



Mr. Gary Spracklen - Headteacher (@Nelkcarps)



Maiden Castle Road, Dorchester, Dorset. DT1 2HH



01305 257120




office@princeofwales.dorset.sch.uk



<http://www.princeofwales.dorset.sch.uk>

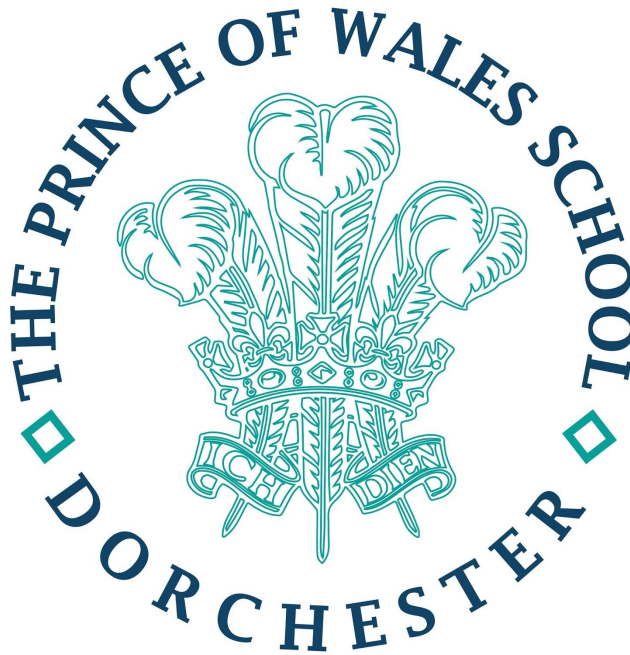
...where we are all inspired to learn

GOVERNANCE POLICY

Date formally approved by the Full Governing Body	Approved - Monday 2nd September 2019
Name of Authorisation Signatory	Chair of Governors - Martin Butcher
Signatory and Date	 Monday 2nd September 2019
Dorset Model Policy	Yes
Next Review Date	September 2021
Responsible for implementation and monitoring	Gary Spracklen - Headteacher Governing Body
Other relevant policies	N/A

...where we are all inspired to learn

The Prince of Wales School



...where we are all inspired to learn

...where every child matters

GOVERNANCE POLICY

Adopted by the Governing Body on Monday 2nd September 2019

CONTENTS

- Introduction
- The seven principles of public life
- Governing body roles and relationships
- The composition of the governing body
- The election/appointment, induction and responsibilities of governors, officers of the governing body and the clerk

The election and appointment of governors

The induction of new governors

Appointment, induction and duties of the clerk to the governing body

The appointment of elected officers of the governing body: the chair and vice chair of governors

Removal of chair and vice chair

Individual governors' roles and responsibilities

- Expenses and pecuniary interests

Governors' expenses

Pecuniary interests

- Meetings of the governing body

Governing body meetings

Voting

Drawing up agendas

Minutes

Attendance and apologies for absence

Correspondence

Confidentiality

Rights of persons to attend meetings

Conflicts of interest

Action following meetings and urgent actions

Extraordinary meetings

- Committees and working parties

- Other procedures

Governors' visits to school

Complaints from parents and carers

The suspension of governors and removal from office

Communication

Safeguarding Pupils

Code of Conduct

The Seven Principles of Public Life

This is an interpretation of Lord Nolan's seven principles, adapted for school governing bodies.

As a public body responsible for the well-being of the school and accountable to the parents and the local community, The Prince of Wales School Governing Body accepts the following principles as individual governors and corporately as the governing body.

<i>The Principle</i>	<i>The interpretation for governing bodies</i>
Principle 1 <u>Selflessness</u>	The governing body takes decisions solely in the interest of the school and its continued development and improvement.
Principle 2 <u>Integrity</u>	The governing body does not place itself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.
Principle 3 <u>Objectivity</u>	In making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending staff for rewards and benefits, the governing body makes choices on merit.
Principle 4 <u>Accountability</u>	The governing body is accountable for its decisions to the public and, in particular, the school's parents, and accepts it must and will submit itself to appropriate scrutiny, including through inspection and financial audit
Principle 5 <u>Openness</u>	Whenever possible and practicable, we are open with our actions and decisions and the reasons underpinning them.
Principle 6 <u>Honesty</u>	Individual governors accept each has a duty to declare any private interests relating to duties as governor, and to resolve any conflict in a way that protects the public interest.
Principle 7 <u>Leadership</u>	The governing body promotes and supports these principles by leadership and example.

Governing body role and relationships

The governing body and Headteacher work in close partnership. The Headteacher is the operational manager of the school, the governing body should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- **Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent**

The school development plan will generally provide the main mechanism for the strategic planning process. The governing body will monitor and evaluate progress and review the strategy for the school and in doing so will consider advice given by the Headteacher and the Self Evaluation Partner or external advisor.

The governing body will delegate sufficient powers to the Headteacher to allow him or her to perform the management duties of the post effectively and the Headteacher will report regularly to the governors.

The composition of the governing body

The composition of the governing body is specified in the Instrument of Government.

The governing body will review the composition of the governing body annually at the first meeting of the autumn term and will take into consideration such matters as the efficiency and effectiveness of the number of governors and the ease or difficulty of recruitment. A skills audit should be carried out regularly to help with recruiting governors with the skills needed.

Where a change of Instrument is clearly desirable, this matter will be considered and any decision to change the instrument made as an agenda item at a full meeting of the governing body.

The election/appointment, induction and responsibilities of governors, officers of the governing body and the clerk

The election and appointment of governors

The clerk should ensure that the governing body is aware of forthcoming governor vacancies at least three months before those vacancies are due.

Parent governors are elected using the procedures and paperwork developed by and available from Dorset governor services. A copy of this is available on Governor Services website within the Toolkit page. Parent governor positions must be filled by initially carrying out an election although an appointment to this category can be made by the governing body if an election is unsuccessful.

Staff governors are also elected using the Dorset procedure, and again paperwork to assist with this can be found on the Toolkit page of the website. Governing bodies will only have one staff governor position on their board but members of staff can also be appointed as co-opted governors. The staff governor position is open to all staff and should it get to a ballot, as more people apply than positions available, then all staff are entitled to vote.

Authority governors are nominated by the Local Authority, by working with the governing body to advertise the position and determine what skills are currently needed. The applicant should complete an application form and the chair of governors a meeting slip (this gives the governing body's view of any applicants). An Appointments Panel then make the nomination to the governing body on behalf of the LA.

The appointment is then made by the governing body ensuring that their eligibility criteria, previously set, has been met.

Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body using the process that they have decided on. The person to be appointed should have the skills, in the opinion of the governing body, required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

Associate members may be appointed to the governing body in addition to the complement of governors. Associate members are **not** governors and do not count towards a quorum. They are appointed to contribute specific areas of expertise or advice. They may sit on committees and the governing body may bestow voting rights. They may attend full governing body meetings but can not be given voting rights at these meetings. Their term of appointment will be for between one and four years, and can be individual to each associate member.

The induction of new governors

The governing body should agree a policy for new governors' induction. This policy should be in line with advice given by the LA in its induction guide for new school governors entitled *Welcome to Governance: what governing bodies do and what being a governor involves*

The key elements of that policy define:

- The information about the governing body that the new governor will receive and how that information is delivered
- Support from the chair
- Support from the headteacher
- Support and advice on courses for new governors
- The role of a governor mentor
- The governing body's decision on entitlement to expenses
- Advice on support from the new governor's employer; and
- Support for the new governor's first meeting

Appointment, induction and duties of the clerk to the governing body

The governing body shall appoint a clerk to the governing body, who must not be a governor, an associate member or the headteacher of the school.

The governing body may remove the clerk to the governing body from office.

Appointment

When a new clerk is to be appointed, the governing body should consider the model clerks' job description available from Human Resources, County Hall.

Induction

Once the new clerk has been appointed the chair of governors and headteacher will take the lead in implementing the induction programme agreed by the governing body.

The key elements of the induction programme include:

- Helping the new clerk to locate essential documentation and information
- Clarifying the policy on the use of email and Dorset County Council websites for communication with governors
- Clarifying pay and conditions of service
- Agreeing an annual appraisal for the clerk
- Agreeing line management relationships (this is the chair's responsibility)
- Support for the clerk's professional development, including attendance at clerks' termly briefings and courses provided by Dorset governor services. In particular covering expenses to enable the clerk to attend these courses.

Duties

The clerk shall:

- **Convene meetings of the governing body**
- **Attend meetings and produce minutes**
- **Maintain a register of members of the governing body and of associate members**

...where we are all inspired to learn

- **Maintain a register of governors' attendance at meetings and report on non-attendance to the governing body**
- **Give and receive notices concerning governor appointments, resignation and disqualification**
- **Perform such other functions suitable to the post as may be determined by the governing body.**

The appointment of elected officers of the governing body: the chair and vice chair of governors and committee chairs

The governing body determines and agrees its own procedure for the election of the chair and vice chair of governors. Normally the election is held at the first meeting of the autumn term, though sometimes a mid-year election may be necessary: for example, where an office holder chooses to resign in mid-term. If the chair resigns the vice-chair will act as chair until a successor can be appointed at the next meeting of the full governing body.

The legislative requirements are that:

- **Every governing body must elect a chair and vice chair.**
- **The chair and vice chair must be members of the governing body and must be governors – associate members can not be elected to either position.**
- **Prior to the election the governing body must determine the date on which the term of office of chair and vice-chair will end**
- **The election must be at a full meeting of the governing body.**
- **Governors who are paid to work at the school cannot be chair or vice chair.**
- **The chair or vice chair shall cease to hold office when: s/he leaves the governing body; is paid to work at the school; or is removed from office by the governing body.**

The process

In agreeing or reviewing its procedure for the election of chair and vice chair, the governing body will consider the following options:

- The length of the term of office. A common choice is one year, though the chair and vice chair can serve longer – the chair can be re-appointed each year but the NGA recommend that no chair serve longer than six years..
- Should governors be permitted to nominate themselves for office, or must the nomination come from another person?
- How will nominations be sought? For example, should nominations be sent in advance to the clerk – if so, how far in advance, and should the clerk write to governors inviting nominations? Or will nominations be acceptable during the meeting at which the election will take place. If so, should the clerk ask for nominations at the meeting?
- Should nominations be supported by a proposer and seconder?
- If there is only one nominee for each position, should that person automatically be elected or should there be a ballot to ensure the majority on the governing body supports the nominations?
- How will votes be indicated – by show of hands or (preferably) paper ballot?
- Can candidates vote for themselves?
- Can absent governors be allowed a proxy or postal vote?
- A suggested process can be found on the governor services website.

Other considerations

The governing body notes:

...where we are all inspired to learn

- The agenda for the governing body meeting at which the chair and vice chair elections will take place should list the election as the first item and give details of any nominations received in advance.
- The clerk will chair that part of the meeting dealing with the election of the chair.
- The governing body should ask prospective chairs and vice chairs to leave the room while the ballot takes place and the outcome is discussed
- Once the chair is elected s/he conducts the election of the vice chair, using the same procedures adopted for the election of the chair.

The appointment of committee chairs and vice-chairs

There is a legal requirement that each committee should have a chair. The law does not actually require a vice chair, though it is perfectly permissible to elect or appoint one if that is the committee's or governing body's wish.

The governing body will decide either to appoint committee chairs and vice chairs or to delegate that decision to the committees themselves.

An associate member may be elected or appointed chair of a committee.

There is no set process for the election of committee chairs (and vice chairs if wanted) but it is probably a good idea to follow the same procedure as agreed for the chair and vice chair of the full governing body.

Removal of chair and vice chair from office

In certain circumstances, the governing body may, by resolution, remove the chair or vice chair from office. Where removal is being considered, the governor proposing removal should attempt informal resolution by discussion with the chair or vice chair.

If a decision to propose removal is made, this must be a specified item of business on the agenda of a full governing body meeting. Before the governing body resolves to remove the chair or vice chair, the governor proposing the removal shall at the meeting state reasons for doing so, and the chair or vice chair shall be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting.

At the meeting, following the withdrawal of the chair or vice chair, the governing body will discuss the proposition to remove and will vote by paper ballot. In the event of a tied vote the person chairing the meeting will have the casting vote.

Individual governors' roles and responsibilities

The governing body will appoint named governors to manage the Headteacher's performance management.

The governing body may also appoint named governors for special educational needs (including in mainstream schools), literacy, numeracy, safeguarding, equality and for other positions as agreed (*for example, early years, governor development, subjects on the curriculum, newly qualified teachers*).

The governing body will review these positions at the first full governing body meeting of the school year and fill any vacancies.

Where appropriate, the governing body should adopt the governor job descriptions from the governor services website.

Expenses and pecuniary interests

Governors' expenses

The governing body will agree a policy on the payment of governors' expenses from the school's delegated budget, recognising that there is no statutory obligation on a governing body to pay expenses though the DEF recommends that it should.

In considering whether to make payment of expenses, the governing body should consider such factors as equal opportunities and the recruitment and retention of governors as well as the cost implications of paying governors' expenses.

If the decision is that expenses will be paid, the governing body's expenses policy must be in line with legislation and detail the areas in which expenses can be claimed, the rate of payment and how individual governors' claims are submitted and processed. (*A model policy is available from governor services*).

Pecuniary and business interests

The governing body will maintain a register of governors' pecuniary and business interests

- The register of governors' pecuniary and business interests is maintained by the clerk to the governing body and is kept confidentially in the school
- New governors will be asked on appointment to complete a form detailing pecuniary and business interests
- Existing governors will be reminded at least annually (at the first full governing body meeting of the autumn term) to sign a new form (or sign and re-date the existing form), even if there is no change in their circumstances, to show that the information is current
- Individual governors whose circumstances change in respect of pecuniary and business interest during the year should take the initiative in completing a new form

A governor with a pecuniary or business interest will withdraw from the meeting during the discussion of that item if the governor, or a close relative (as defined) stands to gain financially from the decision, has a personal interest in the matter under discussion, or is related to a parent, pupil or employee under discussion. The school must publish information for governor Business Interest forms on the school website.

In fact Declaration of Business Interests should be at the top of the agenda for every meeting (full governors and committees) to prompt governors to declare their interest and withdraw. The clerk should minute that this matter was raised and the response from those present.

Where a governor has a personal, pecuniary or business interest in an item under discussion at a meeting, the clerk will draw this to that governor's attention if the governor has not already personally identified an interest at the start of the meeting.

Meetings of the governing body

Governing body meetings

The governing body conforms to the legal requirement to meet three times each academic year.

Meetings of the governing body are convened by the clerk.

The clerk will give written notice of the meeting, a copy of the agenda and any reports or other papers to each governor, the Headteacher and associate members, at least seven clear days in advance of the meeting, except in

...where we are all inspired to learn

cases of emergency where the chair considers a meeting is needed to decide on a matter requiring urgent consideration, when this period may be shortened.

Any three members of the governing body may request a meeting by giving written notice to the clerk that includes a summary of the business to be transacted. The clerk must convene the meetings as quickly as is reasonably practicable.

Full notice is required of any meeting at which consideration is to be given to the removal of chair or vice chair, the suspension of any governor, or a decision to serve notice of discontinuance of the school.

The governing body expects all governors to make every effort to attend and contribute to all meetings of the full governing body and the meetings of the committees of which they are members.

The governing body will agree the annual number of its meetings and how many times it will meet in each term. *(The governing body may like to add a sentence here stating the number of meetings per year and per term.)*

At the first meeting in the autumn term the governing body agrees the times and dates for full meetings of the governing body for the rest of the academic year. An acceptable length of meeting could also be set and agree that if the business has not been completed in this time that the governors present may decide to continue the meeting in order to deal with the agenda items or discontinue and re-schedule.

The times and dates of meetings of committees are decided by the governing body or each committee for the full year, taking account of governing body meeting dates.

The day and time of meetings are reviewed annually and take into account suitability, reasonableness and convenience for most governors, and work-life balance for staff governors and the Headteacher.

Voting

The quorum for a meeting of the governing body and for any vote on any matter shall be one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the actual membership of the Governing Body, excluding vacancies. *(For example, if your governing body has sixteen places but only thirteen are filled, the quorum is half of thirteen rounded up, so seven.)*

Every question to be decided at a meeting of the governing body shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the governors present and voting on the question.

Where there is an equal division of votes the chair or the person acting as chair (provided s/he is a governor) shall have a second or casting vote (associate members acting as chair do not have a casting vote).

- Normally decisions will be agreed by the chair seeking a consensus view at the end of a discussion
- Where the chair or another governor (with the support of the governing body) considers it appropriate to take a vote, the governing body shall determine whether this will be by show of hands or ballot
- A secret ballot will be organised where this is agreed by the governing body
- All resolutions put to a vote require a proposer and seconder and will be decided by a simple majority vote, with the chair having a casting vote
- The clerk will record the voting figures, including abstentions
- Information on how individual governors voted is confidential to the meeting and should not be published

Drawing up agendas

For full meetings of the governing body, the agenda will be considered between the chair of governors, the Headteacher and the clerk at least three weeks before the meeting. At the agenda meeting, priorities will be

...where we are all inspired to learn

discussed and the agenda agreed. *(It may be helpful to make use of the year planner circulated by governor services and available on the governor services website.)*

Governors may request items be placed on the agenda for governing body meetings by contacting the clerk or the chair. These requests will be considered at the agenda setting meeting.

The chair makes the final decision on agenda items, placing priority items near the top of the list and taking into account the views and advice of the head and clerk. The chair should not use this power to forbid discussion of matters put forward by governors.

The agenda of every meeting of the governing body will include an item concerned with school development, often supported by a written report by the Headteacher, or his or her staff nominee or the school development group.

Each agenda item will include a brief description to help governors to prepare properly for that part of the meeting and any papers needed for that item will be identified.

The agenda and any supporting papers (and, if not previously distributed, the approved draft minutes of the last full meeting of the Governing Body and the minutes of committee meetings) will be sent to all governors to arrive at least seven days before the meeting in question.

Only governors who have received minutes may vote on whether the minutes may be accepted.

The same processes are used in drawing up committee agendas. The committee clerk, committee chair and Headteacher will be involved in this case.

The governing body will decide whether or not to include Any Other Business on the agenda for full governing body and committee meetings. If it is decided to include this item, the governing body should decide whether individuals wishing to raise such additional matters must inform the chair of their intention before the meeting or if it will be permissible to raise matters at the meeting itself. Alternatively, the governing body will decide whether such additional items can be dealt with at the meeting, referred to one of the committees, deferred to a later meeting, or should not be included on any agenda. It is quite permissible not to have Any Other Business on the agenda at all.

Minutes

The clerk (or person appointed to act as clerk) will ensure that minutes of the proceedings of a meeting are drawn up and signed (subject to the approval of the governing body) by the chair at the next meeting.

The governing body shall, as soon as reasonably practicable, make available for inspection by any interested person a copy of

- The agenda for every meeting
- The signed minutes of every such meeting
- Any reports or papers considered at any such meeting.

The governing body can exclude any material relating to

- A named person who works, or it is proposed should work, at the school
- A named pupil at, or candidate for admission to, the school
- Any other matter that, by reason of its nature, the governing body is satisfied should remain confidential, having in mind the requirements of freedom of information legislation

...where we are all inspired to learn

The minutes will be drawn up by the clerk and kept as a permanent record, in paper copy (and electronically if desired) in a format to be agreed by the governing body, perhaps a lever-arch file or a minutes book.

On approval by the governing body at the next relevant meeting, the chair will initial and date each page. Other significant documents coming to the governing body for adoption or approval will be signed and dated by the chair on approval by the governing body, with an initial on each page of the document.

Draft minutes should be checked for accuracy by the chair and headteacher within ten days of the meeting. The clerk will send these approved draft minutes to all members of the governing body as soon as they are available.

A copy of the signed minutes will be sent to governor services as soon as practicable, by email, and will be available for inspection by parents and members of the public at the school. The minutes of confidential items will generally be available only to the governors attending the meeting at which they were discussed (see Confidentiality, below).

Attendance and apologies for absence

The governing body expects all governors to make every effort to attend full governing body meetings and meetings of the committees of which they are members.

The Headteacher, whether or not a governor, is entitled to attend all meetings of the governing body but will be asked to withdraw from meetings during discussion and decisions on the head's pay or in any other matter where a conflict of interest could arise. If the Headteacher cannot be present at a full governing body meeting, the deputy head or other nominated member of staff may be invited to attend but will not have a vote.

The clerk records the names of all those present at the meeting, including his or her own name and the names of associate members and any visitors and observers.

The minutes will record the late arrival or early departure of governors or associate members.

A governor who is not able to attend a meeting should give apologies, explaining the absence. The governing body will decide at the meeting whether or not to accept the apologies and record its decision in the minutes of the meeting, following a vote if necessary. Where apologies have not been accepted, the clerk will inform the absent governor. Where a governor fails to attend a meeting and does not give apologies beforehand, the absence is noted in the minutes.

Governors are disqualified from serving if they miss meetings for six months consecutively, starting from the first meeting missed.

- Any governor or associate member who fails to attend a meeting of the full governing body for six months from the first meeting missed will be automatically disqualified unless the governing body has accepted apologies, in which case the six month period starts again from the first meeting at which apologies are not sent or are not accepted. The clerk will inform the governor or associate member of the disqualification rule before the end of the six month period.
- Where a governor or associate member is missing meetings, the chair of governors will arrange to meet the person to discuss any difficulties and provide support.

Correspondence

...where we are all inspired to learn

The clerk will produce a list of incoming and outgoing governors' correspondence as part of a written report for each full governing body meeting and will maintain a file of correspondence in the school available to all governors.

The chair, headteacher and clerk will agree which items of incoming correspondence will be presented for discussion at full governing body meetings. This must not, however, include letters of complaint sent to the clerk; letters of complaint will be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure.

The governing body will from time to time determine who should write letters, policy papers or discussion documents and other materials on its behalf. No governor should write such a letter or policy paper or make a public statement without the authority of the governing body.

Confidentiality

Although minutes of governing body and committee meetings are public documents, the discussions within the meeting are confidential. All members of the governing body must respect the general confidentiality of the detailed discussions that take place in meetings.

The governing body may keep certain parts of its discussions confidential and omit details from the public minutes. A matter is confidential if so declared by the chair of governors or committee chair at a meeting with the agreement of members present and having regard for the requirements of freedom of information legislation. Generally, this is done to protect the identity of persons under discussion, including a parent, pupil, member of staff or governor. These items should be minuted separately as a confidential minute.

The governing body will determine the circulation of confidential minutes arising from governing body and committee meetings. Confidential minutes will be available to all persons present at the meeting at which the confidential matter was discussed and, at the discretion of the governing body, to other governors who need to have this information in order to form judgements and make decisions. Confidential minutes will not be available for circulation to parents or members of the public except where disclosure is required under freedom of information legislation.

The minutes of confidential items will be printed on coloured paper for ease of identification. The clerk will ensure they are kept in a secure place in the school.

A confidential matter is not to be discussed by any governor outside the meeting, including with fellow governors. Individual governors will be asked to account for any breaches in confidentiality and the governing body may vote to suspend or remove a governor who has breached confidentiality.

Rights of persons to attend meetings

In addition to governors, those who may attend a governing body meeting are:

- **The Headteacher of the school (whether or not a governor)**
- **The clerk to the governing body**
- **An associate member – although the governing body may exclude an associate member from any part of its meeting which s/he is otherwise entitled to attend when the business under consideration concerns an individual member of staff or pupil**
- *Anyone else by invitation of the governing body. (Governing bodies may, if they wish, agree that some or all of their meetings will be open to the public, including staff and parents – except that members of the public must withdraw when confidential matters are under discussion.)*
- **The governing body may invite observers to its meetings, and this could include the deputy Headteacher and other staff members.**

...where we are all inspired to learn

Non-governors are not entitled to speak at meetings unless invited to do so by the chair, and they may not vote. The governing body may ask visitors to leave a meeting at any time.

Conflicts of interest

Where there is a conflict between the interests of any person and the interests of the governing body, that person should withdraw from any meeting of the governing body or its committees and should not vote. In a situation where the principles of natural justice require a fair hearing and there is any reasonable doubt as to a person's ability to act impartially, he or she should also withdraw from the meeting and not vote.

If there is any dispute as to whether or not a person must withdraw from a meeting the other governors present at the meeting must decide on this.

Examples of cases where a fair hearing must be given include decisions relating to staff or pupil discipline or admission of pupils. The restrictions on persons taking part in proceedings do not stop a governing body or committee from allowing someone who can offer relevant evidence to a case in question from giving that evidence.

Action following meetings, and urgent actions

The governing body will authorise the chair or clerk to ensure that action agreed at meetings is followed up by the named person within the agreed timescale.

The chair, clerk and Headteacher will monitor progress of actions when planning the next full meeting of the governing body.

Where urgent action is needed, the chair (or vice chair where the chair is unable to exercise this responsibility) has power to exercise any function of the governing body where delay would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, or to any pupil, parent or staff member. (In this context, 'delay' means delay for a period longer than the earliest date on which it would be reasonably practicable for a meeting to be held of the governing body, or of a committee to which the function in question has been delegated.)

The chair will use these powers only when absolutely unavoidable and will report any urgent action taken at the next full meeting of the governing body, usually in writing as part of a chair's report to governors.

Extraordinary meetings

Any three members of the governing body may requisition a meeting by giving written notice to the clerk that summarises the business to be conducted. The clerk must convene a meeting as soon as is practicable. At least seven days before the meeting the clerk must give each governor, associate member and the Headteacher (if not a governor) written notice of the meeting, a copy of the agenda and any papers to be considered. If the chair considers there are matters that demand urgent consideration, s/he can determine a shorter period of notice, but that period must be at least seven days if matters to be discussed include the removal of the chair, the suspension of any governor, changing the school's name or if a proposal to close the school is to be considered.

As a matter of courtesy, the chair should be informed when any three governors plan to request an extraordinary meeting. Governors considering requesting an extraordinary meeting will be expected to have given consideration to the implications for governors' time and to have weighed up other options, such as an agenda item at the next full meeting of the governing body.

Committees and Working Parties

Committees

The governing body will normally delegate decision-making powers to its committees. Committees operate in a broadly similar manner to the governing body: they must have a chair; they may have a vice chair, though this is not a legal requirement; there has to be a clerk (this must not be a member of this committee); meetings must include an agenda and papers, distributed with due notice; minutes must be approved and published, unless confidential.

- **The governing body must determine membership and proceedings of any committee it decides to establish**
- **The governing body must review annually the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any committee**
- **The quorum for a meeting of a committee is three governors who are members of the committee**
- **Each committee must have a chair, who is either appointed by the governing body or elected by the committee, as determined by the governing body**
- **The governing body may remove the chair of a committee at any time**
- **The governing body shall appoint, and may remove, a clerk to each committee. This must not be the Headteacher. The clerk shall convene and attend meetings and ensure that minutes are drawn up**
- **The membership of any committee may include associate members, provided that a majority on the committee are governors**
- **No vote shall be taken at a committee meeting unless the majority of members of the committee present are governors**
- **Associate members may have voting rights on committees if these are granted by the governing body.**

Working Parties

Working parties exist to consider short-term projects and initiatives. They are established, and their membership is set, by the governing body. Working parties do not have delegated powers and can make no decisions on behalf of the governing body, to whom they should report regularly.

Other procedures

Governors' visits to school

Governors' visits are an opportunity for governors to collect information on the impact of policies and plans, to meet staff and to understand better how the school operates. While there may be an element of monitoring in a visit, governors must not monitor the quality of teaching; this is the Headteacher's responsibility. Visits will usually focus on any special responsibilities held by governors or priorities in the school development plan.

The governing body should adopt a visits policy developed in collaboration with staff, a model policy is available from governor services. The policy will lay out clear protocols for the preparation for meetings, the visit itself and post-meeting action. Every governor should visit the school at least once a year, but usually once a term, and the governing body may agree an upper limit on the number of visits per governor to avoid infringing on the time and other commitments of teaching staff. The timing and date of visits should be agreed well in advance with the Headteacher.

Feedback on each visit should be presented to the governing body, the visited teacher being invited to contribute.

A log of governors' visits should be kept by the clerk or a designated governor, including the dates and purposes of visits and the teachers and classes visited.

Complaints from parents and carers

Complaints by parents about the running of the school will be dealt with initially in accordance with the Headteacher's agreed procedure; this may mean that the subject teacher or tutor will be invited first to deal with the complaint, or the Headteacher may deal with all complaints in the first instance. The governing body must agree a policy for dealing with complaints which cannot be settled at this informal stage. *(Dorset County Council has a complaints policy which schools are encouraged to adopt. There are separate arrangements for dealing with complaints on admissions, the curriculum, exclusions and SEN.)*

In no circumstance should any governor attempt to become involved in the resolution of a parent's complaint except by advising how the process works.

Ofsted has the power to investigate parental complaints on whole school issues (not about individual pupils) including complaints that:

- The school is not providing a good education
- The pupils' needs are not being met
- The school is not well managed
- Pupils' wellbeing is neglected

Generally, Ofsted will become involved only where the local complaints procedure has been exhausted and can, in extreme cases, organise an immediate inspection.

The suspension of governors and removal from office

The governing body may suspend a governor from its meetings for a fixed period of up to six months.

The grounds for suspension are if the governor

- **works at the school and is subject to disciplinary proceedings**
- **is subject to court or tribunal proceedings, the outcome of which could mean that s/he is disqualified from holding office as a governor**
- **has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the school's ethos or religious character and has brought, or could bring, the school or the governing body into disrepute**
- **is in breach of the duty of confidentiality to the school the staff and the pupils**

A governing body can vote to suspend a governor on any of these grounds, but does not have to. Suspension on points 3 and 4 should be used only as a last resort after other efforts to seek resolution have been used.

Any motion to suspend must be specified as an agenda item at a meeting of which at least seven days' notice has been given. Before the governing body votes to suspend a governor, the governor proposing suspension must give the reasons for doing so and the governor proposed for suspension must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting so that the vote can take place. If it is decided that

suspension will be invoked, a second vote takes place to determine the period of suspension. All voting is by secret ballot

A governor who has been suspended must be given notice of any meetings and must be sent agendas, reports and papers for meetings missed during suspension and shall not be disqualified from continuing to hold office for failure to attend meetings for six months.

The governing body may remove from office any appointed governors: these are co-opted governors, partnership and appointed parent governors (but not elected parent governors). **The reasons for proposed removal must be made known to the governor, who will have an opportunity to make a defence. A vote by secret ballot will be taken on a resolution to remove.**

The local authority may remove an authority governor and the diocese a foundation governor.

Elected governors (staff and parents) may not be removed from office but may be considered for suspension under the grounds set out in law.

Any governor will automatically be removed from the governing body if disqualified by reason of unauthorised absence from governing body meetings for more than six months, or if s/he is subject to any other legal grounds for disqualification.

Communication matters

1. 'Communication' refers here to communication to the governing body from the CSA and the DFE, among others, and communication from the governors to these bodies. The governing body needs to agree the route for these communications, which is normally through the clerk to governors.
2. All governors should complete a form with their contact details. These will be stored by the clerk.
3. The governing body should make decisions on the extent to which email will be used for sending out agendas, papers and minutes. Votes can not be made by email. While chairs may use email circulation to inform members of the governing body or to discern opinion, no decisions may be made through this means.
4. The governing body can make arrangements for their members to be present at board and committee meetings "virtually", for example by phone or video conference, and therefore to participate in discussion and decision making remotely.

Safeguarding Pupils

All governors on first appointment will be required to undergo checks to determine suitability to have access to children and young people in accordance with any legal requirements or policy of the local authority or the governing body.

Any governor refusing to take these checks will be disqualified from membership of the governing body

Code of Conduct

Every governor will be requested to sign the Code of Conduct declaration at first appointment and each subsequent year, usually in the autumn term



...where we are all inspired to learn