

**St Peter's CE Junior School**  
**GOVERNING BODY OPERATING PROCEDURES**



Agreed by Governing Body:	17 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2009	Due for review:	September 2010
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**1. Style and Standards (Governor Relationships)**

- 1.1 The governing body acts at all times in accordance with the requirements laid down in Acts of Parliament, statutory regulations and the school's instrument and articles of government.
- 1.2 The governing body acts at all times fairly, without prejudice, and in accordance with the principles laid down by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (*Nolan Committee 1996*), namely: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 1.3 An individual governor contributes to the overall governance process as a critical friend to the school, and retains a 'respectful uncertainty' for what they are told, testing their perceptions against written evidence and external judgments.
- 1.4 The governing body and Headteacher will respect each other's roles and maintain a professional and open relationship, acknowledging the skills and contributions of all, supporting each other and recognising each other's respective responsibilities, so as to form a good working partnership.
- 1.5 The governing body will use staff and governor time appropriately, sensitively and effectively.
- 1.6 The governing body will, in the way it conducts its business, always have regard to the need for the Headteacher, staff and governors to maintain a reasonable work/life balance.
- 1.7 All governors will contribute to discussions, and support the corporate decision-making process, maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality and discretion.
- 1.8 Each governor must respect the confidentiality of those items of business that have been designated by the governing body as confidential and must not disclose what individual governors have said or how they have voted.
- 1.9 Once decisions are made by the group, individual governors are bound by them and should be loyal to them. The governing body believes conflict is best resolved openly, through discussion, corporate decision-making and acceptance of the majority view. Where this cannot be achieved, suspension of a governor will be used as a last resort, in accordance with current regulations.

## **2. Membership, Training and Skills**

- 2.1 The governing body will ensure it has sufficient governors to undertake its duties effectively.
- 2.2 All governors will be appointed for a 4 year term of office.
- 2.3 The governing body will ensure that it creates an environment which enables it to proactively recruit and retain effective governors.
- 2.4 The governing body will consider for associate membership those individuals who would not otherwise be qualified to be governors.
- 2.5 New governors will be welcomed and provided with appropriate induction and training.
- 2.6 All governors will undertake training relevant to their role, with a clear link to the School Improvement Plan.
- 2.7 All governors will share the workload and take on additional responsibility at an appropriate time.
- 2.8 The skills base of the individual governors will be monitored and published.

## **3. Election of Chair and Vice-chair of Governors**

- 3.1 The Chair/Vice-chair will be elected for two years at a time.
- 3.2 Candidates may self-nominate at any time in advance of a vote.
- 3.3 The Clerk will take the chair for the election of the Chair.
- 3.4 Where an election of Chair or Vice-chair is contested, voting will be by secret ballot.
- 3.5 Any changes to the governing body's arrangements for elections will be made in advance of any election.

## **4. Committees and Workgroups**

- 4.1 Subject to Regulations, the governing body will make provision for staff dismissal and appeal, pupil discipline, complaints and admissions committees.
- 4.2 The following committees have also been set up with delegated powers:
  - Finance and General Purpose Committee
  - Personnel Committee
- 4.3 Terms of Reference must be reviewed annually by each committee at their first meeting of each academic year for subsequent ratification by the governing body.

- 4.4 Committees will elect their chair annually, and this will not be a full-time member of staff or an associate member of the governing body. The serving chair will call the first meeting of each academic year.
- 4.5 The following workgroups have also been set up to improve the governing body response to specific short-term projects or regularly occurring processes; they have no delegated powers:
- Health & Safety Workgroup
  - Farewell Workgroup

## **5. Appointment of Clerk**

- 5.1 The Clerk to the governing body will have a contract of employment that includes specific provision in relation to their work as Clerk. This will show hours, rate of pay, method of payment, overtime pay and period of notice and accountability.
- 5.2 The governing body will arrange for the Clerk to discuss their role and performance over the previous year with the Chair on an annual basis.
- 5.3 The governing body will support the Clerk in their continuing professional development, for example, the Clerk's development programme, support meetings, and whole governing body training.
- 5.4 The governing body agrees to make use of the LA Clerking Service until otherwise decided.
- 5.5 Each committee delegated powers by the governing body will have a named clerk, who will be agreed at the first committee meeting of each year and who is not a member of the committee.

## **6. Meetings**

- 6.1 The programme of meeting agendas will have a focus on the governors' responsibilities in monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes of the School Improvement Plan, within the full range of governing body responsibilities.
- 6.2 Agenda Setting
- 6.2.1 The Headteacher and Chair of the governing body will meet or exchange e-mails 10 to 14 days before each full governing body meeting to determine the agenda for that meeting, having due regard to the agreed annual programme of actions.
- 6.2.2 For other committees, the chair of that committee will determine an appropriate agenda for each meeting.
- 6.2.3 There will be no item for 'Any Other Business' or tabled papers, except when agreed by the Chair in exceptional circumstances.

- 6.3 Distribution of papers
- 6.3.1 Governors will receive relevant information one week in advance of meetings to enable sound discussion and decisions to be made.
- 6.3.2 For full governing body meetings and for committee meetings, papers will be distributed electronically. Hardcopy will be issued by post only when there is no electronic version available.
- 6.3.3 Electronic copies of the agendas, minutes and other papers of governing body and committee meetings will be sent to Fleet Governor Services for information.
- 6.4 Conduct and Duration of Governing Body Meetings
- 6.4.1 Governors unable to attend GB or committee meetings should notify either the Clerk (for GB meetings), or the chair (for all meetings), by e-mail or phone as soon as it becomes clear that they will be absent.
- 6.4.2 Recording of acceptance of apologies implies the consent of the governing body for a governor to be absent with regard to the Disqualification Regulations for non-attendance. Consent for absence may also be granted by the governing body on request from governors who know they will be unable to attend meetings for an extended period. Where a governing body is not satisfied with the reason for non-attendance, this will be recorded explicitly in the minutes.
- 6.4.3 The governing body will aim to complete full governing body and committee meetings within two hours and be prepared to not cover all agenda items if time runs out. All meetings will be held at the school and start at 7pm.
- 6.5 Parents and the Community
- 6.5.1 The governing body will seek opportunities throughout the year to engage with parents and the community in constructive discussion about the conduct of the school and plans for the future.
- 6.6 Quorum - The quorum for any governing body or committee meeting will be 50% of the constitution of the committee (excluding any vacancies), rounded up, and subject to a minimum of 3 governors.
- 6.7 Frequency
- 6.7.1 The governing body will hold the minimum number of meetings necessary to ensure that the strategic business of the school is properly addressed.
- 6.7.2 The full governing body will meet 6 times annually, spread evenly throughout the year on a two-monthly cycle, but will alternate business meetings and pupil progress meetings.
- 6.7.3 The Personnel committee will meet termly and the F&GP committee every three months, timed for maximum impact.

## 7. Strategic Planning and School Improvement

The governing body:

- 7.1 Has involvement in the planning and agenda for school improvement and contributes to the strategic development of the school.
- 7.2 Seeks a shared understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- 7.3.1 Draws up a strategic School Improvement Plan every 3 years, and reviews it in the first term every year. The draft is initially drawn up by the Headteacher with the help of the School Improvement Partner, before being put to the FGB for review and acceptance.
- 7.3.2 Maintains ownership of the online school Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). The SEF is managed by the Headteacher as part of the overall school management process.
- 7.4 Is continuously self-evaluative about its own performance.
- 7.5 Monitors and evaluates school performance, using a variety of internal and external information and direct observation, taking appropriate action on it.
- 7.6 Requires written information from the Headteacher on:
  - Pupil achievement
  - Performance data
  - Progress against the School Improvement Plan
  - Effectiveness of the Performance Management Policy
  - School self-evaluation
  - Fulfilment of statutory responsibilities as listed in Part C of the OfStEd online school Self-Evaluation Form (SEF).
- 7.7 Will be made aware and make use of external inspection reports from LA advisers. Those provided by HIAS to the chair of governors (except those naming individual staff) will be circulated to all members of the governing body.
- 7.8 Will seek to be 'good' (or better) in terms of OfStEd descriptors on school governance.

## **8. Policies**

- 8.1 The school's policy set and policy review process is described in our published Policy Review Procedure, plus our Best Value Statement and the Register of Governors Pecuniary Interests.
- 8.2 Each policy is owned by an individual governor - normally the chair of the governing body, or the chair of a committee, or the Headteacher.
- 8.3 The policies are collated and stored in ring-files located in the Headteacher's office and in the Staff Room. Electronic versions are stored on SchoolPool and TeachersPool for access and review by staff.
- 8.4 Every policy has a review date, and it is the responsibility of the owner of the policy to ensure this review takes place.
- 8.5 All statutory policies, and many non-statutory policies found useful by the school, are posted on the school website for public viewing. It is the responsibility of the chair of governors to ensure that this is done.

## **9. Commitment:**

Each governor:

- 9.1 Participates in the work of the governing body, for example serving on committees and working groups; this includes preparing for meetings, attending meetings, contributing to discussion, and taking part in agreed actions.
- 9.2 Becomes familiar with the school as a result of discussions with the Headteacher and staff, reading relevant papers, visiting the school and taking part in events.
- 9.3 Strives to increase their ability to contribute to the work of the governing body by taking part in available training and other opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 9.4 Helps new governors to understand their role and to make a full contribution.
- 9.5 Promotes the best interest of the school & the education of its pupils at all times.
- 9.6 Declares personal or pecuniary interests, and avoids using their position as a governor for personal gain, or the gain of other outside parties, or to promote the interest of their own children to the detriment of others.

## **10. Governor Visits to School**

- 10.1 All governors are encouraged to spend time in the school during normal school hours in order to build and refresh their general awareness of the school.
- 10.2 A protocol and process is in place to ensure effective use of focused governor monitoring and evaluation visits. This includes making the Headteacher aware in advance of the visit and its purpose.
- 10.3 The outcome of Chair and HT discussions are reported to the governing body, normally verbally at the FGB meetings or by e-mail to every governor if the issues are time-critical.