

## **STANDING ORDERS**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

These Standing Orders were agreed following a meeting of the full Governing Body of Powerstock VA CE Primary School.

They were drawn up to clarify some aspects of our meeting procedures and will be used in conjunction with (but cannot supersede) the Guidance provided in DfEE Circulars, our own Instrument of Government, the DfEE "Guide to the Law for School Governors" and Government Regulations relating to school governance.

### **2. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

2.1 Prior to the first meeting of every academic year our Clerk will invite every eligible governor to put themselves forward as candidates for Chair of the Governing Body. This term of office will last for one year from the date of election. This is a process of self-nomination; no proposer or seconder is required. No school employee is eligible to stand as Chair or Vice Chair.

2.2 Prior to the first meeting of every academic year our Clerk will invite every eligible governor to put themselves forward as candidates for Vice-Chair of the Governance Board. This is a process of self-nomination; no proposer or seconder is required. No school employee is eligible to stand as Chair or Vice Chair.

2.3 The agenda for the first meeting of the academic year will list the candidates for Chair and Vice Chair. The first item will be the election of Chair by secret ballot of all those governors present (with the exception of the candidates who will withdraw while the ballot takes place). The Clerk will chair the meeting for the election of Chair. The newly elected Chair will then deal with the election of the Vice Chair/s.

2.4 No postal or proxy votes will be accepted, but governors joining the meeting virtually can cast their vote via private message to the Clerk.

2.5 If only one nomination is received in advance, a secret ballot will take place to achieve a majority vote (50%).

2.6 If the candidate receives less than 50% of votes, nominations for chairship will be asked for at the meeting.

2.7 Nominations at the meeting itself will only be accepted if no nomination has been received in advance.

2.8 If no nominations are received in advance, the Clerk will ask for nominations at the meeting itself. A ballot is only necessary if the election is contested.

2.9 The Chair is elected for one year; in his/her absence the Vice Chair will conduct meetings of the full governing body. The Vice-Chair is elected for one year.

2.10 If both Chair and Vice Chair are absent the governors will elect a temporary Chair for that meeting. He/she cannot be a school employee.

### **3. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

3.1 The full governing body will meet at least once each term.

3.2 At the end of the summer term or at the first meeting of the academic year we will agree times and dates for meetings of the full governing body for the rest of the academic year. Times and dates for our committees/working parties will be agreed annually.

#### 4. TIMES OF MEETINGS

4.1 Meetings will start at a time acceptable to the full governing body and will be limited in length to 2 hours duration.

4.2 Where business has not been completed after 2 hours the governors present will vote on extending the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

4.3 After that, any unfinished business will be taken forward to the next appropriate meeting of the governors.

#### 5. QUORUM

5.1 At full governing body meetings the quorum will be one half, rounded up, of the full complement of the governing body.

5.2 The membership, terms of reference and the quorum for a Committee will be determined by the full governing body.

5.3 If there are insufficient governors present to form a quorum the meeting can take place but no decisions can be taken. We will stop the meeting if sufficient governors leave and it becomes inquorate; any outstanding items on the agenda will normally be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

#### 6. CONVENING MEETINGS

6.1 Our Clerk will convene all meetings of the full governing body and will send out the agenda and all supporting background papers to each member of the governing body so that they are received at least seven days before the meeting.

6.2 Extraordinary meetings can be called at shorter notice by the Chair when there is a matter demanding urgent consideration (for example where delay would be seriously detrimental to a pupil or member of staff) or by a request to the Clerk, signed by 3 governors, setting out the reason for calling the special meeting.

#### 7. AGENDA

7.1 Our agenda will be drawn up by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Headteacher.

7.2 Any governor can write to the Clerk at least 14 days prior to the meeting requesting that an item be placed on the agenda. The Chair may decline to include that item on the agenda, if necessary, after consultation with the Headteacher or Clerk. If so, an explanation will be given by the Chair to the governor who made the request.

7.3 Immediately after the approval of Minutes of the previous meeting governors will be invited to inform the meeting of "any items of urgency that do not appear on the agenda". The governors present will decide whether that item can be dealt with at the meeting or deferred to a subsequent meeting.

#### 8. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

8.1 The governing body has agreed that governors can take part in meetings via online meeting technology or similar, but individuals must ensure that this is done in a secure and confidential setting to ensure that conversations cannot be overheard. Governors taking part in this way must be able to hear the whole conversation to be part of the decision making and to be included in the quorum of the meeting. Governors who wish to virtually attend a physical meeting must give 24 hours' notice to enable set-up.

8.2 The Clerk will record the names of all those present at the meeting, including his/her own name and the names of any invited visitors or observers. The minutes will also record the names of governors who have sent apologies which have been accepted and the names of governors who are absent (or whose apologies have not been accepted).

8.3 Our governing body has agreed that apologies must be sent to the Clerk and will only be accepted in the event of unavoidable clashes with work, domestic commitments or illness.

8.4 Any governor (except ex-officio governors and the Headteacher) who fails to attend a meeting of the full governing body for six months will be automatically disqualified unless the governing body has accepted his/her apologies and recognises that circumstances have made it impossible for him/her to attend. The six-month period commences from the date of the first meeting he/she fails to attend.

8.5 The minutes will record the late arrival or early departure of individual governors.

8.6 The Head is entitled to attend all meetings of the governing body except where he/she is asked to withdraw by the governing body during a discussion of his/her pay or performance appraisal or in situations where he/she is required to remain impartial.

8.7 If the Headteacher cannot be present at a full governing body meeting, the Chair may invite a senior leader to attend.

## 9. MINUTES

9.1 The minutes will be drawn up by the Clerk and kept in a minutes book/loose leaf file with numbered pages. On approval by the governing body each page will be signed and dated by the Chair. Other significant documents (such as the School Improvement Plan, Post OFSTED Action Plan and Annual Budget) should be signed and dated by the Chair on approval by the governors, with an initial on each page of the document. In the event of unavoidable absence by the Clerk the Governing Body will determine who will temporarily keep a record of the meeting.

9.2 Copies of the draft minutes, checked by the Headteacher and Chair for accuracy, will be sent to all members of the governing body within 10/14 days of the meeting.

9.3 The governors will determine which matters are confidential and what the circulation of the confidential minutes should be. Only governors who have received the minutes may vote on their acceptance at the next meeting. The minute of any confidential matter discussed by the governing body will not be available for inspection by parents or members of the public. Instead the Clerk will keep a separate record. This record will be kept in a secure place in the school.

9.4 The confidential minute can only be approved at the next governing body meeting by those who were present when the matter was first discussed. The Clerk will therefore:

- circulate copies of the minute to those eligible to approve it, or
- read out the minute to those eligible to approve it, or
- invite governors to inspect the confidential minute, kept securely in the school office, or
- at the meeting following the confidential discussion, circulate numbered copies of the minute to all those eligible to approve it and gather these back in, once the minute has been approved.

9.5 A copy of the minutes of any meeting of the governing body will be made available to the Chief Education Officer on request.

9.6 All members of the governing body will respect the general confidentiality of the detailed discussions we have in our meetings and the absolute confidentiality of those items specifically identified as 'confidential' on our agendas and minutes. Individual governors will be asked to account for any breaches in confidentiality.

## 10. CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 The Chair, Headteacher and Clerk will agree which items of incoming correspondence will be presented for discussion at the full governing body. Any letters of complaint sent to the Clerk should not be dealt with under "correspondence" but will be dealt with through the school's Complaints Procedure and will not be presented to the full governors meeting.

10.2 The governing body will determine who should write letters, policy papers or discussion documents on its behalf. No governor should write such a letter or policy paper or make a public statement without the authority of a committee or the full governing body.

## 11. INFORMATION AND ADVICE

11.1 The Headteacher is accountable to the governors and has a statutory duty to keep the governing body informed. He/she will present a written report once a term.

11.2 The Chief Education Officer (or his/her representative) can make a request to attend a governing body meeting to provide information or advice; equally the governing body can request the attendance (subject to availability) of an LA Officer at a governors meeting.

11.3 Where information is required by the governing body but is not readily available, reasonable time will be given for its production.

## 12. DEBATE, DISCUSSION AND DECISION

12.1 The Chair will ensure that all governors enjoy equality of opportunity to express their views and that debate is not dominated by a small minority of the governors to the exclusion of others.

12.2 The minutes setting out decisions taken by Committees with delegated authority will be received as "information items" by the full governing body, and recorded in the minutes, but not debated in detail. Some decisions - such as adopting the Annual Budget - must be formally agreed by the full governing body.

12.3 Working Parties only make recommendations unless the governing body has specifically authorised them to take action. These recommendations require the approval of the full governing body before they can be implemented.

12.4 Decisions must be made by the full governing body unless an individual or a committee has been formally delegated to deal with a specific issue.

12.5 We are a corporate body, with corporate responsibility for our decisions. Any decision of the full governing body is binding on all of us.

12.6 The full governing body will not debate or discuss any matter which is likely, subsequently, to be the subject of a parental complaint or disciplinary hearing.

12.7 Any governor will withdraw from discussion of an item when there is a conflict of interest such as a pecuniary interest or, in the case of school employees, when he/she has a greater interest in the item than the generality of the school's employees.

## 13. VOTING

13.1 We will operate in a friendly and informal manner commensurate with effective decision making. Normally decisions will be agreed by the Chair seeking a consensus view at the end of a discussion.

13.2 Where the Chair, or another governor, considers it appropriate to take a vote (such as when the School Improvement Plan or Budget are adopted) this will normally be by show of hands.

13.3 A secret ballot will be organised for the election of Chair and Vice Chair, and on any occasion where it has been requested by a resolution put forward by two or more governors and approved by a simple majority of those eligible to vote.

13.4 All resolutions put to a vote (except the election of Chair and Vice Chair) will be decided by a simple majority of those eligible to vote. In the event of a tie the Chair has a second, casting vote. No postal or proxy votes can be accepted unless in exceptional circumstances (see 8.1 above). The Clerk will record the voting figures including abstentions. Information on how individuals voted is confidential to the meeting.

13.5 Where a non-governor serves as an additional member of a committee, he/she will not have a vote.

13.6 A decision of the governing body can only be amended or rescinded subsequently if the proposal to amend appears as a separate agenda item.

#### 14. URGENT ACTION

14.1 The Chair (or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair) can only take urgent action between meetings if delay would seriously affect a person or the school.

14.2 The Chair or Vice Chair must report to the next meeting of the full governing body any urgent action that he/she has taken.

#### 15. VISITORS

15.1 The governing body will decide who (in addition to the Headteacher, Clerk and voting governors) will be eligible to attend meetings as visitors or observers.

#### 16. PECUNIARY INTEREST AND WITHDRAWAL FROM DISCUSSIONS

16.1 The Clerk will circulate a Business Interest form for new governors to complete and will ask existing governors to update their Business Interests form if appropriate. The information will be maintained as a register of our relevant interests.

16.2 A declaration of interest will be an agenda item at every meeting of the full governing body and committee meetings.

16.3 Where a governor is likely to have a personal or pecuniary interest in a specific item on the agenda, the clerk will draw his/her attention to it. A governor will withdraw from the room during the discussion of an item if he/she (or a close relative):

- stands to gain financially from the decision;
- has a personal interest in the matter under discussion;
- is related to the parent, pupil or employee under discussion.

16.3 When the governing body is discussing the pay and conditions of a school employee, all governors who are school employees will be asked to withdraw unless the governing body invites one or more of them to remain.

16.4 Where a Panel or Committee is discussing a complaint or a pupil/staff disciplinary matter any governor including those with a personal interest must be allowed to give evidence or make submissions if required.

## 17. ANNUAL REVIEW

17.1 Once a year, (normally in our first meeting of the academic year) we will review the overall operation of the governing body including its efficiency and effectiveness. We will consider the frequency and timing of meetings, Committee/Working Party structure, terms of reference and membership of Committees/Working Parties, the continuing relevance of our Induction Pack for new governors, Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.

17.2 Committee terms of reference will be reviewed by each committee at their first meeting of the academic year.

## 18. MEMBERSHIP AND EXPENSES

18.1 The membership of the governing body is determined by our Instrument of Government and by the DfES Regulation covering disqualification.

18.2 A governor may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Clerk. The Clerk should ensure that the governing body moves promptly to fill any vacancies that arise.

18.3 The governing body will decide each year whether to make a financial allocation from the school budget for governors' expenses. Eligible expenditure includes travel costs, childcare and any costs incurred in caring for other dependents. The governing body will decide the procedure for claiming expenses (normally receipts will be submitted to the school's petty cash; DCC employees will submit an expense claim form to the LA).

## 19. DISTRIBUTION

19.1 A copy of these Standing Orders will be given to every governor and the Headteacher (if he/she is not a governor) and subsequently to each new governor who joins the governing body.

19.2 The Standing Orders will be reviewed annually (see 17.1 above). Any amendments to the Standing Orders must not conflict with the DfEE "Guide to the Law for School Governors" or School Governance Regulations.

These Standing Orders were approved on 12 October 2021.

Signed:

Chair of Governors