

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR GOVERNING BODIES

The core purpose of our governing body

As a governing body we have responsibility for:

- determining through consultation the aims and values of the school;
- monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans, procedures within which the school operates;
- monitoring and keeping under review the achievement of all pupils at the school;
- ensuring local accountability;
- insisting that the best interests of all pupils are paramount in our decision-making.

General

In working in support of the school:

- we recognise that the head teacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and the implementation of the agreed curriculum.
- we recognise and value the different perspective of governors, accept that all governors have equal status and are representatives, not delegates, of different interest groups. These groups have a shared concern – the success and welfare of all pupils in the school.
- we have no legal authority to act individually, with the exception of the chair when urgent action is required or when the governing body has given delegated authority to do so.
- we have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff we will fulfil the expectations of a good employer.
- we recognise that we are accountable and will encourage open government and effective communication.
- we will consider carefully how our decisions may affect other schools.

Commitment

As members of the governing body:

- we acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- we will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, attend regularly and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- we will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- we will consider at least on an annual basis our individual and collective needs for training and development.

Relationships

As a governing body:

- we will strive to work as a team.
- we will seek to develop effective working relationships with the head, staff and parents, the LEA, other relevant agencies and the local community.

Confidentiality

As a governing body:

- we will observe confidentiality when required to do so by the governing body, especially regarding matters involving individual staff or students.
- we recognise that some information we receive is not confidential but may be sensitive. We will abide by the proper means of disseminating this information to the school community.
- we will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a possibly contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the governing body.

Conduct

As a governing body:

- we will encourage the open expression of views at meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak out against majority decisions in public or private outside the governing body.
- we will only speak on behalf of the governing body if we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- in making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- our visits to school will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed through consultation with head and staff.
- in discharging our duties we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school.

(This Guide was taken from the 2002 Newsletter of the National Association of Governors and Managers.)