

Code of Conduct for Governors

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Introduction

The Full Governing Body (FGB) accepts the following principles and procedures.

The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. The FGB has three main roles:

- To provide a strategic view of where the school is heading,
- To provide support and appropriate challenge to the school, and
- To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides.

Governors have a responsibility for ensuring the monitoring and review of all the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates. The FGB and Headteacher will respect each others' roles and maintain a professional and open relationship, acknowledging the skills and contributions of all, supporting each other and recognising each other's respective responsibilities, so as to form a good working partnership.

This FGB is committed to providing equal opportunities for all.

This FGB is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the pupils. All Governors will require a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in order to hold office. We expect all governors to act with personal and professional integrity, respecting the safety and wellbeing of others.

For further information about the roles and responsibilities of a Governing Body readers should refer to the Governance Handbook and Competency Framework for Governance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Aims

- The over-riding purpose of the FGB is to help the school provide the best possible outcomes for its pupils. In order to help fulfil this duty this Code of Conduct aims to set out the principles under which the business of the Governing Body should be conducted.
- We will encourage open and transparent governance and should be seen to do so.
- The FGB is constituted according to the current Instrument of Government and this will always ensure suitable representation across all areas of our learning community.

Commitment

- All Governors are encouraged to spend time in the school during normal school hours in order to gain knowledge and understanding about the workings of the school, its policies and self-evaluation activities, and build relationships with school stakeholders.
- We acknowledge the need to commit time and energy to being an effective Governor and recognise that all governors have times when they can commit more or less. We ask that governors are open about their ability to do their role at any point in time and encourage honest discussion with the Chair of Governors.
- We should involve ourselves actively in the work of the FGB and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees and working groups.
- We will be expected to regularly attend meetings of the FGB, committees and working groups.

- We accept that regular non-attendance at FGB meetings can lead to eventual disqualification, unless apologies have been received in advance and accepted by the FGB, and that repeated non-attendance will lead to disqualification.
- In planning the frequency and timing of meetings the Governing Body will have regard to the equality of opportunity to serve as governors.
- We will take responsibility for diarising agreed dates for meetings and other responsibilities.
- We will consider our training needs for development as Governors.

Relationships

- We accept that all Governors have equal status.
- We will strive to work as a team, and abide by all the decisions of the Governing Body whether we agree as individuals or not.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with our Headteacher, staff, parents and the school's wider community.
- The Headteacher expects the FGB to both challenge and support the school.
- In so far as we have, or share, responsibility for the employment of staff, we should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- If the school, or a member of staff, is courteous enough to invite you to a function you should have the courtesy to reply.

Confidentiality and Communications

- Once approved, the minutes of the FGB are publicly available with the exception of confidential items.
- Matters discussed at governing body meetings are confidential only if declared so during the meeting. Though all matters should be treated as confidential unless otherwise stated until the minutes are approved.
- We must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so or when matters are obviously sensitive.
- We must treat all electronic and paper communications with utmost care and dispose of them in an appropriate, secure manner.
- We must exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the FGB.
- We must encourage parents to communicate with the school and the Headteacher in the first instance for any school matters and not directly with any Governors. In the event that governors need to contact parents (or the wider community) concerning governor business this should be via formal school channels of communication whenever possible or otherwise through their nominated governor email address.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, we should refer to the School's "Complaints Policy" for the correct procedure to be followed at all times and advise the complainant accordingly.
- We understand that we have no authority to act or speak individually on behalf of the school (apart from the Chair on urgent matters) unless the FGB or sub-committee has given any individual Governor the delegated authority to do so, it is legally permissible, and it has been recorded in the appropriate minutes.
- The proper place for discussions is at FGB and Committee meetings.
- Discussions and communications between Governors outside of formal meetings need to be limited to allocated actions, tasks, information and administrative purposes.
- We should consider carefully how our own decisions might affect other schools.

Conduct

- The Governing Body will, in the way it conducts its business, always have regard to the need for the Headteacher, Staff and Governors to maintain a reasonable work/life balance.
- We will accept collective responsibility for all decisions, acting both in line with this code of conduct and in the best interests of the school.
- In the event that a majority decision cannot be reached, the Chair of Governors will have a casting vote.
- We will be mindful of how our conduct maintains, develops and supports the ethos and reputation of the school. Our actions within the school community should reflect this.
- We will not communicate our individual opinions either within or outside of school.
- We will conduct ourselves in meetings as outlined in the following meetings' charter:

Meetings' Charter

As a Governor I expect:

- To attend meetings regularly and be punctual
- An agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before the meeting
- An agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item
- A chair of a committee who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, ensures that its strategic responsibilities are properly addressed, encourages all members to make contributions and keeps discussions to the point
- The decision making process to be quite clear, with all outcomes and actions to be clearly recorded
- Governors to work together
- Governors to take collective responsibility for decisions
- Minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, as soon as possible after each meeting, within 14 days and before the next FGB meeting.

Others can expect me to:

- Apologise in advance if unable to attend
- Attend regularly and be punctual
- Read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note any questions or comments where necessary
- Bring relevant papers to the meeting
- Make relevant and positive contributions
- Have completed, or be able to report the progress of, any action points given to me at a previous meeting
- Listen respectfully to other people and consider what they want to say
- Represent my own views and not act as a spokesperson for other stakeholder groups
- Leave the meeting or refrain from discussion/voting when asked to do so if a conflict of interest arises
- Accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with

Conflict of Interest

FINANCIAL

- Governors should be mindful of any actual or potential conflict of interest, and behave properly when very occasionally this happens. You will be asked to complete an annual declaration of pecuniary interests (via GovernorHub) to ensure that the governing body is aware of any potential issues. Any changes that happen between annual reviews should also be recorded on GovernorHub when you become aware of them.
- If you find that you are at a meeting where the outcome will affect you financially, you should tell the Chair and leave.
- If there is uncertainty about whether or not a conflict of interests exists the Governing Body decides the matter. If you are asked to leave, or not to take part in a discussion, because you are considered to have a financial interest, you should do as requested.

ROLES

- Financial conflicts are rare. It is much more common for governors find themselves in a position where their action/behaviour/feelings/relationships in one capacity may cause problems or conflict in another capacity. For instance, your child, or you as a parent of a child at the school, might do something that is not in accordance with the Headteacher's or the governors' wishes. In such situations we do not expect a governor to be "whiter than white" but equally we expect governors not to let the school or the governing body down. The golden rule is not to abuse your position by doing something inappropriate.
- Do not ask for, or expect, "special treatment" for yourself or your child. For instance your child should not expect to break school rules because of your position. Conversely, if your child misbehaves in school this does not undermine your role as a governor. If you are in doubt about whether something will be acceptable, talk it over with the Chair, the Headteacher, or a fellow governor with whom you get on well.
- If you are unhappy with a decision by the governing body, a committee or the Headteacher, in relation to your role as a parent or as a member of staff, you should follow the ordinary grievance procedure for parents or members of staff

Training and Development

- We all agree that governor training and development is important.
- We will undergo regular training and self-evaluation to further our individual interests within the Governing Body and the work of the FGB as a whole. This may include attending staff training where relevant
- We will liaise with the Governor responsible for training and maintain a training summary.
- We will ensure that there is an appropriate school induction procedure for all new Governors in addition to that provided by Hampshire Governor Services.
- We will ensure that all new Governors are encouraged to familiarise themselves with all committees in conjunction with the relevant training.

Visiting the School

- All visits to the school by Governors will have a clear purpose (see below), and will be agreed in advance with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- Governors will conduct themselves as observers and not inspectors. Governors are not there to comment on the teaching ability of an individual member of staff.
- Governors should be aware of the confidentiality and sensitivity of what they may see and hear. This need for confidentiality does not overrule a governor's duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where a governor believes a child is at risk of harm. This safeguarding responsibility also extends to not taking photographs during visits and not to disclosing pupil names in any written reports about a school visit. Information obtained during a monitoring visit should not be inappropriately disclosed or used for any other purpose.
- Each Governor due to make a classroom visit should contact the Deputy Headteacher, preferably during the month before their intended classroom visit, to arrange the exact date, and the precise objective, length and structure of their visit. The Deputy Headteacher may delegate arranging these details to another member of staff, in which case it is the Governor's responsibility to ensure that the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher are notified in advance of the visit of what has been agreed.
- When visiting the school Governors should sign in and identify themselves by wearing their Governor Name badge. Whenever visiting the school during the normal school hours, governors should ensure they observe an appropriate standard of dress (in accordance with the guidance provided in the staff code of conduct).
- When observing teaching and learning, Governors must not
 - Check on the progress of particular children
 - Pursue any personal agenda
 - Monopolise the teacher's time
 - Interrupt the flow of the lesson.
- Governors are expected to complete a written report, using the agreed format for each visit to the school, or collection of visits where they are related to one SSP monitoring activity. Exceptions to this are:
 - Introductory visits for new Governors
 - Meetings which have their own minutes, or documented outcome
 - Meetings about individual pupils or staff, or which are confidential for other reasons
 - Meetings between the Chair of Governors and Headteacher
 - Agenda setting meetings
 - Visits to the school which are about building relationships, and raising the profile of Governors, e.g. attendance to school functions, parent consultation evenings.
- Governors are expected to agree with the school at the start of any visit whether a report will be produced. The school staff involved in the visit must be given the opportunity to comment on the report before it is issued to the FGB, or Committee.
- The number and frequency of visits expected will be discussed and agreed each year (or directly with the Chair), recognising that some governors may have been elected to provide support in other areas (e.g. financial probity) and devoting more available time to that. In any case, all governors would normally be expecting to make at least one school visit per term (learning walk or governor monitoring day).
- Link governors for Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Special Education Needs should be making a 1:1 termly monitoring visit with the staff lead on the area, and may need to attend ad hoc meetings on specific topics.

Detailed guidance and conduct for Governor visits

The following sections describe the guidelines and conduct relating to visits to the school by Governors in more detail. Note that visits involving or discussions concerning individual members of staff or pupils, or meetings between the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher are outside the scope of this document.

Aims of Governor Visits

- To support and assist the whole Governing Body in fulfilling its statutory role by improving the Governors':
 - Knowledge of the workings and ethos of the school;
 - Understanding of the impact of statutory changes on the school;
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of the current School Strategic Plan;
 - Understanding of school needs and priorities for future school development and improvement plans;
 - Links with staff; an effective partnership between Governors and staff, based on mutual understanding, benefits the whole school community
- To recognise and celebrate the successes of the school;
- To help Governors to be better able to support the needs of the school in the community;
- To raise Governors' profile amongst staff, children and parents by attending parental consultations, curriculum evenings, assemblies;
- To highlight the need for particular resources.

Before a Visit

At our school, governor visits are normally organised with the Deputy Headteacher, unless the visit includes a meeting with the Headteacher. In advance of the visit, the Governor should discuss with the Deputy Headteacher or designated member of staff the management of the visit:

Governors will:

- **Notify the headteacher and the chair** before scheduling a visit, even if the headteacher will not be involved in the visit. They should be made aware just as a matter of courtesy
- **Schedule an appointment through the Deputy Headteacher who will assign the relevant members of staff** and schedule times that are mutually convenient during the school day or as close to the start and end of the school day.
- Be sensitive to the numerous demands staff have on their time and their workload
- **Clarify the purpose of the visit in relation to key objectives within the school strategic plan (SSP) or to fulfil a statutory duty in advance** with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher ahead of the visit.
- **Ensure they reviewed background information and prepared for the visit, including how they will be able to monitor whether objectives of the visit have been met.**
- **Send questions in advance** to the Deputy Headteacher and the relevant member of staff so everyone can feel properly prepared
- **Be familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and procedures**
- **Be aware of general topics the should be monitored on all visits including: safeguarding, behaviour, equalities, health and safety and data protection.**

During a Visit

Governors should know how to conduct themselves appropriately during visits in order to minimise disruption for staff and pupils and to receive the maximum benefit from the time spent. Governors should emphasise they are coming to learn and understand, there should be no hint of an inspection.

Governors will:

- Be on time and meet with the member of the Senior Leadership Team with whom they have arranged the meeting, ahead of the visit
- Sign in at reception and always wear a visitor's badge
- Use the agreed recording method for the visit, ensuring any notes made during the visit are made unobtrusively.
- Remain as observers; they are not there to pass judgement on staff or inspect them
- Ensure all parties are clear about why a governor wishes to spend time in the classroom, if they wish to do so
- Check with teachers before speaking to pupils
- Pass on any concerns the staff raise with the relevant people
- If visits are being made to more than one classroom, it is good practice to spend approximately the same amount of time in each classroom.
- Be friendly but professional and dress appropriately, in line with the staff dress code policy.
- Share things that you have seen and are encouraged by with pupils, staff and Headteacher before completing the visit.
- Thank staff and pupils for their time.

Governors will not:

- Pass comment on classroom practice or any specific incidents that happen, judge teaching methods, assess the quality of teaching, or comment on the extent of learning
- Interfere with the day-to-day running of the school
- Behave in a manner that would make staff feel that they are there to inspect, e.g. sit at the back of the classroom with a clipboard
- Raise concerns in the moment. Governors should note down any concerns they may have and raise them with the Headteacher after the visit
- Record or photograph anything

After a visit

Governors will complete a written report as soon as reasonably practicable and by the next Governing Body meeting at the latest. Governors are encouraged to use the standard form (see Appendix), which may be updated from time to time. In completing the report, governors will ensure to:

- Use neutral language at all times

- Remain observational, and describe only what they see and the impact against the SSP objectives
- Focus closely on the agreed reasons for the visit, and its strategic role
- Not refer to individual staff or children by name.

Once complete, governors will submit their reports to the following people, in the following order:

- A more experienced governor for feedback - if they've been in place for less than 1 year
- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher as courtesy and for review
- The relevant staff member, both as a courtesy and to check for accuracy
- The chair of the governing body or the relevant committee, as agreed,
- Upload the report to Governor hub prior to the next governing body meeting, and inform the Clerk so it can be recorded in the minutes. (Key Governor Docs > Governor Monitoring > <Academic Year>)

Use of technology

Governors should follow the principles set out in the Staff Code of Conduct, in particular:

- Governors will not use technology in school to view material that is illegal, inappropriate or likely to be deemed offensive.
- Governors will not use personal mobile phones and laptops in front of pupils or in pupil facing areas during school hours. It is recognised that governors may have work commitments that coincide with school visits, in these circumstances, a meeting room, or other identified separate work location can be used. Please speak to a member of the SLT for guidance.
- They will also not use personal mobile phones or cameras to take pictures of pupils.
- Usage of the school WiFi is in line with the internet acceptable use policy.