

Park Junior School Governors Code of Conduct.

General

The head teacher 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.

- The main aim of the school is to 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.
 - To act as a critical friend by providing support and advice to the school.
 - To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides.
- 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 decision might affect other schools.
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.
- Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole governing body.

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.

Relationships

- Governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the head teacher, staff, parents, the Local Authority, the Diocese, other relevant agencies and the local community.

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.
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.
- 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 head teacher.
- 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 reach me 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 contributions 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.

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.

Visiting Policy

Every Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to establish and monitor its school's policies and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its curriculum. Governors are also held to account for their own school's performance.

The Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) assumes that Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and will test that assumption during a school inspection.

One of the best and most effective ways in which a Governor can get to know about their school is to visit during the school day and see it at work, talking to staff and pupils and finding out what happens in the school and the classrooms.

If school and classroom visits are done well they will add to Governors' understanding of their school, its staff and its pupils.

Why Have School Visits?

Governors' visits are an important feature of role of the Governing Body as they provide a range of opportunities for Governors to:

- monitor school development priorities
- develop an understanding of the issues facing the school
- get to know staff and pupils
- become part of the school community
- support the school

Ways in which governors could get involved

- attend concerts, plays, open days, assemblies, special events
- help with outings or after school activities
- establish links with a curriculum subject
- take responsibility for monitoring one of the school's policies
- arrange to see lessons being taught

Informal Visits

Governors are welcome to visit the school for any activity to which parents and members of the community have been invited. They will also be welcome to volunteer to assist the school in various ways. There will be a rota for attending assemblies to give out awards and badges. These visits are informal and provide an opportunity for governors to become part of the school community.

Formal Monitoring Visits

In addition to informal visits the governing body will arrange a series of more formal visits to fulfil their statutory responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school. These visits will have a specific purpose agreed by the Curriculum and Development Committee and the headteacher. Visits will be linked to priorities in the School Development Plan

The committee will request individual governors to make a formal visit. Ideally visits will be shared among all governors.

- Before each visit a Pre-visit Form will be completed by the governor concerned and the head teacher. This will agree the date and time of the visit, the purpose of the visit and what activities will be carried out. It will also be agreed with any other members of staff concerned.
- During the visit governors need to bear in mind that they are there to learn about how the school works. Visits by governors can be useful and informative. They do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the head teacher.
- After the visit the governor will fill in the Report Form with brief details of what they learned, any comments and any issues for the governing body to follow up.

The visit and its outcome will be noted at the next full governors meeting. A record will be kept of the visits by the Curriculum and Development Committee.

Visit Forms are available from the clerk to the governors at the school.

A Protocol for Governors' Visits

- Governors visit to learn about the school, to fulfil their monitoring role and to support the school.
- Governors need to arrange visits with the headteacher as detailed in the Visiting Policy. Date, time and purpose of the visit will be agreed with the staff concerned, including whether a written report is needed.
- Governors should always make an appointment when they want to come into school to speak to staff. Governors may visit the school informally but they should not expect staff to be automatically available.
- At Park Junior School governors are welcomed into the staff room as guests.

In the classroom

- Remember governors are not inspectors. We are not making professional judgements about teachers or doing classroom observations. We are there to learn about what goes on in school.
- Governors should follow normal rules of courtesy in the classroom and check with the teacher before getting involved in the lesson and speaking to pupils.
- Understand that things are not always perfect. You only see a snapshot of the class and how it works.
- If a governor sees something that worries them, they should discuss this with the headteacher after the visit.
- If a governor has a problem with the headteacher this should be discussed with the Chair of Governors.
- Remember that staff, including support staff, have welcomed you into their working area. Thanks and positive comments go a long way towards being welcomed back.