

Brookvale Primary School

Governor Induction Pack

Introduction

Welcome to your new governor induction pack produced by Newall Green Primary School. This pack helps to explain the roles and responsibilities of being a governor, how the governing body is structured in our school and how the governing body carries out its duties.

This pack includes the following:

- The responsibilities of a governor
- The different types of governor
- The responsibilities of the Head teacher, Leadership Team and the Chair of Governors
- Being an effective governor
- The governing body membership and structure
- Useful terms and abbreviations

Relevant supporting information can be found on the school website

<http://brookvale.halton.sch.uk>

Here you will find:

- Aims and mission statement
- School Prospectus
- Newsletters
- Term dates
- Staff lists
- Links to the Governors Handbook
- Copies of the school policies
- Links to Ofsted Reports
- Pupil Premium information
- And much more!

Before becoming a Governor in our school we would ask you to complete the

- pecuniary interests statement
- skill matrix

Many new governors have confessed to being quite bemused during their first meetings and some feel unprepared for the barrage of papers with which they were greeted. In order to be effective, every governor needs some basic knowledge about their school and needs to be able to set this against a wider understanding of education. For both new and experienced governors there are training courses run by the Local Authority (LA). All governors are encouraged to take advantage of the training on offer. These courses are free of charge to governors.

What School Governors Do

A school governing body has a strategic role in the development of the school but does not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Head Teacher.

You are there to:

- Provide a strategic view - help to set and maintain the broad framework within which the Head Teacher and the staff should run the school
- Act as a critical friend - provide the Head Teacher with support and offer advice and information but also to provide some challenge. The governing body is there to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and governors should therefore be prepared to ask challenging questions
- To ensure accountability - the Head Teacher and staff report to the governing body on the school's performance.

In turn the governing body is accountable to all stakeholders on the school's overall performance

Different types of governor at Brookvale Primary School:

Parent Governors - parents or carers elected by other parents or carers with children at the School or, on occasion, appointed by the governing body;

Staff Governors - the Head Teacher and staff members elected by teaching and support Staff;

Community Governors - individuals chosen by governors from the local community who represent community interests;

LA Governors - appointed by the Local Authority who take regard of the skills and experience which schools require and appoint candidates who support the schools' ethos and mission;

Associate Members - a discretionary category appointed by the governing body from individuals who may be able to make specific contributions, but who is not a governor and has no vote at full governing body meetings but may have limited voting rights at committee level.

Specific responsibilities of the Governing Body

- set the overall budget for the school
- decide on the number of staff
- decide on the level of pay for teachers
- help to decide the priorities for the school when the school improvement plan is being developed
- ensure the national curriculum is taught to all pupils
- set targets for pupil achievement
- publish national test and exam results
- compare the performance of their school to similar schools
- receive information about the quality of teaching in the school
- have a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns
- ensure health and safety issues are addressed

- set the times of school sessions
- consult the Head Teacher when making decisions
- ask challenging questions
- help develop school policies and procedures
- consider the repair and maintenance of school buildings
- consider the use of school premises outside school hours
- Appoint committees of governors to look at specific issues such as finance, staffing, curriculum and premises.

Governing Bodies Don't:

- inspect the school
- report on the quality of teaching after visiting the school
- authorise all expenditure
- share concerns about staff capability
- decide on how pupils are taught different subjects
- have the right to exclude a pupil
- write the school's policies on their own
- rubberstamp recommendations from the Head Teacher
- automatically approve all apologies for absence for meetings sent by governors
- need to be aware of the performance objectives which had been set for individual teachers
- write the OfSTED action plan

The key responsibilities of the Head Teacher are:

- the internal organisation, management and control of the school
- Performance Management of all staff
- formulating aims, objectives and policies for the governing body to consider adopting
- advising on and implementing the governing body strategic framework
- giving governors the information they needed to help the school raise its standards

The key responsibilities for the Leadership Team are:

- to support the head teacher in the day to day running of the school
- to oversee an OFSTED area for the next inspection

The Chair of Governors is responsible for: (as listed by OfSTED)

- giving a clear lead in organising the governing bodies work, delegate and ensure other governors are fully involved
- manage meetings effectively
- keep other governors fully informed
- hold regular meetings with the Head Teacher
- co-operate with other agencies to support school improvement

The Chair has a pivotal role to play in helping the governing body work as a team. The Chair must have a clear view of the governing body and understand the shared visions for the school and know how that vision is to be achieved.

Being a school Governor, What Makes an Effective School Governor?

- you care about improving children's educational attainment
- you want to work as part of a team and can value and respect the contribution made by different people
- you are willing to listen, learn and to ask questions
- you are open to ideas and have a feel for what is important to people
- you are enthusiastic
- you can commit time and energy
- you will attend relevant training

What Does the Effective Governor Need to be Familiar With?

- the recent history of the school
- the type of school and the nature of the pupil intake
- the number of pupils on roll and projected future numbers how the school is staffed, organised and managed
- the status of the school budget
- the contents of the school improvement plan
- the curriculum provided at the school
- the range of extracurricular activities on offer and the nature of any extended services
- the school policies
- how the school communicates with parents, other schools and the community
- the layout of the buildings, grounds, their suitability and state of repair

How Much Time Do Governor's give?

A governor's term of office is usually for four years, but as a volunteer you can resign at any time. Your main task is to attend meetings of the school governing body. Meetings of the full governing body normally take place once each term. Each committee normally meets once a term, but may meet more frequently depending upon current issues the committees are involved with.

We actively encourage our Governors to visit school as part of their role in monitoring and evaluation to observe practice, meet with staff and to familiarise themselves with the school. Governors are usually welcome, by invitation, to attend school performances, events and some staff training. All Governors are encouraged to be aligned to at least one subject within school. This gives governors an opportunity to build a relationship with staff and to champion this subject at meetings of the governing body which focus on curriculum development. We recognise that not all governors can visit school during the day due to work commitments.

Be Prepared for a Meeting:

- read the papers before the meeting

- know who all the governors are (governors could be asked to wear name labels to help you)
- make sure you have all the necessary papers prepare your thoughts and questions before the meeting
- bring with you a pen, your diary and your annotated papers

Attendance

Any governor who, without permission, is absent from meetings of the full governing body for a continuous period of six months will cease to be a governor. If you need to offer apologies for a meeting this should be done through the Chair or the clerk in advance of the meeting with the reason for your absence noted.

Confidentiality

Governing body meetings are not open to the public. Visitors may attend by invitation but may be asked to leave if a confidential item is discussed. Governors observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the governing body in meetings and from their visits to school as governors. How an individual governor votes should always be regarded as confidential. The minutes of any part of the meeting that are confidential should be kept separate. In the main confidential items will be those where the privacy of an individual needs to be respected.

Governors and the law

The intention of the law is that governors should be accountable and business should be transparent with any confidential items being kept to a minimum. Any old documents governors wish to dispose of should be shredded, given the sensitive nature of some of the information.

Frequency, notice & duration of meetings

You will usually be given a terms notice of the next full governing body meeting date. You should receive your papers for the formal full governing body meetings seven days before the meeting with the papers setting out details of the date, time and place. Committee meetings are organised by the committees and contact is made by email or telephone giving governors details of agendas or necessary information they need for a meeting.

Agenda

The agenda, which will be contained with your notification for the meeting, will list all the items that are to be discussed at the meeting. Consider the agenda carefully before the meeting and make notes where there are items of particular interest or importance to you or where you want to ask a question. You have the right to request that an item be placed on the agenda by contacting the Chair or clerk a few weeks before the meeting. If "Any Other Business" features on your agenda and you wish to raise an issue under this item you must discuss this with the Chair prior to the start of the meeting so the Chair can evaluate whether the meeting is an appropriate forum for the issue and can allow sufficient time for discussion.

Quorum

If a meeting of the governing body cannot be held for a lack of a quorum (50% of current membership) or has to be terminated on that account before all agenda items have been completed, the clerk must convene a further meeting as soon as reasonably practicable. If the governing body decide to terminate the meeting before all agenda items have been completed, it must first fix the date and time for a further meeting at which the outstanding items will be considered and must direct the clerk to convene that meeting accordingly.

Register of Pecuniary Interests

Governors and school staff have a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and affairs and the interests of the school. Each Governor is required to complete this register each year. A copy for you to sign is included in the supporting information and needs to be returned to the head teacher.

Minutes

The clerk takes minutes of the Business meetings which are a record of what happens at that meeting. Minute takers at committee meetings are agreed at the start of the meeting. Once approved by the full governing body, the minutes are a public record and are displayed in the school.

How the Governing body is structured.

The whole Governing Body will meet once each term for a formal business meeting which looks at current issues within the school, takes a report from the head teacher and also takes feedback from the committees. Whilst each Committee has a specific area of responsibility the support of other committees may need to be sought before decisions can be actioned. Each committee has a core membership and arranges its meetings within the group, however all governors are welcome to attend committee meetings where they feel they wish to be involved in a specific issue.

- Curriculum and Standards –curriculum/ data / tracking/ teaching & learning
- Finance Staffing and Resources – building / staffing/ finance/ pupil premium spend