

Effective Governance Policy



Committee Name:	Full Governing Body
Date of Approval:	2018
Validity Date:	2018-2021
Person responsible:	Chair of Governors

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Governors are charged with the duty to carry out the strategic, monitoring, executive and accountability roles needed to make St Fidelis a great school.

The “board of governors” should operate at a strategic level, leaving the head teacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable for the operational day-to-day running of the school. The board should avoid its time being consumed with issues of secondary importance, and focus strongly on three core functions:

- Setting the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school;
- Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Ensuring financial resources are well spent.

Code of Conduct

This code sets out the expectations and commitment required from school governors in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the head teacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the head teacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role and Responsibilities

- We will support the aims and objectives of the Governing Board and promote the interests of the School and its pupils in the wider community;
- We will work co-operatively with other Governors in the best interests of the School;
- We will acknowledge that differences of opinion may arise in discussion of issues but, when a majority decision of the Governing Board prevails, it should be supported;
- We will base our view on matters before the Governing Board on an honest assessment of the available facts, unbiased by partisan or representative views;
- We will acknowledge that as an individual governor, we have no legal authority outside the meetings of the Governing Board and its committees;
- We understand that, unless delegated as an individual governor by the Governing Board, an individual governor does not have the right, other than through the chair and with Governing Board's agreement, to make statements or express opinions on behalf of the Governors;
- We will resist any pressure to use the position of governor to benefit himself or herself or other individuals or agencies;
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will consider how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the head teacher.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. We will prepare for meetings by reading minutes and relevant papers and familiarise ourselves with school policies so that meetings are effective and we understand the work of the school.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will give priority, as far as practicable, to attendance at all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance within the visits framework established by the governing board and agreed with the head teacher.
- We understand our individual and collective needs for training and development to ensure our skills and knowledge is relevant and up to date, and will undertake relevant training, and as a minimum at least two training sessions per academic year.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing board, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

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 in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the head teacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will exercise caution with the use of Social networking sites, for example, FaceBook, Twitter etc and not make comments regarding the school, school staff or governance which could bring it into disrepute. Care should also be exercised in relation to material posted including photographs.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will return to the (school/clerk) whatever material we hold for secure disposal when our appointment comes to an end including deleting emails.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will in addition declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

Competency Framework

The DfE has established that governance should be considered as 16 competencies, grouped under six features:



Nolan Principles of Public Life

The 16 competencies set out above should be underpinned by a foundation of principles and personal attributes that can be summarised by seven guiding attributes that should be demonstrated by all involved in governance:

Committed
Confident
Curious
Challenging
Collaborative
Critical
Creative

Absence

Being a governor is a volunteer position. Where a governor's attendance falls below that which might be expected, the chair of the relevant committee will contact the absent governor to explore what, if anything, can be done to help the governor improve their attendance and contribution.

Actions

Actions arise from various committee meetings and they should be agreed by the committee collectively. The best action points will have a clarity to the purpose of the actions that is understood by all and particularly those charged with undertaking them. The minutes should then reflect what the action is, who is responsible for undertaking the action and when it should be completed by. Actions will be listed in the body of the minutes as well as a table at the end of the minutes to aid clarity in this regard.

Agenda

All governors can suggest items for inclusion on future committee agendas. The various committee chairs will meet with the Head Teacher termly in order to review the previous minutes and agree agenda items for the subsequent term's meeting. The chairs and Head Teacher will consider the order of agenda items, to try to ensure that the most significant items for discussion or strategic decision come earlier in the agenda where possible.

Chair

The chair will be responsible for keeping meetings to time, ensuring equality of contribution and depth of discussion. Where an agenda item begins to run beyond the allocated timing the chair may recommend the item for further discussion as a future agenda item, choose to defer the item to the Full Governing Body, or close the discussion down with a vote. In order to promote engagement across all governors, the chair may wish to select an item on the agenda that they want to go "around the room" and invite comments from all governors present.

Committees

The majority of the work of governance is undertaken within the committee structure. There is an expectation that all governors will be a member of at least one committee.

Items

Each agenda item will have an identified lead, which could be either a senior leader or governor, whose responsibility it is to lead the discussion around that item. The purpose of this will be to try and ensure there is a wide distribution of participation.

Minutes

The draft minutes are sent to the Chair and Head Teacher shortly after each meeting takes place in order for a first review of the minutes to take place. Once the Chair and Head Teacher have made amendments to the minutes and returned these to the clerk, the clerk will send the draft minutes to all committee members electronically for information only. The minutes will be agreed at the next committee meeting for accuracy.

Newsletter

The chair of each committee will prepare a brief statement for inclusion in the termly governor newsletter immediately after their committee meeting, which will be compiled and agreed at the full governing body meeting before publication to the school community.

Papers

It is important that governors have enough information to be effective, but not so much that they cannot meet the expectation that everyone arrives at each meeting having read the distributed papers. With this in mind the review at the end of each meeting will consider briefly whether the correct balance was struck. The Full Governing Body meeting will receive hard copies of the minutes of the last meeting only, with the various committee meeting minutes being distributed electronically as these minutes are well scrutinised by each committee.

Plan for Improvement

The governing body will collectively develop an annual action plan that responds to and informs the further development of this effective governance policy. As a guide governors may wish to consider up to three development points that they would like to work together to strengthen across the course of the calendar year.

Presentations

Each committee will start by receiving one presentation on an aspect of the school development plan or other area of agreed focus led by a senior or middle leader. Governors will have the opportunity to give feedback or ask questions as part of the presentation.

Questions

All governors should take the opportunity to ask questions or make contributions during committee meetings. It might be helpful if individual governors each came to each meeting with two questions planned that they might ask based on their reading of the circulated governor papers..

Reports

Governors should expect to receive the self-evaluation form at least annually and school development plan at each termly meeting of the full governing body.

Review

Each meeting will make a small amount of time available at its conclusion to review what were the positives that made the meeting productive, whether the timings for each agenda time were met and if not, why not? This review also provides an immediate opportunity for committee members to put forward suggested items for inclusion on the next committee meeting's agenda.

Timing

Agendas will be developed by the chair of each committee with indicative timings allocated to each item on the agenda. These indicative timings are not to intended to limit discussion, but rather to act as a guide to the chair, in ensuring that all items are discussed with sufficient depth. This will assist meetings in being efficient and allow governors to know in advance what time they should allocate for the meetings themselves.

Training

Keeping up to date with the changing nature of education is challenging. Guidance and duties are constantly changing. To be effective governors need to commit some time to reading, attending training or using online learning. The National Governor Association (NGA) website, local authority and diocesan training events are all excellent sources of information.

Twitter

Governors are advised to follow the school's twitter account @headstfidelis as this provides a frequent insight into some of the events and successes that are happening in the school.

Visits

Visits to school by Governors during the time that the school is in operation give them insights that they can acquire in no other way. Their individual written reports provide the governing body as a whole with a perspective that widens governor's collective understanding of the school. If Governors are to carry out their strategic, monitoring, executive and accountability roles they need to have an understanding of the way schools work and a feel for the dynamics of their particular school. There is no better way of gaining this information than by visiting the working school.

Governor visits should be pre-planned and agreed with the school. These visits should not interrupt the smooth running of the school. They should be of sufficient length to give a detailed picture of the focus area, whilst not so long as to become burdensome. Governors should feel that their visits are welcome and valuable.

It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to manage the school from day to day. To judge the quality of teaching and learning in school is a specialist skill, not exercisable by non-specialists on the basis of a short, occasional visit. The purpose of visits is to gain information and impressions to help governors to better understand the strategic decisions that they are required to make. Moreover a visit gives us a glimpse or snapshot of what goes on. Governors should not assume that what they learn at one, or even at several visits gives a full and balanced picture. Our conclusions may be entirely valid as far as they go and we should not reject the evidence of our own eyes and ears; but both may need to be checked and revised in the light of other information brought to the governing body.

The annual calendar for governing body meetings also contains three governor visit dates, one each term, when all governors are invited to attend the school and undertake a range of planned activities. In addition link governors will undertake a termly visit to better understand their area of specific focus.

During a visit all governors should be concerned with noticing everything that they can, it deepens our understanding of our own school. It is important that the visit has a focus taken from the School Development Plan because this is one of the governors' prime responsibilities; to ensure that the school is seeking to and succeeding in developing further. It enables governors to be assured that the evidence and findings presented them by the Headteacher are an accurate reflection of the actual school.

Governors should always report verbally to the Headteacher or in his absence the Deputy Headteacher, before leaving after a school visit. This provides an instant opportunity for feedback and clarification. Reports should be prepared by each visiting governor using the template attached or one agreed as being most appropriate for that particular link governor role and submitted to the Chair and Head Teacher within a week of the visit taking place for approval prior to inclusion in the papers for the next relevant committee meeting.

Website

There is a section of the school website that is set aside for governance. It contains information on who all governors are, which committees they chair or are a member of and their attendance rates for the last academic year. Governors are responsible for checking that their information contained on the website is accurate.

Further Reading

Competency Framework for Governance
DfE, January 2017 (DFE-00021-2017)

Governance Handbook
DfE, January 2017 (DFE-00022-2017)

Governors' Action Plan			2017-2018
Effective Governance			
Impact after:	Impact before:	Actions taken:	Impact on outcomes so far:
Link governor roles developed further.			
Chair and clerk to review each committee meeting.			
Induction of two (possibly three) new governors.			

Governors' Action Plan		2016-2017	
Effective Governance			
Impact after:	Impact before:	Actions taken:	Impact on outcomes so far:
The school website reflects the quality of governance as reflected by governor commitment and expertise as experienced within committee meetings.	The school website is compliant with current statutory requirements for governor information as set out by the DfE.	HT requested governors review and advise on updates for website- particularly terms of office. 30/11/15	Terms of office adjusted. 1/2/16
		Register of business interests returned to the school. 30/11/15	8 forms returned. 22/1/16 All forms returned. 9/2/16
		HT requested "Who's who" short bio for inclusion on website. 30/11/15	6 published on website, but awaiting 6 more. 3/3/16 8 published on website, but awaiting 5 more. 14/6/16 9 published on website, but awaiting 4 more. 19/11/16
		All governor details added to Edubase website.	Compliant 16/11/16

Governors' Action Plan		2016-2017	
Effective Governance			
Impact after:	Impact before:	Actions taken:	Impact on outcomes so far:
Accountability and distributed dialogue is a regular feature of all committee meetings.	Meetings are dominated by a small number of senior leaders and governors.	New effective governance policy includes reference to lead person for each agenda item. 23/01/16	An initial run through of all three committees has taken place, and the timed agendas have been well received by committee members, with meetings keeping to time and the full agenda being discussed in equal depth. 3/3/16 Agenda timings and leads still in place. 14/6/16
		The lead person will set a brief context (pose), the chair will encourage governors to reflect briefly on this information (pause), the lead person will start a discussion by inviting a governor to comment/question (pounce), this governor will then distribute the discussion by inviting another governor to comment/question (bounce). The lead person, supported by the chair, will then invite open questions/discussion. 23/01/16	An initial run through of all three committees has taken place, and there has been limited use of PPPB. 3/3/16 Limited use of PPPB, but generally all governors are contributing at some stage to the meetings. 14/6/16 PPPB not used so far in committee meetings in Autumn 2016 19/11/16

Governors' Action Plan		2016-2017	
Effective Governance			
Impact after:	Impact before:	Actions taken:	Impact on outcomes so far:
Parents are aware of the role, work and impact of the governing body through the termly governor newsletter, which is driven by the chair of each committee.	The last governor newsletter to parents was published in July 2014.	HT requested chair of each committee to provide short and succinct summary of committee's work for inclusion in the governor newsletter. 30/11/15	Governor newsletter published March 2016. 14/6/16
		Governor identified to take on role of compiling termly newsletter.	FGB Nov 2016 to identify governor with particular responsibility.

Committee Membership

Committee:	Full Governing Body		
No. of governors:	13		
Timing:	Monday evenings 5:00-7:00pm, once a term		
Chair:	Br James Boner		
Membership:	Br James Boner Simon Hayes Mark Hannon Maggie Holdgate Linda Ibegbule Nigel Mascarenhas Alison McGurn Fatima Melder Catherine Quirke Tamara Renshaw Chris Shine Richard Wilding Cllr John Wilkinson		
Others in regular attendance:	Deborah Atherton (AHT) Ben Kennor (AHT) Sue Tregear (clerk)		
LAC Link Governor:	Fatima Melder		
Safeguarding Link Governor:	Richard Wilding		
SEND Link Governor:	Fatima Melder		
Policies:	Admissions- nursery	2016	2018
	Admissions- primary	2016	2018
	Equality information and objectives	2015	2018

Committee:	Admissions
No. of governors:	4
Timing:	Various times, at least twice a term
Chair:	Br James Boner
Membership:	Br James Boner Mark Hannon Maggie Holdgate Catherine Quirke
Others in regular attendance:	

Committee:	Curriculum		
No. of governors:	9		
Timing:	Wednesday mornings 8:45-10:30am, once a term (twice in autumn)		
Chair:	Simon Hayes		
Membership:	Simon Hayes Mark Hannon Maggie Holdgate Linda Ibegbule Nigel Mascarenhas Alison McGurn Catherine Quirke Tamara Renshaw Chris Shine		
Others in regular attendance:	Sue Tregear (clerk)		
Assessment Link Governor:	Simon Hayes		
Religion Link Governor:	Chris Shine		
Policies:	Assessment	2018	2021
	Behaviour	2016	2018
	English	2015	2018
	Feedback and Marking	2018	2021
	Maths	2015	2018
	Personal Relationships and Sex Education	2016	2018
	Religion	2016	2019
	Special Educational Needs and Disability	2018	2021
	Teaching and Learning	2018	2021

Committee:	Finance and General Management		
No. of governors:	7		
Timing:	Monday evenings 5:45-7:30pm, once a term		
Chair:	Richard Wilding		
Membership:	Mark Hannon Nigel Mascarenhas Alison McGurn Fatima Melder Catherine Quirke Tamara Renshaw Ken Ryde (associate) Richard Wilding		
Others in regular attendance:	Deborah Atherton (AHT) Sam Crumley (Office Manager) Ben Kennor (AHT) Shaun Kinsella (Premises Manager) Debbie Newman (External Finance Officer) Sue Tregear (clerk)		
Health and Safety Link Governor:	Richard Wilding		
Pupil Premium Link Governor:	Nigel Mascarenhas		
Finance Practice Link Governor:	Nigel Mascarenhas		
Policies:	Accessibility plan	2015	2018
	Charging and remissions	2016	2020
	Critical incidents	2017	2020
	Health and safety	2015	2018
	Intimate care	2016	2019
	Positive handling	2016	2019
	Pupil Premium	2018	2019
	Sports Premium	2018	2019

Committee:	Staffing		
No. of governors:	6		
Timing:	Monday mornings 8:45-10:30am, once a term		
Chair:	Br James Boner		
Membership:	Br James Boner Mark Hannon Simon Hayes Maggie Holdgate Nigel Mascarenhas Catherine Quirke		
Others in regular attendance:	Sue Tregear (clerk)		
Policies:	Complaints	2015	2018
	ICT E-Safety	2015	2018
	Safeguarding and child protection	2016	2018
	Whistleblowing	2016	2019

Committee:	Head Teacher Performance Management Review		
No. of governors:	3		
Timing:	Convened when required (once a year)		
Chair:	Maggie Holdgate		
Membership:	Simon Hayes Maggie Holdgate Nigel Mascarenhas		
Others in regular attendance:	External adviser		

Committee:	Appeals
No. of governors:	3
Timing:	Convened when required
Chair:	Appointed once convened
Membership:	Three available members of the FGB
Others in regular attendance:	Sue Tregear (clerk)

Committee:	Pupil Discipline
No. of governors:	3
Timing:	Convened when required
Chair:	Appointed once convened
Membership:	Three available members of the FGB
Others in regular attendance:	Sue Tregear (clerk)

Committee:	Staffing 'First'
No. of governors:	3
Timing:	Convened when required
Chair:	Appointed once convened
Membership:	Three available members of the FGB
Others in regular attendance:	Sue Tregear (clerk)

Governors' Visit Report

Name:			
Committee:			
Date of visit:		Time of visit:	
Activities:			
Staff met:			

Reference	Initiative	Evidence Found

Action 1:	
Action 2:	

Committee Agenda Template

Committee:			
Date of meeting:		Timing:	

Item No.	Item Description	Lead	Purpose	Timing
1	Apologies for absence	Br James	Approve/ note governor absences	9:15- 9:17
2	Declaration of pecuniary/non-pecuniary interest	Clerk	Inform	9:17- 9:18
3	Minutes of the last meeting	Br James	Review for accuracy/ matters arising	9:18- 9:28
4	Head Teacher's Report	Mark	Inform/ question	9:28- 9:45
5	NQT development	Catherine	Inform/ question	9:45- 10:00
7	School Development Plan TLP 1: SEN	Ben	Update on progress/ question	10:00- 10:10
8	Maths Policy	Deborah	Approve	10:10- 10:20
9	Class Timetables	Matt	Review time allocations to subjects/ question	10:20- 10:40
10	Governor newsletter & Review of meeting	Br James	Agree 2/3 main points and suggest future items	10:25- 10:30 5 mins
	Close			11:00