR LINKS and LEARNING WALKS 2019/2020

Governor Links

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Board of the Corporation is to monitor the curricular quality and performance of the Group. The Link governor process is an excellent way in which members of the Board can play a significant role in developing the effectiveness of the governing body and in raising Group standards. Reports from the Link Governors will not only help the governing body understand the Group's core business but also help in fulfilling statutory responsibilities.

The Group has in place a scheme that links some Governors to specific areas of the Group's curriculum provision in order to help Governors to gain knowledge and become better informed about the work of the Group.

Link Areas

The following areas are the arrangements for Governor Links for 2019/2020.

Area of Provision	Manager(s)	Link Governor(s)
The Altrincham Campus	Helen Wood	Sarah Drake Janet Grant
The Stretford Campus	Alex Fau-Goodwin	James Beazley Jill Bottomley
The Stockport Campus	James Scott	Glad Capewell Glynis Brown
Higher Education	Mark Harris	Kurt Allman Maureen Wilkins
Adult Learning and Skills	Joan Scott	Louise Richardson
Apprenticeships	Jane Keys	Louise Richardson
Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults	James Scott	Sue Derbyshire

Key Curricular Thematic Tasks	Manager(s)	Link Governor(s)
Education Programmes for Young People including English and Maths	Emma Goodlet	Glynis Brown
Quality of Education including Teaching Learning and Assessment and Value Added	James Scott Gemma Hawkley-Holt	Graham Luccock Glad Capewell
Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes	Emma Goodlet	Graham Luccock Sarah Drake
Equality & Diversity Including Special Education Needs and Disabilities	James Scott Helen Redman	Dawn Cole
Student Engagement and Participation	Richard Pleavin	Sarah Drake

Key Business Thematic Tasks	Manager(s)	Link Governor(s)
Health & Safety	John Frowen	Sue Derbyshire
Legal	Michelle Leslie	Guy Robson
Audit and Risk	Andrea Bennett	Jed Hassid
Leadership, Management and Governance	Lesley Davies Barry Watson	Graham Luccock
Marketing	Carl Miles	Jed Hassid
Finance	Andrea Bennett	Janet Grant Dawn Cole
Human Resources	Naomi Harrop	Jill Bottomley

Frequency of Contact

Link Governors should normally visit their designated curricular area at least three times per year in order to establish an understanding of the provision and a dialogue with the staff and students concerned. In order not to overload either party, it is proposed that visits are not normally made more than once per term.

If at all possible Governors should look to organizing the visits during the half term which does not include the Curriculum and Quality Committee meetings and to undertake Learning walks on the same day as the Link Visit.

The scheduled meetings for the academic year as follows: 13 November 2019, 11 March 2020 and 17 June 2020.

Link Governors will normally be reviewed every 2 years in order to broaden Governors awareness of the Group.

Protocol

The Link Governor visit is not about:

- inspection and governors should not behave as an inspector;
- making judgements about the professional expertise of the teacher;
- pursuing a personal agenda.

Whilst all Governors are, of course, welcome to visit the College at any time, it is expected that they inform the relevant College manager in advance in order to plan arrangements for parking, visits to work areas, meeting staff etc. Many members of staff will be delighted to meet a Link Governor who is showing a genuine interest in their work and that of their students. They will welcome Governors observing their lessons etc.

Managers and staff will want to prepare for the visit, for example, by arranging for samples of students' work to be available. It is therefore important to always ensure that the date, time and purpose of your visit are mutually agreed with the link manager.

Both staff and students will be encouraged to meet their Link Governor, and to openly share their views on College matters. The Link Governor will undertake to discuss any issues raised with the relevant manager, although it will be made clear that they should not be used as a route for individual grievances or complaints. Governors should familiarise themselves with all reports and Key Performance Indicators relating to the area and ensure that the targets for improvement are being met.

Key areas that the Link Governors should explore with the Manager are as follows:

- Progress against Quality Improvement Plan and Key Performance Indicators.
- Challenges that the area faces.
- Strengths and weaknesses.
- The Business Plan.
- Key Risks.
- Staffing arrangements and development.
- Curriculum Development.

Link Governors have a responsibility to make it clear to staff that line management rests firmly with managers, and to students that the normal process of representation, feedback and possible complaint cannot be compromised or subverted.

If Link Governors have a concern arising from the visit, they should take care that the matter is handled sensitively and raise the issue with the Link Manager rather than comment directly to staff members. If the agreed protocols are followed, then the visits will be an enjoyable experience for all involved, and will result in effective monitoring by the Board of the Corporation, which will contribute to improvement.

Setting up a Link

When a Link Governor has been appointed, the member should arrange a meeting with the Link Manager to receive an initial briefing. This would include course portfolio, structure and names of staff and student numbers. This would also be an opportunity for the Link Governor to be informally introduced to staff in the department.

Communication and Reporting

Link Governors will be given the opportunity to present a brief verbal report to the Board of the Corporation following each link visit. This will permit an opportunity to exchange knowledge obtained in their role, good practice and areas of concern. Link governors will produce a Link Governor Report reporting on the focus of the visit, without giving opinions or identifying individuals after consultation with the Link Manager (see Appendix 1).

The report should be completed as soon as possible after each visit and sent to the Corporation Secretary who will share it with the relevant manager. The Corporation Secretary will provide an annual summary report of the visits to the Board of the Corporation at the end of the Academic Year.

- **Learning Walks**

In addition to Link Visits Link Governors are invited to undertake learning walks to experience teaching, learning and assessment in the Groups curriculum areas.

What is a 'Learning Walk'?

A learning walk is an opportunity to visit a number of lessons accompanied by a member of staff to sample the teaching and learning happening at that time. Each classroom visit should last about 10 - 15 mins and hence the overall time needed for the learning walk will depend upon the programme agreed in advance between the Governor and the relevant manager.

Why do a Learning walk?

A learning walk is a unique opportunity to experience a snapshot of how the core work of the college functions. Link Governors will be able to see and appreciate the relationships between staff and student; the level of enthusiasm, punctuality and attendance of the students; the standard of facilities available in the curriculum area and the breadth and method of delivery of the curriculum offer.

A learning walk is not an 'inspection' and hence no graded judgements or formal feedback will be given.

Having a visitor in the classroom is potentially very stressful for the teacher but if a learning walk is done sympathetically it can be a very stimulating and valuable experience for all concerned.

Framework for Learning Walks

- i. Before the learning walk takes place the Governor should contact the relevant manager and arrange the time and date and discuss the format of the walk e.g. how many lessons will be visited and for how long. The manager will then inform the staff in the department that the learning walk will take place.
- ii. On the day of the learning walk the Manager ,or another designated member of staff, will meet the Link Governor to discuss relevant background information about the department and will have drawn up a suggested list of lessons to be visited ,thus avoiding inappropriate intrusions such as during a timed assessment. This member of staff or another will accompany the Link Governor(s) on the learning walk.
- iii. When visiting a lesson Governors need to be as unobtrusive as possible and act in an observation capacity only.
- iv. As indicated a learning walk is not an inspection and hence formal judgements are not applicable, however, whatever the subject or mode of a lesson some good/ poor features will be obvious without having any formal subject knowledge.

Examples of good teaching and learning might be –

- Are the students enthusiastic and attentive?
- Are there regular checks on student progress?
- Is the lesson interesting with fast pace?
- Do the students respect each other and the teacher?
- Is there evidence of effective use of technology to support learning?
- How organised and successful is the practical work?
- Do folders of work appear to be well organised?
- Does the classroom environment support effective learning including adherence to Health & Safety?

Impressions such as these should be noted.

If an appropriate opportunity arises to speak to students some questions that might be asked could include-

- What do you enjoy about your learning and how could it be improved?
 - Do you receive regular feedback on you progress and of your assessed work?
 - Do you get good careers information to support you with your choices for next steps?
 - Do you have any input from employers including opportunities for work placements?
- v. Formal feedback will not be given to the teacher but there is no harm in simply mentioning something you enjoyed if you happen to meet the teacher in lunch or on a corridor later. We all like encouragement.
 - vi. Following a learning walk the Link Governors will have the opportunity to provide a short verbal report at the appropriate Board of the Corporation meeting.
 - vii. In the highly unlikely event that some serious issue is identified during a learning walk e.g. an infringement of safeguarding or health and safety this must be passed to the appropriate Manager immediately.