

# Governor Handbook



*Broadening Horizons*

*Raising Aspirations*

Date:	September 2018
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## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	3
Role of the Governing Body	3
Committees and Meetings	5
Expectation	6
Governor Visits	7
Evaluation	7
Instrument of Government	Appendix 1
Code of Conduct	Appendix 2
Governor Visits Policy	Appendix 3

## **Introduction**

Coombe Road Primary is a Community (sometimes called Maintained) School. The land and buildings are owned by Brighton and Hove City Council which also employs the staff. The school's Instrument of Government (Appendix 1) sets out membership of the Governing Body, to which the Council has delegated some powers and responsibilities.

Maintained schools are funded by the Government through the Council, which retains limited powers over the formula for local distribution until a national funding formula comes into effect in 2021. The school uses its delegated budget to buy support services from the Council: we have also joined 20 other local schools in the Sussex Coast Teaching School Alliance and twelve others in an Aspirational Partnership for Leadership and Learning (APLL).

The School believes in Commitment, Opportunity, Respect and Excellence. These CORE aims, which are explained on the website, apply to the whole community including Governors.

We have adopted the Brighton and Hove Code of Conduct for Governing Bodies (Appendix 2). This handbook explains how Governors work at Coombe Road.

## **The Role of the Governing Body**

The governing body has many official responsibilities, as set out under the following broad headings.

### **The Strategic Role**

- Ensure the school has clear aims and values that are supported by the whole school community
- Ensure evidence of this in the day to day running of the school
- Focus on raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning so that every pupil achieves his/her full potential
- Decide with the Headteacher, staff, pupils and parents the direction of the school's development planning
- Be involved in the review of the Raising Attainment Plan (RAP)
- Ensure that the resources that the school receives are directed to the school's priorities as determined in the RAP
- Help to set and review the policies that provide a broad framework within which the Headteacher and staff should run the school
- Ensure that there are systems in place to monitor progress toward targets and gather evidence accordingly
- Use the evidence to review progress against targets to see whether policies and practices are effective. Check on the school's achievements and progress over time and in comparison with similar schools
- Take advice on this from the Headteacher before making their decisions

Governing Body committees can draw up detailed plans for their area, for example, premises development or governing body development. This process enables the governing body to have a clear understanding about the direction of the school, the allocation of resources along with the monitoring process, ensuring the plans that are implemented are effective.

### **The Critical Friend Role**

- Recognising and celebrating the achievements of the school
- Recognising where improvements can be made
- Providing support and encouraging strategies to bring about improvement
- Striking an appropriate balance between supporting and challenging

The role of 'critical friend' involves monitoring and evaluating how the school is progressing. Governors need to build a trusting relationship with the Headteacher and staff in order to achieve this.

Monitoring means:

- Evidence gathering to show progress has been made toward agreed targets
- Using the RAP to know the actions to be taken and the outcomes expected
- Asking questions about progress and challenging to ensure objectives are met

Evaluation means:

- Making judgements about results
- Ensuring action is taken once concerns are identified
- Using a search analysis of pupil achievements to provide a focus for the evaluation of teaching and learning

It is not the governors' role to make judgements about members of staff. It is, however, the role of the governors to ensure that monitoring of teaching and learning takes place and that the necessary actions are taken to develop and support the professional development of all staff.

### **The Accountability Role**

In this role, governors:

- Are required to promote high standards of educational achievement (Education Act 2002)
- Have the right to discuss, question and refine proposals while respecting the professional roles of the Headteacher and other staff, and their responsibilities for the management of the school
- Must be prepared to account for the school's performance and to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest.

The governing body will need to be accountable to the whole school community for the performance of the school. Governors must ensure that the school prospectus and website are up to date and contain the appropriate information.

## **Committees and Meetings**

The Full Governing Body (FGB) meets four times a year. A quorum for an FGB meeting is 50%.

There are two committees of the FGB. They each meet once a term. The committees are:

### **Resources**

This committee deals with premises, personnel and finance issues. It also fulfils the responsibilities of the Pay Committee as set out in the school's Pay Policy. The Headteacher and School Business Manager attend every meeting.

### **Education & Learning**

This committee looks at curriculum issues. The Headteacher reports on and up-dates the RAP and attainment/progress data for the preceding term.

The Terms of Reference for these committees can be found on the school website. These are reviewed annually by the FGB and agreed at the first committee meeting of the academic year. Committees meet once in a term.

A Panel of three governors is responsible for the Headteacher's performance management, assisted by an external adviser.

Ad hoc panels for other purposes will be convened from time to time, the membership being decided at the time. If an Appeal Panel is required, there is a collaboration agreement with the Governing Body of Moulsecoomb Primary School.

### **Current members of the Governing Body**

A full list of Governors and Committee members is available on the website. We are also required to publish each Governor's attendance record and the record of outside interests.

### **Agendas**

The Chairs of the FGB and Committees agree with the Clerk the agenda for the meeting a week prior to the meeting. The agenda is circulated electronically with any relevant documents to committee members at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.

### **Any Other Business**

On every agenda the second to last item will be Any Other Business (AOB). The Chair must be notified of AOB prior to the meeting.

### **Expenses**

Governors may claim reimbursement of expenses incurred when carrying out their duties as a governor. Details of what is covered and how to claim are set out in the Coombe Road Governors Expenses and Allowances policy.

## **Expectation**

Being a governor is much more than simply turning up and contributing to meetings. At Coombe Road Primary School we expect all governors to contribute positively to ensuring the school provides the best opportunities for the children in our care.

## **Link Governors**

Governors are assigned to various areas within the school to ensure that the school has prioritised its focus for improvement appropriately and is carrying out the actions in the RAP.

Link governors gain in-depth knowledge of one of the areas of the school's work. They work in partnership with the relevant members of staff and the Headteacher, carry out monitoring visits and keep the rest of the governing body informed. Details of link governors are on the school website.

## **Training**

The school buys Governor Support from the Local Authority. All governors are notified by them about training courses and meetings for governors. The FGB reviews annually the need for adding to or up-dating skills and developing interests. The Clerk circulates to all members an annual summary provided by Governor Support of the courses attended by governors.

New governors are expected to complete the Local Authority's induction training and will be mentored during their first six months by an experienced governor. All governors will be expected to attend at least one training session per academic year.

## **Attendance**

We arrange our meetings to get the best balance between time demands on governors and time demands on staff (especially the Head Teacher). All governors will be given a diary of the year's meetings at the start of the academic year. It is their responsibility to ensure they attend the correct meetings.

If you are going to be absent from any meeting you should email your apologies to the Clerk to the Governors. This email address is [melaniearnold@coomberoad.brighton-hove.sch.uk](mailto:melaniearnold@coomberoad.brighton-hove.sch.uk)

The Head Teacher also circulates at the beginning of each term a programme of school activities which governors are invited to attend.

## **Safeguarding and Confidentiality**

All Governor appointments are subject to receipt of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates, which the school will arrange. Governors also need to sign the school's Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement. While minutes of Governor meetings are published some items may be classed as confidential at the discretion of the Chair.

**NO GOVERNOR WILL USE THEIR PRIVATE E-MAIL FOR GOVERNOR BUSINESS.**  
All Governors will be set up with a school e-mail address by the school.

Parent and staff governors are not representatives. If a parent approaches a parent governor, or a member of staff approaches the staff governor, they should refer to the complaint or grievance policy or another process as appropriate and not personally become involved in individual concerns. Apart from the risk of jeopardising appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, no governor has the authority to act individually on behalf of the school.

## **Governor Visits**

It is important that the Governors' Visits to the school are planned and have a clear purpose. They should not be over-burdening for either the staff or the members of the governing body. As a school we have agreed that the main driving force for any visits is the termly RAP.

Governors should adhere to the 'Governor Visit Policy', see Appendix 3.

It is good for the school if governors take an interest in the school beyond the academic development of the children. Staff give much of their time to ensure that the children have a wealth of experiences. These include school productions, participation in local creative festivals and a selection of fundraising activities. To get a full picture of the school it would be helpful if representatives from the governing body (and not always the Parent Governors) attended these events.

## **Evaluation**

Governors are encouraged and expected to review their own effectiveness each year and a review of each committee and the FGB will be undertaken. A timetable and process will be recommended for approval by the FGB in 2018-19.

**Coombe Road Primary School Instrument of Government**



**Coombe Road Instrument of Government Mar 15 (1).pdf**



## COOMBE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Brighton & Hove Code of Conduct for Governing Bodies

This Code of Conduct sets out the purpose of the governing body and the appropriate relationship between individual governors, the full governing body and the leadership team of the school. It sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities within the school and community effectively and efficiently. It is not intended to cover all aspects of the roles and responsibilities of the governing body but rather is concerned with establishing a common understanding of the broad principles by which the governing body will operate.

The Code will be adopted by the full governing body and will be reviewed annually.

#### The Purpose of the Governing Body

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that pupils and students are provided with a good education and that the school supports their well-being.

The governing body has a duty to act fairly and without prejudice and in so far as it has responsibility for staff, fulfils all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of the employer.

The governing body recognises that the headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy and day to day management of the school and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.

The governing body recognises that people become school governors with the intention of making a positive contribution to the work of the school and to contribute to the school providing the best possible education for all of its pupils and students.

#### The Role of the Governor

In law the governing body is a corporate body which means that:

- No governor can act on his or her own without proper authority from the full governing body
- All governors are appointed or elected with equal status and all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made
- Public statements will only be made on behalf of the governing body by the person delegated to do so (usually the chair or, in their absence, the vice-chair)
- Although appointed/elected by different routes (ie parents, staff, local authority, Diocese) the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole, above personal feeling and individual concerns

All governors will agree to adhere to The Seven Principles of Public Life (attached)

## **General**

- We will expect open government and will act appropriately
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except where the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so
- We will accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body, which means we will not speak against the majority decisions outside the governing body meetings
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school and our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this
- In making or responding to concerns or complaints raised about the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body through the published School's Complaints Policy. Individual governors should not deal with complaints independently from the guidelines in the policy

## **Publication of Governors' Details and Register of Interests**

- Governors' names, category, appointing body and their term of office will be published on the school's website.
- Also published will be the names of the committees of the governing body, governors' positions of responsibility on the governing body or committee, their relevant business interests and any other educational establishments they govern.
- Any relationships between governors and members of the school staff, eg spouses, partners or relatives, will also be published on the school's website.

## **Commitment**

- We acknowledge that being a governor involves the commitment of time and energy of all members of the governing body
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept our fair share of responsibilities
- We will make full effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, explain appropriately in advance why we are unable to attend
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities
- Our visits to school will be in line with our agreed school visits protocols, agreed in advance with the headteacher and appropriate members of staff
- We will make our individual and collective training and development needs a high priority

## **Relationships**

- We will strive to work together as an effective team and develop constructive working relationships with all members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leadership team and the school community as a whole (including the local authority and Diocese where appropriate)
- We will express opinions openly, courteously and respectfully – respecting there may be differences of opinion
- We recognise the role of the governor chairing the meeting is responsible for ensuring appropriate high standards of conduct at all times and we will support them in this role
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account questions or concerns raised
- We will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved

## **Confidentiality**

- We will observe confidentiality regarding proceeding of the governing body in meetings and from our visits to school as governors
- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern a named pupil, prospective pupils, parent, employee or prospective employee
- We will exercise the greatest care at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside of governing body meetings
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote

## **Conflicts of interest**

- We will maintain an updated record of pecuniary interest in the Register of Business Interest
- We will declare any personal or pecuniary interest in a matter under discussion at a meeting
- We will leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time if there is a conflict of personal or pecuniary interest
- If there is a disagreement as to whether a governor should withdraw from the meeting we recognise that the governing body will make the decision on withdrawal

## **Implementation of the Code of Conduct**

- We recognise that suspending or removing a governor is a serious step. Steps will be taken to attempt to resolve any issues, however, if the need arises to use sanctions, we will do so by following the appropriate resolutions processes and regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this Code of Conduct by any governors shall be raised at a meeting of the full governing body and if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors it shall be recorded in the minutes
- We understand that any governor whose conduct is recorded in the minutes twice in a twelve month period shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute

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The governing body of Coombe Road Primary School adopted this Code of Conduct on 26 September 2018

## **The Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Committee)**

### **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.

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. The above seven principles are the recommendations from the Committee.

# Governor Visits



*Broadening Horizons*

*Raising Aspirations*

Date:	December 2018
Review Date:	December 2020
Agreed by Full Governing Body:	4 December 2018

## **Governor Visits Policy**

This policy sets out the purpose and frequency of governor visits to the school, along with guidelines on how they should be conducted.

### **Purpose of governor visits**

1. Governor visits are one of the means by which the governing body fulfils its monitoring role. They are an opportunity for governors to see the practical effects of the decisions made by the governing body. They also allow staff to have contact with governors and help to give them a well-rounded view of how the school works.
2. Individual governors come from a variety of backgrounds. Some may have a professional teaching background, but during visits ALL governors should be observing as a well-informed lay person, not as a professionally qualified teacher.
3. In order to gain a fuller picture of the school in action, the governing body should plan a range of different types of visit, in order to collectively meet as many staff and pupils as possible in different scenarios. Types of visit can include learning walks, health & safety / diversity walks, classroom visits, meeting a professional they are linked to (eg SEN governor meets SENCO), inset days, lunchtime organisation, etc.

### **Frequency and duration of visits**

4. Non-staff governors should complete at least one visit per year, but it is expected that most will be able to carry out more. At each meeting of the full governing body, a schedule should be planned for visits to take place before the next meeting of the full governing body. The type of visit, the focus and the dates should be agreed with the full governing body, including the headteacher. Each visit should be at least 90 minutes.

### **Preparation for governor visits**

5. A week before the scheduled visit, governors should contact the headteacher to check the date is still convenient. At this point (preferably before), they should also identify the focus of the visit to any staff they are visiting, to ensure any necessary preparation can be made. For example, governors may wish to focus on topics or subjects addressed by policies which have recently been reviewed or are currently undergoing revision.
6. It is preferable that governors do not arrange visits for classes containing their own child(ren).

### **Conduct of visits**

7. Governors must not conduct visits to the school unless they have been planned with the headteacher and governing body.
8. Governors are 'critical friends' of the school and should adopt this role while on visits, so they should be showing support as well as asking questions (ie challenge').

9. In class, governors should behave as the classroom teacher asks them to, including joining in with activities so they can talk informally to the children. Governors should ensure that their presence does not disrupt the lesson. 'Involvement' may be more effective than 'observation'.
10. There are some example questions attached to this policy, which governors may want to consider during visits. Governors should plan their questions prior to the visit, according to the type of visit.

## **Feedback**

11. Immediate thanks and positive feedback should be given to the staff and pupils visited.
12. The governor should type up a brief written report using the proforma attached so that the school has a record of the visit. The governor should share this report with the headteacher (and any staff visited) before presenting it at the next meeting of the full governing body.
13. If, during a visit, a governor sees anything that causes them serious concern, they should raise this as soon as possible with the headteacher, before writing the report. If the headteacher is not available that day, then the deputy headteacher should be contacted.
14. Governors should give brief verbal feedback at full governing body meetings, where governor visits are a standing item on the agenda. Once agreed, the report will be a public document.

## **Example questions for governors to ask during a visit**

### **Questions to ask a subject leader / head of department**

- How are children responding to any new strategies? Are there different responses in different classes / year groups / girls & boys?
- What are the broad trends in the school's achievement from year to year / compared to other similar schools / in relation to the national picture etc?
- Are there significant differences between girls & boys / SEN / more able / EAL pupils / other minority groups?
- What training do the teaching staff and support staff receive?
- Is there a need for additional resources for any aspect of the work?
- How are parents kept informed of progress and what steps are being taken to encourage their involvement?
- How is your role developing?
- What is the allocation of funding for this subject? Will it be spent?
- What impact is the Pupil Premium having?
- Does the school offer books for all abilities, cultural backgrounds etc?

### **Questions to ask teachers**

- Do you feel fully trained up to implement new strategies?
- Do you have all the resources you need?
- Are you aware which pupils are identified as having extra support through the Pupil Premium funding? What extra support is this?
- How are children responding to any new strategies?
- What feedback have you had from parents about any new strategies?
- Do you feel you have been able to develop in your role this year?
- Do you have opportunities to share best practice with colleagues and ask for advice?

### **Questions to ask pupils**

- How do you know how to get better at your learning?
- What are you learning?
- Who helps you with your learning?
- Who can you ask?
- Tell me about your work. What are you proud of?
- Do you enjoy learning?
- What do you like about school?
- What would you do if you were worried about something?
- What happens if you follow the golden rules or don't follow them?
- Do you think it's important to have rules? Why?

**Coombe Road Primary School  
Governor Visit Report**

<b>Governor name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Time (start &amp; finish):</b>	
<p><b>Purpose of visit:</b>  <i>(For example, does the visit relate to a priority in the Raising Attainment Plan and/or an aspect of the school's self-evaluation?)</i></p>	
<p><b>Member(s) of staff visited:</b>  <b>Class(es):</b></p>	
<p><b>General comments/observations</b>  <i>(What did you see? What did you learn? What would you like clarified? NB Don't name individual pupils)</i></p>	
<p><b>Key observations to take back to governing body</b></p> <p>Positives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Questions arising from this visit to discuss with the governing body:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Date shared with the headteacher:</b>  <b>Date shared with committee/governing body:</b>  <b>Action agreed by the governing body:</b></p>	