

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNING BODY OF FENSTANTON & HILTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

It is good practice for the governing body to re-adopt the code of practice annually at the first full governing body meeting of the year.

GENERAL

* The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievements 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 critical friend

** To hold it to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides.

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

* 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 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 headteacher, staff, parents, the local authority and their 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 or otherwise, 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 authorised to do so.

* All visits to the 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.

* Governors should withdraw from any meeting in which they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest. It may only be necessary to withdraw for the part of the meeting where the 'item' is discussed.

* A person who is paid to work at the school is not regarded as having a pecuniary interest if his/her interest is no greater than that of other persons paid to work at the school.

* A governor paid to work at the school, other than the headteacher, must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to the pay or performance appraisal of any particular person working at the school. This does not affect general discussions about general policy.

* The headteacher must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to their own pay or performance appraisal.

* All governors must ensure that confidential and sensitive data is kept securely, both paper and electronic versions.

* Governors will only use email as agreed by the governing body, for example, to circulate agendas and reports, and not for discussing business.

MEETINGS

Individual governors do not have the authority in a school. It is the 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 headteacher, 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 every 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 any relevant papers to the meeting
- * Make relevant and positive contributions
- * Listen to and consider what others say
- * Accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with

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.

In its guidance to governors, the DfE emphasises the importance of governor training and support:

‘Training for all governors and clerks is to be encouraged. Although not compulsory, it is strongly recommended and all governors, however experienced, need training to improve their effectiveness and to keep abreast of developments that may affect their schools and roles as governors. New governors should take advantage of induction training. It will benefit schools if governing bodies use the funds they allocate for governor training and development. There is a wide range of training and support available for governors and each governing body should consider what its needs are and how training can help it to meet those needs’. Extract from DfE document: The Governors’ Guide to the Law

Mentoring

The link governor or an experienced governor can act as a mentor to new governors providing support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body.