



GOVERNING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

Golden Rules (devised by School Council 2009)

At our school we always:

- Treat people kindly
- Listen to each other
- Look after our school environment
- Do our best

Vision

To be the Centre of Excellence for students with special educational needs.

The Governing Board (GB) – Purpose and function as defined by the DfE

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

All boards, no matter what type of schools or how many schools they govern, have three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its students, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Membership

The GB membership is defined by the school's Instrument of Government dated 26 November 2020. This specifies that the board consists of ten governors;

- One Headteacher,
- Two parent governors,
- One local authority governor,
- One staff governor,
- Five co-opted governors

A governor's term of office is four years unless agreed otherwise at the time of appointment.

Co-opted governors are appointed by a majority of other governors.

In attendance - Clerk to the Governors.

The board may appoint, for defined terms, associate members for their particular expertise or contribution.

The GB will meet at least six times a year with the agenda and relevant reports ideally made available a minimum of seven calendar days before the meeting.

Meetings may include, by exception, governors dialling in through conference calls or the use of Skype, Teams or Zoom for video conferencing to fulfil the quorum requirement when they cannot attend in person.

Minutes from a meeting should be available to governors within two weeks of the meeting.

If a governor fails to attend three consecutive GB meetings, the GB will question that individual's commitment and contribution to governance. Where a governor has not attended meetings for six months, the GB will consider taking steps towards disqualification from office.

The Role

To undertake its role, the GB at its meeting, will:

1. Receive and consider reports from the Headteacher and Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) regarding the school's progress against the School Development Plan
2. Receive and consider reports about financial performance, budgets and projections
3. Receive and consider reports from each lead governor regarding the school's effectiveness in that area
4. Ensure that all matters requiring action following each GB meeting are agreed and recorded, including appropriate named responsibility and timing.
5. Ensure that actions are then followed up and outcomes communicated to the GB to confirm completion. The GB will not wait until its next meeting to conclude matters outstanding.
6. Make strategic decisions that ensure the school's resources are used to secure the best possible outcomes for all students of the school
7. Support and monitor implementation of the School Development Plan and relevant policies
8. Ensure the school's legal compliance and governance
9. Make strategic decisions to ensure that the Teaching and Learning (T&L) Model is effectively implemented and monitored to secure best possible outcomes for the students
10. Respond to identified areas of weakness and support effective strategies to deal with them
11. Monitor the safeguarding of students and the wider SEN provision

Quorum

The quorum for GB decisions to be actionable is five governors.

Associate members of the GB do not have a vote.

Code of Conduct

Governors agree to abide by the Code of Conduct at the Annex.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

The Governing Board approved these Terms of Reference on: 7th October 2021

Signed: Richard Pelly, Chair of Governors

Signed: Joolz Scarlett, Headteacher

ANNEX – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

Governance – strategic vs operational

The governors accept the following demarcation of responsibilities:

The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, the implementation of policy and procedure and the operation of the curriculum.

The governors are responsible for leading the school's strategic direction, and monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

Duties

These include ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the Headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets set in the school improvement/development plan;
- Performance managing the Headteacher;
- Engaging with stakeholders both with the school and the wider community;
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Agreeing the budget;
- Monitoring spending against the budget;
- Ensuring value for money is obtained;
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

Roles and Responsibilities

As individuals on the GB, governors agree to:

- Abide by the seven principles of public life (Appendix A)
- Accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the GB has given us delegated authority to do so
- Only to speak on behalf of the GB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- Accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside of GB meetings.
- Act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, to fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- Encourage open government.
- Consider carefully how our decisions might affect the community, Borough and other schools in the area.
- Be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school.
- Follow the procedures established by the GB when making or responding to criticism or complaints. Actively support and challenge the Headteacher.
- Individual Governors are delegated the authority to lead certain areas of the Governing Body. These Governors being held accountable by the GB for the quality of governance in their lead area.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of appropriate amounts of time and energy
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the GB and accept our fair share of responsibility, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and, where we cannot attend, explain as far in advance as possible why we are unable to do so to the Clerk and Chair of Governors.

- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- All visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken in accordance with the Governor Visits Policy.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the GB, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or students, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a GB meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any GB vote.

Conflicts of interest

- Refer to the [Conflicts of Interest Policy](#)

Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair for investigation; the GB will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the Vice Chair, will investigate.

APPENDIX A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.