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| Governor Committee Responsible | Full Governing Body |

*This document sets out the principles and procedures by which this governing body operates.
All governors have a copy so that they know how the governing body works.*

WNA Vision: All children will achieve their full potential, with holistic support, whilst enjoying and driving their own learning, gaining self-respect, self-esteem and self-belief. Our classroom extends to rich, exciting environments within the forest, the beach, the city and the community as a whole.

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The School's Vision

All children will achieve their full potential, with holistic support, whilst enjoying and driving their own learning, gaining self-respect, self-esteem and self-belief. Our classroom extends to rich, exciting environments within the forest, the beach, the city and the community as a whole.

Our Ethos

Respect for the core capabilities of children and the recognition that all children are unique individuals with a wide range of abilities and potentials. Children are valued as strong, sociable and capable individuals, constantly learning and enquiring about the world about them.

WNA is a place where children will be encouraged to be curious, to ask questions and to learn from one another. Children at our school will be encouraged to question their teachers, formulate their own theories and validate possible results.

Dialogue with, and democratic decision making between children, staff, parents and the wider community is central to the running of WNA. Key Priorities for Improvement:

To sustain the School Vision and Ethos through these Key Priorities for Improvement:

1. Number

Laura Leadership Target – To ensure the continued effective implementation of the calculation policy to ensure school wide consolidation of learning in order to drive up standards, by:

- 1.1 To ensure standards in number are in line with national expectations (see target sheet)
- 1.2 To teach number calculations throughout the curriculum using practical equipment and pictorial methods
- 1.3 To teach number through an agreed calculation policy

2. Writing

- 2.1 To ensure standards in writing are in line with national expectations (see target sheet)
- 2.2 To ensure spelling is taught through an agreed scheme which is differentiated
- 2.3 To ensure handwriting is neat and legible

3. Pupils with English as an Additional Language

- 3.1 To provide focused basic skills support for pupils who are new to English
- 3.2 To welcome families to the school and ensure they have a good understanding of how the school operates
- 3.3 To develop rich language for pupils with EAL through Seven Stories Storytelling sessions for children and families

4. Differentiation and Challenge

- 4.1 To ensure children are taught in small groups with appropriate support and challenge
- 4.2 To ensure intervention is provided for individual children at breaks and assembly times

4.3 To continue to develop Early Bird Readers throughout school and Prep sessions for Y3 and 4.

5 Non- Teaching

5.1 To ensure efficient and timely management of financial resources

5.2 To ensure effective management of staff and resources to support school improvement, including holiday working

5.3 To ensure communication is good, the website and Facebook page are up to date

5.4 To ensure ICT hardware is maintained

6 Family Support

6.1 To ensure school attendance is at least at 95% (national average of 94.8%)

6.2 To provide support and actions for families with poor attendance so that individual attendance (and achievement) improves

6.3 To support families and sign post to services through Family Link Worker

6.4 To ensure their good relationships with parents, including families with EAL and those who might find working with the school difficult

6.5 To ensure volunteers and students support the work of the school

7 Eco School

To achieve Eco School Silver Status

8 Healthy Schools Plus

To achieve Healthy School Plus

Introduction

West Newcastle Academy is a Free School.

The governing body works to support the overall development of the pupils. All governors contribute to raising standards for all pupils. This involves providing a strategic view for the school, acting as a critical friend and ensuring accountability.

(See Appendix 1 for a full list of governors)

Governors are involved in:

- planning the future direction of the school
- monitoring and evaluating the progress of the school against these plans
- supporting and challenging the school team
- being accountable to parents and others about the school's performance and
- ensuring all statutory duties are carried out

In order to carry out this work governors:

- Work closely with the school team
- Have 3 full governing body meetings a year; one in each half term.
- Work on committees to which the governing body has delegated key areas of responsibility. These meet on a regular basis – once or twice each term
- Visit the school
- Attend training
- Recognise that the headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum.

The individual governor has a responsibility, working alongside other members of the governing body, to the staff and pupils of the school, the school's wider community and where they are representatives, to their particular constituency (parents, staff etc).

Although some governors may represent particular constituencies (for example parents or staff) they are not delegates of that group, they are representative members.

We ask that governors do the following;

- Undergo a DBS check on starting as a governor and on re-election or re-appointment
- Wear ID badges when in school during the day
- Provide information on themselves for newsletters etc
- Agree to their photograph being displayed on the notice board

Roles

Governing bodies do:

1. Set the overall budget for the school
2. Decide on the number of staff
3. Decide on the level of pay for teachers
4. Help to decide the priorities for the school when the school improvement plan is being developed
5. Ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is taught to all pupils
6. Set targets for pupil achievement
7. Publish national test and exam results
8. Compare the performance of their school to similar schools
9. Receive information about the quality of teaching in the school
10. Have a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns
11. Ensure health and safety issues are addressed
12. Set the times of school sessions
13. Consult the headteacher when making decisions
14. Ask challenging questions
15. Help develop school policies and procedures
16. Consider the repair and maintenance of school buildings
17. Consider the use of school premises outside school hours
18. Appoint committees of governors to look at specific issues such as finance, staffing, curriculum.

Governing bodies don't:

19. Inspect the school
20. Report on the quality of teaching after visiting the school
21. Authorise all expenditure
22. Share concerns about staff capability
23. Decide on how pupils are taught different subjects
24. Have the right to exclude a pupil
25. Write the school's policies on their own
26. Rubberstamp recommendations from the Headteacher
27. Automatically approve all apologies for absence for meetings sent by governors

Need to be aware of the performance objectives which have been set for individual teachers

Chair – key tasks:

1. To make sure, with the clerk, that the governing body's business is conducted in accordance with the law.
2. Ensure that governors know and follow the rules and codes of conduct ensuring democracy.
3. To make it clear that all governors must accept collective responsibility for decisions taken at governors' meetings.
4. To be available to make "emergency" decisions under Chair's Action and to report any urgent action taken on behalf of the governing body, making sure it is fully explained.
5. To ensure meetings are run effectively, focusing on priorities and making the best use of time available, and to ensure that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in discussion and decision-making.
6. Construct and agree the agenda for meetings, together with the clerk, taking account of the recommendations of the headteacher and requests from other governors and keep good order in meetings.
7. To approve draft minutes for publication taking account of confidential items.
8. To use time effectively by planning the year's cycle of meetings and a timetable for action.
9. Help new governors become involved in the work of the governing body.
10. Ensure all decisions are understood and that necessary action is taken.
11. Ensure governors receive all relevant information and materials.
12. Be proactive with regard to recruitment and retention on the governing body.
13. Ensure succession planning within the governing body.
14. Help the governing body understand its own strengths and weaknesses.
15. To establish and foster an effective relationship with the headteacher based on trust and mutual respect for each other's roles.
16. To ensure that the governing body acts as a sounding board to the headteacher and provides strategic direction.
17. Report decisions of the governing body to parents, staff and others regularly.
18. Co-ordinate the governing body role in OFSTED Inspections and other reviews.
19. Manage the complaints process.
20. Attend LA briefings where beneficial.
21. Involve the vice-chair so that he/she is in a position to act if not available.

Vice Chair – key tasks:

1. To liaise on a regular basis with the chair and headteacher to ensure they are fully informed.
2. To take on responsibilities delegated to them by the chair.
3. To deputise for the chair in their absence.
4. To establish and foster an effective relationship with the headteacher based on trust and mutual respect for each other's roles.
5. To use time effectively by planning the year's cycle of meetings and a timetable for action in conjunction with the chair.
6. Ensure governors' participation in and between meetings.
7. Listen and be a critical friend to the headteacher.
8. Attend LA briefings on chair's behalf if necessary.

The headteacher – Key Responsibilities:

1. The internal organisation, management and control of the school
2. Formulating aims, objectives and policies for the governing body to consider adopting
3. Advising on and implementing the governing body strategic framework
4. Reporting on progress at least once every school year

Meetings

Attendance and apologies:

Good attendance at meetings, both full governing body and committees, is important so that all governors develop a good overall understanding of school business and are involved in making corporate decisions.

All formal meetings of the governing body have to be quorate in order to make decisions. Meetings are quorate when at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of the governors are present. This means that a minimum of 3 governors must attend, or $\frac{1}{3}$ of the full body if this is greater, for decisions to be made. Committee meetings must also be quorate for decisions to be made (3 governors).

Attendance at meetings is monitored by the Clerk to the Governing Body. If you cannot attend a meeting then you should give your apologies to the Clerk to the GB or via the headteacher or Chair. The governing body decides whether or not to accept apologies. If a governor's apologies are not accepted and the governor does not come to meetings for a period of more than six months then they will be disqualified from the governing body. (The date is calculated from the date of the first full governing body meeting missed.) Where governors fail to send their apologies in advance of a meeting their apologies may not be accepted or approved after the meeting.

All governors may ask for items to be included on the agenda of the full governing body by contacting the Chair and the Clerk at least two weeks before the meeting. The Chair decides whether to include the item. If three governors ask for an item to be included then this must appear on the agenda.

Committees

We have subcommittees which meet termly in the following order:

Curriculum and Research - Every two months

Recruitment

People and Resources Management – Every two months

Admissions

Finance & Premises – Monthly

Pay Committee – Yearly

Yearly Planning of Meetings

Appendix 3 exemplifies all the standard, procedural, specific termly and strategic items. (Further guidance can be obtained from your clerk.) At WNA the yearly plan and dates will be set at the first meeting of the academic year.

Terms of reference

Full Governing Body Agreed October 2017

QUORUM: 1/3 of current membership (min 3)

To determine the strategic direction of the school

To monitor and evaluate the performance of the school receiving reports from the Headteacher

To receive reports and ratify recommendations from committees

To approve the annual budget

To investigate financial irregularities

To agree selection panel for headteacher and deputy head appointment

To suspend or end suspension of headteacher

To direct reinstatement of excluded pupils following an appeal

To draw up the Instrument of Government and any amendments thereafter

To appoint (or remove) the chair and vice chair

To appoint or dismiss the clerk to the governors

To hold a governing body meeting at least once a term

To appoint and remove community governors

To set up a register of Pecuniary Interests

To delegate terms of reference to committees and review once a year at the beginning of the academic year

To review the membership of committees once a year at the beginning of the academic year

To set the times of school sessions

To ratify the Self Evaluation Document (SED)

To adopt Financial Procedures in line with the Academies Financial Handbook

To review and approve risk analysis annually

To review the performance of the governing body

To ensure adequate safeguarding procedures are in place

To consider forming a multi academy trust

Curriculum and Research Committee Agreed October 2017

QUORUM: 3 governor members

To assist in the development of the School Development Plan (SDP)

To monitor and review pupil and school performance

To set and publish targets for pupil achievement

To monitor and review School Development Plan (SDP)

To contribute to School Evaluation Document (SED)

To consider and review policy and practice in:

- Homework
- Curriculum matters
- RE and collective worship
- Special Educational Needs
- Gifted, Able and Talented Children
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Equalities and Community Cohesion
- SEN (Special Educational Needs)
- CP and Safeguarding

Receive monitoring and inspection reports from OFSTED or HMI and monitor and review action plans.

Finance and Premises Committee Agreed October 2017

QUORUM: 3 members

- To prepare and agree the Annual Budget each financial year for formal agreement by the Governing Body
- To establish and monitor links between the School Development Plan and
- To evaluate the effectiveness of spending decisions
- To consider longer term financial planning linked to the future needs of the school
- To ensure school meets its statutory obligations and complies with Academies Financial handbook
- To consider relevant supplier contracts and the effectiveness of services provided through these
- To monitor pupil roll and income levels
- To review delegated spending limits annually in line with Financial Handbook
- To consider/approve procurement/contracts in line with Financial handbook
- To review charging and remissions policy
- To receive information on grants and miscellaneous income
- To consider outturn statement
- To consider and determine response to any financial matters including consultation on changes to funding formula
- To investigate irregularities
- To approve and set up an expenses scheme
- To ensure appropriate administration and audit of the School Fund
- To consider and ensure best value at all times
- To consider financial benchmarking data
- To self-evaluate financial competencies of governors
- To receive any health and safety reports
- To ensure health and safety issues are met
- To receive reports on condition of buildings and school environment
- To agree maintenance work to be done

(See Appendix 4 for Finance and Premises Committee Responsibility Planner)

People & Resource Management Committee Agreed October 2017

- **QUORUM: 3 members**
- To determine staff complement
- To review staffing structure
- To establish and review annually an Appraisal and Capability Policy
- To review (1) performance objectives for Headteacher (HT PM Reviewers) and (2) pay for Headteacher (HT Pay Review Group)
- To review salary scale for the Leadership team
- To review pay policy
- To consider pay discretions (the Headteacher should not advise on his/her own pay)
- To conduct agreed arrangements for recruitment and selection
- Appointment of staff - headteacher + 1 or more governors (who has completed Safer Recruitment Training)
- To conduct agreed procedures for capability, discipline, grievance, attendance and welfare issues
- To conduct dismissal procedures
- To receive reports and monitor status of any staffing issues
- To consider early retirement
- To consider and approve admissions arrangements

Appeals and Complaints Committee

QUORUM: 3 members

The membership is to be established on an ad hoc basis and not include any governors involved in the original decision and be a minimum of 3 governors.

Election and Appointment Arrangements

Arrangements for the election of parent and staff governors are delegated by the members to the headteacher, but must be conducted in accordance with the articles of association.

The members are responsible for the election of new governors, and at WNA we aim to ensure that the governing body is representative of the community we serve.

Appointment of the Chair

Term of office: One Year

Election process: By nomination at the first meeting of the autumn term

Appointment of the Vice Chair

Term of office: One Year

Election process: By nomination at the first meeting of the autumn term

Suspension of Governors

The governing body may decide to suspend a governor from all or any meetings of the governing body or its committees for a fixed period of up to six months on one or more of the following grounds:

- That the governor, being a person paid to work at the school, is the subject of disciplinary proceedings in relation to their employment
- That the governor is a subject of proceedings in any court or tribunal, the outcome of which may be that they are disqualified from continuing in office as a governor (Under Section 6 of the Constitution Regulations)
- That the governor has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the school and has brought or is likely to bring the school or the governing body into disrepute
- That the governor is in breach of their duty of confidentiality to the school or to any member of staff or pupil at the school

Support for New Governors

To help new governors learn about their role and quickly contribute to the work of the governing body, there will be an initial meeting with the chair, headteacher and mentor. A named and experienced governor will be appointed. There will be welcome and full introductions at the first meeting.

New governors need copies of the following:

- Governing Body Induction and Information Pack
- Minutes from last full Governing Body meeting
- School Development Plan
- School Evaluation Document
- Last Ofsted Report

We encourage all new governors to take up training opportunities – especially Induction – offered by Newcastle City Council Governor Services.

Mentors will:

- Meet with the new governor before the meetings for the first year to answer questions, explain the agenda etc
- Sit with the new governor at meetings to answer questions
- Make regular contact to answer questions

How Governors are Involved in Monitoring:

Monitoring is an essential part of the role of governors in supporting the school's self-evaluation. By being involved in monitoring, governors will develop a better understanding of how well their plans and policies are working in practice. They will then be able to use this information to better inform future strategic planning.

The Purpose of Monitoring is to:

- Check that agreed plans are being implemented
- Identify what's going well and celebrate it
- Identify what is not going well and the reasons for this
- Modify plans, if appropriate
- Be accountable as a governing body

Methods of monitoring: The Headteacher's Report

Over the year, the headteacher's report will include the following:

- The number of pupils on roll
- The names and responsibilities of all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff
- The organisation and sizes of classes or year groups in the school
- Attendance data
- The numbers and percentages of pupils taking paid and free school meals, packed lunches
- The number of pupils in the school with statements of Special Educational Need
- The numbers of pupils in the school with EAL
- Data on looked after pupils
- Data on complaints and exclusions
- Information on standards and attainment including trends (for example by class, gender or ethnicity)
- The success of cohorts of pupils in meeting performance targets agreed by the governors and reasons for any shortfall/excess
- Statutory and proposed performance targets for pupils throughout the school
- Specific targets relating to relevant groups of the pupil population (for example, Looked After Children, more able children)

- A commentary on the school's performance
- Information about staff training which has taken place and future needs
- Forthcoming training in which governors might be involved
- Specific curriculum initiatives and ways in which staff have been involved in monitoring the curriculum
- The arrangements that have been made over the previous term for parental consultation and how far these have succeeded

Committee Work

Each committee will identify its remit and the areas of the School Development Plan it has responsibility for, monitor the aspects of the school for which it is responsible and report each term or half term to the whole governing body. Each committee also needs to set up a rolling programme of policy review.

School visits

It is expected that all governors visit the school at least once a year during the school day

Visits may involve meeting teachers and pupils, visiting classes or attending events (for example, assemblies, productions). All visits should be planned in consultation with the headteacher and the Visits Protocol should be followed (see Governor Visits Policy)

Appendix 1

Composition of the Governing Body

Subject to Articles 48-49 and 64, of the Memorandum and Articles, the Academy Trust shall have the following Governors:

- (a) Up to 11 Governors, appointed under Article 50
- (b) Any Staff Governors, if appointed under Article 50A;
- (c) Up to 1 LA Governor if appointed under Article 51;
- (d) A minimum of 2 Parent Governors appointed under Articles 53-58;
- (e) The Headteacher;
- (f) Any Additional Governors, if appointed under Article 62, 62A or 68A; and
- (g) Any Further Governors, if appointed under Article 63 or Article 68A;

47. The Academy Trust may also have any Co-opted Governor appointed under Article 59
Membership and contact details

| Governor Type | Name | Contact details |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Full(Chairperson) | Shelagh Keogh | shelagh@westnewcastleacademy.org |
| Member | Gareth Davies | Garethdavies1963@googlemail.com |
| Member | Jamie Carrahar | jamie@jamiecarraher.co.uk |
| Member | Katherine Trafford | katherinetrafford@hotmail.com |
| Member | Kathleen Hearnden | khearnden@hotmail.com |
| Member | John Fern | admin@westnewcastleacademy.org |
| Full | Susan Percy | susan@westnewcastleacademy.org |
| Full | Jo Carre | jo@westnewcastleacademy.org |
| Full | Simon Lymn | s.lymn@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk |
| Parent Governor | Ellie Turner | admin@westnewcastleacademy.org |
| Parent Governor | Hannah Winney | admin@westnewcastleacademy.org |

Associates

The attendance of individuals other than governors at full governing body meetings and committee meetings may be appropriate to support the work of the governing body. The invitation for associates to attend is a full governing body decision. Those associates who do attend are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as the governing body.

Appendix 2

Membership of Committees and Groups and Link Governor Information

(to be reviewed each Autumn Term)

| Committee | Members |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Finance & Premises sub committee | Jo Carre, Shelagh Keogh, Simon Lymn, Susan Percy, Saj Anwar. |
| Curriculum & Research sub committee | Hannah Winney, Shelagh Keogh, Susan Percy, Jamie Carraher. |
| People & Resource Management | Ellie Turner, Shelagh Keogh, Susan Percy |
| Appeals and Complaints | To be convened as required with available non-school governors not previously involved in relevant discussions |
| Admissions Committee | Shelagh Keogh, Jo Carre, Kath Hearnden |
| Recruitment & Marketing | Hannah Winney, Ellie Turner, Susan Percy, Saj Anwar |
| Pay Committee | Shelagh Keogh, Susan Percy, Kathleen Hearnden |

- Each committee meets bi-monthly
- The Chair of each committee is responsible for setting the agenda in discussion with the headteacher.
- All members may ask for items to be included on the agenda.
- Each committee will have an annual programme of work.
- Each committee will produce written minutes which should be included in the governing body pack after the chair of the committee and the headteacher have had the opportunity to check and make amendments.

| Link Area (Priority, Year Group, Class etc) | Name of Governor |
|---|------------------|
| Safeguarding | Susan Percy |
| Achievement Partner | John Fern |

Appendix 3

Governing Body Year Planner – Notes

Standard Items

There are a number of items which should form part of the standard agenda for each meeting. Such items include the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Apologies for absence, for acceptance
- Declaration of interest
- Appointments/membership review
- Approval of previous minutes
- Matters arising from the minutes
- Health & Safety/Safeguarding Issues
- Confirmation of dates and times of future meetings

Term Items:

At certain points in the school year, the governing body has additional responsibilities and duties. Governing body agendas should make provision for these accordingly. Some examples are shown below (the agenda planning template (available via Governor Services) provides further details)

Autumn Term Procedural Items

- Election of Chair/Vice chair
- Review of GB procedures
- Review of responsibility and decision planner
- Review committee membership
- Review of monitoring links

Spring Term / Summer Term Procedural Items

- Review and approve budget
- Approval of financial monitoring processes (SFVS)
- Approval of training days
- Approval of term and holiday dates

Strategic Items

While the governing body has a duty to attend to the procedural items above, it also has a duty to consider the strategic needs of the school including Ofsted inspection preparation.

The sections below highlight some key strategic items. Many of these will be familiar items from previous agendas, but are grouped into sections aligned to the key headings of the current Ofsted inspection framework.

Headteacher's Report

The headteacher has a duty to provide a termly report to the governing body.

Committee Reports

Committees should meet termly with an agenda and minutes for the governing body. The chair of each committee should provide a brief report of actions at the full governing body meeting.

Individual Governors' Reports

Individual governors who visit the school, should aim to provide a written report to the governing body (See Governor Visits Policy for more information)

Stakeholders' views

The governing body should put mechanisms in place to seek and review the views of the following key stakeholders annually:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents (including the monitoring of the 'Parent View' website)
- Other key stakeholders and partners (if applicable)

Governance

- Review the School Evaluation Document (eg view sub-sections at termly meetings)
- Create a governing body work plan (including a committee monitoring schedule) at the beginning of the year to set actions and targets and review it at the end of the year
- Plan for training needs and requirements for the year

Behaviour and Safeguarding Issues

- Review termly Safeguarding reports and review safeguarding issues on a regular basis
- Receive an annual Safeguarding Audit Report
- Review health and safety / risk management issues on a regular basis
- Ensure health and safety and risk management inspections are carried out termly

Appendix 4

Finance & Premises Committee

Responsibility of Planner (to be reviewed at the beginning of each academic year)

| FUNCTION | | RESPONSIBILITY |
|----------|--|---|
| 1. | BUDGET PREPARATION | |
| 1.1 | Prepare and agree the Annual Budget Plan for formal submission to the governing body | SBM/HT |
| 1.2 | Prepare reports for the information of the governing body outlining reasons for the principal changes to the Budget during the course of the year | SBM |
| 2. | BUDGET MONITORING AND CONTROL | |
| 2.1 | Review progress against all budget headings at ordinary meetings once a month and take such action as appropriate | SBM |
| 2.2 | Provide the full governing body with information on all significant variations | SBM |
| 2.3 | Ensure that the full governing body is provided with appropriate information on all matters of financial significance that may affect the agreed budget | SBM |
| 2.4 | Ensure that all staff, who are involved in the incurring of expenditure and receipt of income and who are in any other way involved in the management of the School's finances, are fully conversant with Financial regulations (as set out in Academies Financial Handbook) | SBM |
| 2.5 | Implement the expenditure and income proposals agreed in the budget, subject to the restrictions of the Academies Financial Handbook) | SBM |
| 3. | VIREMENTS | |
| 3.1 | Limitations applying to the exercise of virement and transfers from contingency are as follows: | |
| | Individual virement under £5,000 | Suggested delegated authority - headteacher |
| | Individual virement above £5,000 and smaller amounts which total £5,000 | Suggested delegated authority –Finance & Premises Committee then presented to full governors. |
| 4. | CONTRACTS/PROCUREMENT | |
| 4.1 | Limitations applying to the agreement of contracts are as follows: | |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | Contracts under £5, 000 | Suggested level of authority - headteacher |
| | Contracts between £5,000 and £20,000 (minor quotations) | Suggested level of authority – Finance and Premises Committee |
| | Formal tenders [subject to EU procurement threshold] | Finance and Premises Committee |
| | Contracts above £5,000 must be reported to the governing body for their information | |
| 4.2 | Prepare reports for the governing body on contracts let where the recommended tender was not the lowest if payment is to be made, or not the highest if payment is to be received | |
| 4.3 | Ensure that details of all contracts exceeding £5000 are recorded in the minutes | |
| 5. | AUDIT REPORTS | |
| 5.1 | To prepare financial statements for filing with companies house and charity commission | SBM |
| 5.2 | To receive auditors' reports and to recommend to the full governing body action as appropriate in response to audit findings | |
| 5.3 | To recommend the appointment or reappointment of the auditors of the academy. | |
| 5.4 | To carry out an audit of the admissions process, ensuring compliance with admissions policy | |
| 6. | LETTINGS AND CHARGES | |
| 6.1 | Approve a Lettings Policy on the recommendation of the committee | |
| 6.2 | Determine the scale of charges for lettings | |
| 6.3 | Carry out an annual review of the scale of charges | |
| 7. | INSURANCES | |
| 7.1 | Carry out an annual review of all insurances | |
| 8. | GENERAL | |
| 8.1 | To investigate irregularities (other suspected) | SBM |
| 8.2 | To approve and set up an Expenses scheme | SBM |
| 8.3 | To monitor pupil numbers | SBM |

| | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 8.4 | To receive any health and safety reports and ensure health and safety issues are met | SBM |
| 8.8 | To receive reports on the condition of the buildings and school environment | SBM |

Appendix 5

Code of Conduct for Governors

These are the broad principles by which the governors of the school should operate at all times.

People who become school governors make a positive contribution by giving time and their experience to help shape the quality of learning in their school. The Governing body will ensure that the school is effectively and efficiently managed.

General

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

Headteacher's Responsibilities:

- Day-to-day management of the school
- Implementation of policy
- Operation of the curriculum

Governors' Responsibilities:

- Determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

The main aim of the school is to promote high standards and raise the educational achievement of all its pupils.

The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:

To provide a strategic view of where the school is heading by:

- Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
- Setting statutory targets
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure

To act as a critical friend by providing support and advice to the school by ensuring:

- The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
- Progress towards targets
- The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
- The budget and the staffing structure

To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides by:

- Singing off the self-evaluation form
- Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
- Holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school
- Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- Making available information to the community
- Appoints and performance manages the headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.

Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.

In so far as they have, or share responsibility for the employment of staff, governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.

Governors should consider carefully how their own decisions might affect other schools.

Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.

Governors do not act alone but as a member of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is designated specifically to them by the whole governing body.

Relationships:

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully, the governor chairing a meeting is responsible for ensuring appropriate conduct at all times, and other governors are responsible for supporting the chair in that role.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.

Commitment:

- Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the governing body of a school.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full governing body and committees is essential.

- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities.

Visiting the School:

- Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. However, they do need to have the opportunity to arrange visits to the school in order to see governors' policies in action and to understand how the school works. In order to avoid misunderstandings the governing body has a policy on governor visits which stipulates the following:
- All governors should visit the school, The date and timing of a visit should be arranged in advance with the headteacher and other staff involved
- Visits should have a clear focus, linked to a school policy, a curriculum area or an aspect of the school development plan
- If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do
- Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the headteacher. Governors should not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching that they see
- If governors are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be passed to the headteacher
- After the visit, the governor should report back in writing to the governing body following discussion with the headteacher before publication.

Confidentiality:

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Whilst governors are entitled to disclose the decisions made by the governing body, unless it was agreed as a confidential item by the governing body, governors are not entitled to identify the views expressed by individual named governors.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Conduct:

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so
- All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly

- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this
- Any pecuniary interest that a governor may have in connection with the governing body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests
- Where an interest is declared, the governor must leave the meeting while the item is under discussion.

Training and Development:

- Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork
- Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the governing body as a whole.

Mentoring:

- An experienced governor who acts as a mentor to new governors can provide support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body
- Governors should be prepared to act as mentors, as required.

Meetings:

- Individual governors do not have any authority in school
- It is the collective decisions of all the governors together that carry authority
- The activities that governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' - in a meeting.

It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Below is a suggested 'Meetings Charter'. If the Chair, the Head, the Clerk and all the governors subscribe to, and implement, a charter such as this, the governing body will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

MEETINGS CHARTER

As a governor I expect:

- People to attend regularly and be punctual;
- An agenda and relevant documents to be circulated at least seven days before the meeting;
- An agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item;
- A Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point;
- My contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion;
- The decision making process to be quite clear;
- Governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan;
- Governors to take collective responsibility for decisions;
- Minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.

Others can expect me to:

- Attend regularly and be punctual;
- Read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about;
- Bring my papers to the meeting;
- Make relevant and positive contributions;
- Listen to and consider what other people want to say;
- Accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with.

Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year

Signed

Printed name Date:.....

Appendix to Code of Conduct: The Seven Principles of Public Life *(Originally published by the 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 Public Office.

Appendix 6

Governor Allowances and Expenses

WNA Policy on Governors Allowances and Expenses

Introduction

The Governing Body can choose whether or not to pay allowances to governors and associate members. It still means that only out of pocket expenses can be reimbursed: payments cannot include attendance allowance or loss of earnings. The cost of paying these allowances will be a charge on the school budget and where a Governing Body decides to make such payments, a suitable budget should be set aside.

Eligible expenses may include:

- childcare or babysitting expenses by a registered child minder;
- care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative;
- support for governors with special needs (e.g. audio equipment);
- support for governors whose first language is not English (e.g. translations);
- telephone charges, photocopying, stationery etc; and
- travel and subsistence

Policy

The Governing Body should first decide whether, as a matter of policy, they wish to pay allowances. This decision should be made at a Governing Body meeting and minuted.

Where the Governing Body decides to pay expenses, they must define what will qualify for payment and this should be included in the policy. The policy must treat all categories of governors equally and should also cover non-governors who are members of committees. Any allowances for travel and subsistence cannot exceed the rates specified by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions in respect of elected members of local authorities.

The policy given below is a model which the Governing Body should adapt if needed and adopt. It should be read in conjunction with the relevant related guidance.

Payment

Any claim for expenses must be processed correctly and records kept. Details about how claims should be dealt with are given in the policy. Governors' allowances will be subject to audit.

Review

This policy should be reviewed annually and in the light of any changes in legislation.

Claiming expenses process

Claim forms are available from the SBM.

The claimant should complete and sign the form and submit it to the SBM within 28 calendar days of the date the related expenses were incurred.

The SBM is responsible for:

- verifying entitlement to the claim (i.e. that the claim relates to approved duties and that the claimant did attend);
- affirming that the claim seems reasonable;
- certifying the claim and forwarding it to the Chair of Governors for authorisation where applicable; and
- maintaining a record of claims which helps the Governing Body to exercise budgetary control and meet any requirement to report information about expenditure on governors' expense.

The Governing Body will review the policy annually.

Appendix 7

Governing Body Decision Planner Policy

(To be agreed annually)

This planner shows to which level the governing body may legally delegate functions

KEY

Level 1: Individual Governor

Level 2: A committee of the governing body

Level 3: Headteacher

Level 4: Full governing Body

Column blank: Action could be undertaken by this level.

Column blocked off: Function cannot be legally carried out at this level.

Although decisions may be delegated, the governing body as a whole remains responsible for any decision made under delegation

| Key Function | No | Tasks | Decision Level | | | |
|--------------|----|---|----------------|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Budgets | 1 | To approve the first formal budget plan each financial year | | | | |
| | 2 | To monitor monthly expenditure. | | | | |
| | 3 | To establish a charging and remissions policy | | | | |
| | 4 | Miscellaneous financial decisions | | | | |
| | 5 | To enter into contracts (GB may wish to agree financial limits) | | | | |
| | 6 | To make payments - SBM | | | | |
| Staffing | 7 | Headteacher appointments (selection panel) | | | | |
| | 8 | Deputy appointments (selection panel) | | | | |
| | 9 | Appoint other teachers | | | | |
| | 10 | Appoint non-teaching staff | | | | |
| | 11 | Agree a pay policy | | | | |
| | 12 | Pay discretions | | | | |
| | 13 | Establishing disciplinary/capability procedures | | | | |
| | 14 | Dismissal of Headteacher | | | | |
| | 15 | Dismissal of other staff | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| | 16 | Suspending headteacher | | | | |
| | 17 | Suspending staff (except headteacher) | | | | |
| | 18 | Ending suspension (headteacher) | | | | |
| | 19 | Ending suspension (except headteacher) | | | | |
| | 20 | Determining staff complement | | | | |
| | 21 | In voluntary and foundation schools to agree whether or not the Exec Director of Children's Services/diocesan authority should have advisory rights | | | | |
| | 22 | Determining dismissal payments/ early retirement | | | | |
| | 23 | To establish and implement a curriculum policy | | | | |
| | 24 | To monitor curriculum policy | | | | |
| | 25 | Responsible for standards of teaching | | | | |
| | 26 | Responsibility for individual child's education | | | | |
| | 27 | Provision of sex education – to establish and keep up to date a written policy | | | | |
| | 28 | To prohibit political indoctrination and ensuring the balanced treatment of political issues | | | | |
| | 29 | To establish a charging and remissions policy for activities (non NC based) | | | | |
| Performance Management | 30 | To formulate a performance management policy | | | | |
| Target Setting | 31 | To set and publish targets for pupil achievement | | | | |
| Discipline/ Exclusions | 32 | To establish a behaviour policy | | | | |
| | 33 | To review the use of exclusion and to decide whether or not to confirm all permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions where the pupil is either excluded for more than 15 days in total in a term or would lose the opportunity to sit a public examination. (Can be delegated to chair/vice-chair in cases of urgency) | | | | |
| | 34 | To direct reinstatement of excluded pupils (Can be delegated to chair/vice-chair in cases of urgency) | | | | |
| Admissions | 35 | To consult annually before setting an admissions policy | | | | |
| | 36 | To establish an admissions policy | | | | |
| | 37 | Admissions: application decisions | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| Religious Education | 38 | Responsibility for ensuring provision of RE in line with school's basic curriculum (all schools) NB this must fall into line with locally agreed syllabus | | | | |
| Collective Worship | 39 | In all maintained schools to ensure that all pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship (after consulting GB) | | | | |
| | 40 | To make application to the advisory councils, SACRE, concerning the requirements for collective worship (schools without a religious character) to dis-apply (after consulting GB) | | | | |
| | 41 | Arrangements for collective worship (schools without religious character (after consulting GB) | | | | |
| Premises & Insurance | 42 | Buildings insurance and personal liability | | | | |
| | 43 | Developing school buildings strategy or master plan | | | | |
| | 44 | Procuring and maintaining buildings, including developing properly funded maintenance plan | | | | |
| Health & Safety | 45 | To institute a health and safety policy | | | | |
| | 46 | To ensure that health and safety regulations are followed | | | | |
| School Organisation | 47 | To publish proposals to change category of school | | | | |
| | 48 | To set the times of school sessions and the dates of school terms and holidays | | | | |
| | 49 | To ensure that the school meets for 380 sessions in a school year | | | | |
| | 50 | To ensure that school lunch nutritional standards are met where provided by the governing body. | | | | |
| GB Procedures | 51 | To draw up instrument of government and any amendments thereafter | | | | |
| | 52 | To appoint (and remove) the chair and vice-chair of a permanent or a temporary governing body | | | | |
| | 53 | To appoint and dismiss the clerk to the governors | | | | |
| | 54 | To hold a full governing body meeting at least three times in a school year or a meeting of the temporary governing body as often may require | | | | |
| | 55 | To appoint and remove community or sponsor governors. | | | | |
| | 56 | To set up a Register of Governors' Business Interests | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| | 57 | To approve and set up a Governors Expenses Scheme | | | | |
| | 58 | To discharge duties in respect of pupils with special needs by appointing a "responsible person" in community, voluntary and Foundation Schools | | | | |
| | 59 | To consider whether or not to exercise delegation of functions to individuals or committees | | | | |
| | 60 | To regulate the GB procedures (where not set out in law) | | | | |
| Federations | 61 | To consider forming a federation or joining an existing federation | | | | |
| Extended Schools | 62 | To decide to offer additional activities and to what form these should take | | | | |
| | 63 | To put into place the additional services provided | | | | |
| | 64 | To ensure delivery of services provided | | | | |
| | 65 | To cease providing extended school provision | | | | |

^{1,4} Although these tasks are open to delegation under the Education (School Government) (Terms of Reference) (England) Regulations 2000, the expectation would be that these decisions would be undertaken by the full Governing Body.

Appendix 8 Governor Visits Policy

Policy Note: This policy will be reviewed annually at the first Governor Meeting of every academic year

Purpose

Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. However, they do need to have the opportunity to arrange visits to the school in order to see governors' policies in action and to understand how the school works.

In order to avoid misunderstandings the governing body has a policy on governor visits.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the purpose of governors' visits and to detail the process and protocols to be followed before, during and after any visit to the school.

Purpose of Visits

The main objectives are:

- To enable governors to learn more about the school and play a strategic role
- To contribute to the governing body's monitoring role
- To help fulfil the governing body's legal duty "to promote high standards of educational achievement" and act as a critical friend
- To help to understand the teaching and learning process
- To demonstrate to staff and pupils that governors take their responsibilities seriously
- To enable governors to make more informed contributions at governing body meetings
- To enhance the sense of identity with the school
- To help develop relationships with the staff and understand their roles in school
- To have knowledge of the teaching environment

The governing body should aim to allocate governors to visit each term and agree the focus for each visit with headteacher. The focus should be linked to the School Development Plan, examples could be:

- The impact of specific spending on teaching and learning, the impact of building improvements on Teaching and Learning or the Behaviour Policy in practice
- The impact of changes in practice as a result of specific curriculum area development.

Governors with specific roles will probably need to use that visit to fulfil this particular role i.e. Health and Safety, SEN, Performance Management

Frequency of Visits

Governors will be expected to visit the school at least once each year. The visits can be for a whole or half day. These dates should be notified to the chair of committees and the headteacher at the beginning of each term.

Arranging Visits

- The date and timing of a visit should be arranged in advance through the headteacher to ensure that staff are briefed appropriately
- The first Governor visit should be with a mentor to introduce the procedure and provide an opportunity for discussion and questions

Protocol during Visits

During any visit Governors will be expected to spend most of the time listening and observing. Their role is not to interfere with the organisation and teaching of the class or to challenge any practice they observe.

- Governors should not provide feedback directly to any teacher or make promises on behalf of the governing body. Visits should have a clear focus, linked to the ethos of the school, a policy, a curriculum area or an aspect of the School Development Plan.
- If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.
- Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the headteacher. Governors should not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching that they see but can make a judgement about how this impacts on the ethos of the school.
- If governors are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be passed to the headteacher.

Following a Visit

- If possible, the Governor should meet with the headteacher to discuss his or her observations on the day of the visit.
- After the visit, the governor should report back in writing to the governing body.
- A suggested format for this report is attached.
- Visit reports will be on agendas to be discussed at the meeting following the visit. Visit reports will be circulated to the full governing body.

GOVERNOR'S VISIT REPORT

NAME.....DATE.....CLASS.....

PURPOSE OF VISIT

RECORD OF VISIT

GOVERNOR'S COMMENTS

ISSUES ARISING FOR GOVERNING BODY

FURTHER QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNING BODY

Appendix 9

Commonly used Abbreviations/Acronyms

(As at September 2012)

| | |
|------------|--|
| ADHD | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder |
| ADD | Attention Deficit Disorder |
| AGT | Able, Gifted and Talented (or G&T Gifted and Talented) |
| AQA | Assessment and Qualifications Alliance |
| AP | Achievement Partner |
| APP | Assessing Pupil Progress |
| APS | Average Point Score |
| ASCL | Association of School and College Leaders |
| ARC | Additionally Resourced Centre |
| AST | Advanced Skills Teacher |
| ATL | Association of Teachers and Lecturers |
| BSA | Books/Stationery/Apparatus |
| BSF | Building Schools for the Future |
| CAF | Common Assessment Framework |
| CATs | Cognitive Ability Tests |
| CC | Children's Centre |
| CEIAG/ IAG | Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance |
| CPD | Continuing Professional Development |
| CRB | Criminal Records Bureau |
| CS | Children's Services |
| CVA | Contextual Value Added |
| CWDC | Children's Workforce Development Council |
| CYPP | Children and Young People's Plan |
| DES | Disability Equality Scheme |
| DfE | Department for Education |
| DDA | Disability Discrimination Act |
| DSP | Designated Safeguarding Person |
| DT | Design Technology |
| EAL | English as an Additional Language |
| HSE | Health and Safety Executive |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IEP | Individual Education Plan/Programme |
| IIE | Investment in Excellence |
| IIP | Investors in People |
| INSET | In Service Education and Training |
| L & M | Leadership and Management |
| LAC | Looked After Children |
| LA | Local Authority |

| | |
|----------------|---|
| LADO | Local Authority Designated Officer (Safeguarding) |
| LSU | Learning Support Unit |
| MFL | Modern Foreign Languages |
| NGA | National Governors' Association |
| NAHT | National Association of Headteachers |
| NASUWT | National Association Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers |
| NC | National Curriculum |
| NPQ | National Professional Qualification for Headship |
| NQT | Newly Qualified Teacher |
| NUT | National Union of Teachers |
| OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education |
| OSC | Out of School Clubs (or ASC – After School Clubs) |
| PFI | Private Finance Initiative |
| PGCE | Post Graduate Certificate in Education |
| PLASC | Pupil Level Annual School Census |
| PM | Performance Management |
| PPA | Planning, Preparation and Assessment |
| PRU | Pupil Referral Unit |
| PSA | Parent Support Adviser |
| PSHCE/PSHE | Personal, Social, Health (and Citizenship) Education |
| PTA | Parent Teacher Association |
| QCDA | Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency |
| RAP | Raising Achievement Plan |
| R & R | Recruitment and Retention |
| RAISE | Raising Achievement in School Education |
| SACRE | Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education |
| SATs | Standard Assessment Tasks |
| SBM | School Business Manager |
| SDSR | Supported Departmental Self Review |
| SEAL | Social and Emotional Aspects to Learning |
| SEF | Self Evaluation Form |
| SEND / SENCO | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities / Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator |
| SENTASS | Special Educational Needs Teaching and Support Service |
| SFVS | Schools Financial Value Statement |
| SIMS | School Information and Management System |
| SIP | School Improvement Partner |
| SIP / SDP / SP | School Improvement Plan / School Development Plan / School Plan |
| SIS | School Improvement Service |
| SLA | Service Level Agreement |
| SMSC | Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| SSSR | Supported School Self Review |
| TaMHS | Targeted Mental Health in Schools |
| T & L | Teaching and Learning |
| TLR | Teaching and Learning Responsibilities |
| VA | Voluntary Aided |
| VA | Value Added |
| VC | Voluntary Controlled |

Appendix 10

Online participation for Governors - Guidance

Introduction

The way people communicate is changing, with use of the internet increasing throughout society. Most of us are very used to emailing, which continues to be a common form of communication for governors. But social networking tools such as Facebook can be used to have conversations online and for people to share information, experiences and knowledge.

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, may present incredible opportunities for school governors to communicate and collaborate more effectively – however there are risks and governors must be aware of the implications of participating online in their official capacity.

Below we have set out some of the considerations governors should bear in mind when using the web, to ensure risks are mitigated and opportunities maximised.

The opportunities

Participating online offers a number of opportunities for school governors for example:

Communicating between governors:

Using trusted online spaces, governors can have discussion online and share information with one another between face to face meetings, increasing efficiency. There is also the opportunity for governors to communicate with other governors in their local authority and nationally.

Listening to what people are saying: like it or not, people will be talking about your school online.

Engaging with parents and students: greater involvement from school stakeholders such as parents and students can be achieved by talking to them online, especially when using spaces they already visit regularly, such as Facebook

Promoting the work of the governors: by using digital channels to talk about the work governors are doing, more people will get to hear about and understand it

Encouraging new people to become governors: the visibility provided by participating online means that more people will be aware of the role and inspire them to get involved themselves

The Risks

As well as an incredible opportunity, digital participation is not without risk. Some of the risks include:

A governor writes something inappropriate: the ease of sharing thoughts and opinions online means it is easy to write something that could bring the school into disrepute.

Confidential information is released to the public: again, the fact that it is so easy to put information on the web means data security policy can be easily breached.

An online discussion between some but not all members of a governing body undermines collective knowledge and responsibility: there is a danger of a two-tier governing body resulting from online discussions that exclude those governors not online.

None of these risks are a reason for governors not to be active online. However, they are risks that need to be understood and managed.

For e communication, you also need to consider the following:

- Governors must always be aware that what they say and write as an individual could reflect negatively on them as a governor, their fellow governors or their school.
- Always remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply. This means that you should not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school unless you are authorised to do so.
- Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Be cordial, honest and professional at all times.
- Wherever possible, align online participation with other (offline) communications.

The different sites

The following covers the main sites for online interaction and how they are used.

Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social network and is continuing to grow. Users create profiles with personal information, and connect to their friends online. They can also create and join groups around common interests and causes. Facebook is widely used by young and old, and it is very likely that the site is being used by parents to discuss their childrens' school.

Twitter

Twitter is a website where users create a much less detailed profile than in Facebook, and publish short messages. These are published publicly, and users 'follow' one another to receive their updates. Twitter has a smaller user base than Facebook but this is growing.

Blogging

A blog is a website where an individual or group of authors publish short articles. Blogs may be a good way to publicise the activity at a school, and as an informal method of finding out people's views.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is another social network, similar to Facebook, although its focus is very much on people's professional rather than personal lives.

YouTube

YouTube is the most popular video website in the world. It allows users to upload short videos for other people to view.

Things to do

Start a discussion: As a governing body, use this information as the basis for a discussion as part of a governing body meeting, in order to clarify common expectations and standards. Your headteacher may have strong views on this!

Look at your school's policy on E Safety / Online Participation: As a governor, you may wish to follow the same rules as apply to other members of the leadership team and school staff.

Review your governing body's Code of Conduct: Consider adding a section on online participation.

Do some research: spend some time searching the web for mentions of your school online. You might find that a local blogger has been writing about you, or perhaps parents have started a Facebook group.

Consider creating your own social networking groups: Firstly, if one doesn't already exist, a Facebook group for your school might be a great way to get governors, teachers and parents talking to one another regularly in an informal, constructive way. Secondly, why not create a group for just governors to use, to discuss issues in between formal meetings, share information and work together on reports and other documents?

Register with Twitter: Twitter provides a really quick way to get active online. There are also a number of school governors active on there who you can connect with.