



GOVERNOR PROTOCOL AND CODE OF CONDUCT

This document was approved and ratified by the Governing Body of
Cox Green School
On 29 November 2016

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1	Full Governing Body	Jul 2013	1 Sept 2013	Jul 2015
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1.3	Full Governing Body	29 Nov 2016	29 Nov 2016	Autumn 2017



Governance Handbook

Governors at Cox Green School are required to abide by the current version of the Governance Handbook. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>.

This provides information on the role of Governors and how Governance works in schools.

STRUCTURE: Composition of the Governing Body

In line with the Articles of Association, there must be 5 (minimum) Members of the Academy Trust and 3 (minimum) Governors on the Governing Body (entitled Trustees).

The Constitution comprises:

- 4 Parent Governors
- 4 Staff Governors (including Headteacher)
- 7 Ordinary Governors

Total = 15

The term of office of a Governor is four years. Any Governor may be re-appointed or re-elected (although a Parent Governor must have a child attending the school at the election time. If their child subsequently leaves the school, the Parent Governor will still be able to complete their 4 year term.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Governing Body will elect from among its number a Chair of Governors and Vice Chair.

The term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair is 1 year. The Chair and Vice Chair may be re-elected at the Autumn Term FGB Annual Planning Meeting. Staff Governors cannot be Chair or Vice Chair.

Business and Meetings of the Full Governing Body

All Governors are expected to attend regularly at Full Governor Body (FGB) and Committee meetings which ensures that the business of the Governing Body can be conducted effectively and within timescales. Attendance at meetings is noted and reported annually on the school website. Governors are expected to attend a minimum of 70% of their allotted meetings.

Governors are required to submit their apologies for non-attendance to the Clerk / Committee Chair along with their reasons for non-attendance as soon as possible ahead of the meeting.

Governors respect the office of the Chair and conduct all decisions through him/her at all times.

Governors must declare any interests through completion of a Business Interest form and declare any business and pecuniary interest in agenda item(s) and withdraw from any discussion of the item as directed by the Chair.

There are 5 FGB meetings during the academic year with dates for the forthcoming year being agreed before the end of each academic year. Quorum for FGB meetings is 3 Governors minimum OR one third of the total FGB if this is greater (currently 5). The Leadership Team may nominate Advisors who attend the FGB meetings at the discretion of the FGB.

A Clerk to the Governing Body is appointed for the purposes of taking minutes for the FGB meetings and managing the administration of the Governing Body and providing advice as required. Paperwork for the FGB meetings will be sent to all Governors 7 days ahead of the meeting.



Committees and Working Parties

When establishing Committees the Governing Body should ensure that at least 3 Governors are appointed to each Committee and;

- agree the membership annually and the method of electing the Chair of each Committee
- establish Terms of Reference, including delegation and review annually
- allow Working Parties and Committees to determine their own timetables within given limits

The Headteacher has the right to attend any meeting of the Governing Body or any of its Committees or Working Parties subject to the statutory rules laid down in respect of exclusions, and staff disciplinary matters. The Leadership Team may nominate Advisors who attend the Committee meetings at the discretion of the FGB.

The Governing Body will delegate responsibility to Committees in the following areas:

- Leadership & Management
- Teaching & Learning
- Finance & Resources
- Audit
- People & External Relations

Each Committee will have agreed Terms of Reference reviewed annually by the Full Governing Body and by the Committee itself at its first meeting of the academic year.

A Committee will provide minutes showing its decisions and actions. The Chair of the Committee will send the Clerk to the FGB all of the paperwork associated with the meeting electronically as soon as it is available. The minutes of Committee meetings will be presented to the next meeting of the Governing Body for information. The Committee will approve the minutes of each Committee meeting at the subsequent meeting and a signed copy, together with agenda and any papers presented, excluding any Part II confidential documents, will be filed in school, for public view if requested.

It is expected that an individual should NOT chair more than one Committee – this will allow the workload to be more equally spread across the Full Governing Body. All Committee Chairs must design their own agenda in consultation with the Headteacher, or the Senior Leader attached to the Committee, and must appoint their own Clerk for the purposes of taking the minutes for the meeting. The agenda must be prepared at least 2 weeks ahead of the meeting and all of the paperwork circulated 7 days ahead of the meeting. The role of Clerk should be rotated amongst the Committee members excluding the Chair, Headteacher, Senior Leader or Staff Governor. Once the minutes have been typed and agreed with those present (within 3 weeks of the meeting) they should be sent to the Clerk to the Governing Body for circulation with the FGB papers.

All Governors are required to become members of 1 Committee (minimum). New Governors may attend all Committees initially to decide which Committee best suits their skills, experience and interest, but after one term they must join 1 Committee. Their preferences will be considered by the Chair of Governors and Committee Chairs who will ensure that Committee membership and skills are balanced.

Any Governor is welcome to attend a meeting of a Committee of which they are not a member as a non-voting participant and new Governors are encouraged to familiarise themselves with all Committees

Governor meeting dates

Dates for Governor meetings are to be set at the end of the Summer Term for the forthcoming academic year. Due consideration should be given to all meeting dates and timings with an understanding that school staff have other significant evening work commitments and are often in school by 7.30am the next day.



Other Governor appointed roles

Governors will be appointed to the following special roles:

1. Development (Training) Governor
2. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Governor
3. Child Protection and Children in Care (LAC/CiC)
4. Safeguarding
5. Liaison with LA in the event of allegation (child protection) against Headteacher
6. Health & Safety

Governors appointed in these roles should present a brief update, outlining any discussions and actions arising from meetings or investigations relating to their functions at relevant FGB or Committee meetings.

Alternative participation & voting

Any Governor shall be able to participate in a meeting via telephone or video conference as long as they have informed the Clerk/School 2 days before the meeting and the appropriate equipment can be sourced.

Contact information, Register of Interests and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Clerk to the Governing Body will collect contact information for all Governors at the FGB Annual Planning meeting. This information will be shared between Governors, the school and RBWM. This information will not be shared more widely unless express permission is given to do so.

The Register of Interests will be updated annually and basic information put onto the school website as statutorily required and onto the Edubase system for the DfE National Database of Governors.

All Governors must have a current DBS certificate in place for the School (every 3 years).

Confidentiality

Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body, and always in matters relating to individual members of staff, students and parents/carers. Governors must not bring the school into disrepute. Confidentiality also applies to the basis on which decisions are made, although final decisions are made public through publication of minutes of the full Governing Body meetings. Governors will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Body meeting.

Social Contact and Social Networking

Communication between students and Governors, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Governors should not share any personal information with students. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their Governor role. If a student seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the Governor should exercise his or her professional judgment in making a response and should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Governors must not give their personal contact details, such as home/mobile phone number, home or personal e-mail address or social networking details to students if related to a school matter, except in the case of Parent Governors who may already have relationships in place through their existing personal connections.

It is recommended that Governors ensure that all possible privacy settings are activated to prevent students from making contact on personal profiles and to prevent students from accessing photo albums or other personal information which may appear on social networking sites.



Governors must not have any students or any ex-students under the age of 18 as friends on their social networking sites, except for their own children.

Governors are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and must bear in mind that what is published might be read by the school, students, the general public, future employers and friends and family for a long time. Governors should not post material which damages the reputation of the school

Governor visits to school

The Governing Body will organise a programme of visits with the help of the Headteacher. These should be spread throughout the year, with the aim to **achieve a minimum of one visit per term**. If possible, at the end of the visit day, the Headteacher may also convene a representative panel of students for the Governors to talk to. In addition, new Governors will make a general introductory visit of the school as part of their induction programme.

The focus of a visit will be for Governors to see the school in operation first hand and to gain an overall impression of the day to day working of the school. The focus of the visit may also specifically cover an element of the Raising Achievement Plan (e.g. behaviour) and this will be agreed at the start of the visit with the relevant SLT member

What a visit is not about

- Making judgements on the quality of teaching or professional expertise of the teacher, this is the role of the Leadership Team
- Checking on progress of individual children
- Pursuing personal interests and concerns
- Monopolising school/teacher time

When organising and conducting a visit Governors will be courteous and considerate, respecting the professional roles of the Headteacher and staff. Working to the annual schedule agreed with the Headteacher and staff, they will confirm in advance with the Headteacher the date and timing of the visit. The Headteacher will decide the format of the visit for each Governor attending and which lessons they will be observing.

Governors will verbally report back at the next Full Governing Body meeting ensuring they do not specify any names of teachers or pupils and do not specifically comment on the quality of teaching. Governors will also provide a written report in a specified format and these will be lodged with the Clerk to the Governing Body

Training and Development

The role of the Governor is critical to the effective management of the school. All Governors will attend the New Governor Induction courses run by RBWM when they first join the Governing Body and undertake Safeguarding training every 1 year. On-going Governor training is also necessary to keep abreast of changing central government policy and legal duties, which will inform decision making within the FGB. Training will be logged by the Clerk to the Governing Body at each FGB meeting and Governors are expected to update the Governing Body of what they have learned and actions that should be taken.

- Governors are expected to keep updated with changes brought about by legislation
- Governors are encouraged to undertake relevant Governors' training and briefing sessions provided by the Local Authority
- Governors are expected to undertake training specific to particular roles and duties as Governors.

Distribution

This Governor Protocol and Code of Conduct will be made available to each member of the Governing Body and new Governors when they join. The Governor Protocol and Code of Conduct will be reviewed each year at the FGB Annual Planning Meeting and any amendments made to ensure the document remains fit for purpose. At this meeting all Governors will agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and Code of Practice.



Code of Practice

The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the lead executive/headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher
- 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

For Governing Bodies to carry out their role effectively, Governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously.
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals.
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task.
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the lead executive/headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- 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 act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully 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/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the lead executive/headteacher.



Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee/academy committee member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 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 make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the lead executive/headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

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/trustees/academy committee members.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the lead executive/headteacher, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

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/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

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/trust's website.
- We will also 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, even if elected to the governing board.



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 governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

Undertaking to comply with the Governor Protocol and Code of Conduct of the Governing Body and the Code of Practice for Governors of Cox Green School:

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.



The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: 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 various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

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.