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# Danegrove School

## Governor Code of Practice

## **Introduction**

Welcome to your governor induction pack for Danegrove School. This pack helps to explain the roles and responsibilities of being a governor, how the governing body is structured in our school and how the governing body carries out its duties.

This pack is useful if you are considering becoming a governor, you have just been appointed as a governor or as a reminder if you are an existing governor.

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

### **This pack includes the following:**

- The purpose of the governing body
- The responsibilities of a governor
- The different types of governor
- The responsibilities of the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors
- Being an effective governor
- the governing body membership and structure
- Useful terms and abbreviations
- Governor Code of Conduct

### **The list below are documents that if you are appointed as a governor, you should make yourself very familiar with:**

- a copy of the school improvement plan (SIP)
- a full list of staff and the staffing structure
- The school profile
- a copy of the school Behaviour Policy
- a copy of the school prospectus
- recent school newsletters
- a calendar of school events
- a copy of the school's latest OfSTED report
- a copy of the most recent Governor Support Service booklet
- papers from the last full governing body meeting
- The school website

### **As a governor you will be asked to complete:**

- A pecuniary interests statement
- A skill matrix

In order to be effective, every governor needs some basic knowledge about their school and needs to be able to set this against a wider understanding of education. For both new and experienced governors there are training courses run by the Local Authority (LA). All governors are encouraged to take advantage of the training on offer. These courses are paid for by the school.

## **The purpose of the governing body**

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

## **What School Governors Do**

A school governing body has a strategic role in the development of the school but does not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Head Teacher.

Governors are there to:

**Provide a strategic view** - help to set and maintain the broad framework within which the Head Teacher and the staff should run the school. Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school. Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives. Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.

**Challenge and support the school by monitoring, reviewing and challenging** – Act as a critical friend. Provide the Head Teacher with support and offer advice and information but also to provide some challenge. The governing body is there to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and governors should therefore be prepared to ask challenging questions. Implement the improvement strategy.

**To ensure accountability** - the Head Teacher and staff report to the governing body on the school's performance. In turn the governing body is accountable to all stakeholders on the school's overall performance. Respond to Ofsted when necessary. Ensure parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed. Make information available to the community.

**Appoint and Performance Manage the Headteacher** - who will deliver the aims of the school improvement strategy, manage the school day to day, implement agreed policy, deliver the curriculum and report appropriately to the governing body.

## **Different types of governor at Danegrove School:**

**Parent Governors** - parents or carers elected by other parents or carers with children at the School ;

**Staff Governors** - the Head Teacher and staff members elected by teaching and support Staff;

**Community Governors** - individuals chosen by governors from the local community who represent community interests;

**LA Governors** - appointed by the Local Authority who take regard of the skills and experience which schools require and appoint candidates who support the schools' ethos and mission;

**Associate Members** - a discretionary category appointed by the governing body from individuals who may be able to make specific contributions, but who is not a governor and has no vote at full governing body meetings but may have limited voting rights at committee level.

No governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body. All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made.

### **Specific responsibilities of the Governing Body**

- set the overall budget for the school
- decide on the number of staff
- decide on the level of pay for teachers
- help to decide the priorities for the school when the school improvement plan is being developed
- ensure the national curriculum is taught to all pupils
- publish national test results
- compare the performance of their school to similar schools
- receive information about the quality of teaching in the school
- have a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns
- ensure health and safety issues are addressed
- set the times of school sessions
- consult the Head Teacher when making decisions
- ask challenging questions
- help develop school policies and procedures
- consider the repair and maintenance of school buildings
- consider the use of school premises outside school hours

- Appoint committees of governors to look at specific issues such as finance, staffing, curriculum and premises.

### **Governing Bodies Don't:**

- inspect the school
- report on the quality of teaching after visiting the school
- authorise all expenditure
- act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body
- share concerns about staff capability
- decide on how pupils are taught different subjects
- have the right to exclude a pupil
- write the school's policies on their own
- rubberstamp recommendations from the Head Teacher
- automatically approve all apologies for absence for meetings sent by governors
- need to be aware of the performance objectives which had been set for individual teachers
- write the OfSTED action plan

### **The key responsibilities of the Head Teacher are:**

- the internal organisation, management and control of the school
- Performance Management of all staff
- formulating aims, objectives and policies for the governing body to consider adopting
- advising on and implementing the governing body strategic framework
- giving governors the information they needed to help the school raise its standards
- reporting on progress at each meeting

### **The Chair of Governors is responsible for: (as listed by OfSTED)**

- giving a clear lead in organising the governing bodies work, delegate and ensure other governors are fully involved
- manage meetings effectively
- keep other governors fully informed
- hold regular meetings with the Head Teacher
- co-operate with other agencies to support school improvement

The Chair has a pivotal role to play in helping the governing body work as a team. The Chair must have a clear view of the governing body and understand the shared visions for the school and know how that vision is to be achieved.

## **Being a school Governor**

### **What Makes an Effective School Governor?**

- you care about improving children's educational attainment
- you want to work as part of a team and can value and respect the contribution made by different people
- you are willing to listen, learn and to ask questions
- you are open to ideas and have a feel for what is important to people
- you are enthusiastic
- you can commit time and energy
- you will attend relevant training
- you are prepared to take the responsibility seriously
- you are willing to monitor and review your own performance
- you have an overriding concern for the welfare of the school as a whole

### **What Does the Effective Governor Need to be Familiar With?**

- the recent history of the school
- the type of school and the nature of the pupil intake
- the number of pupils on roll and projected future numbers how the school is staffed, organised and managed
- the status of the school budget including the Pupil Premium and the Sports Grant
- the contents of the school improvement plan
- the curriculum provided at the school
- the range of extracurricular activities on offer and the nature of any extended services
- the school policies
- how the school communicates with parents, other schools and the community
- the layout of the buildings, grounds, their suitability and state of repair
- How well the school is doing in relation to subject areas, specific year groups and specific groups of children

### **How Much Time Do Governor's give?**

A governor's term of office is usually for four years, but as a volunteer you can resign at any time. Your main task is to attend meetings of the school governing body.

Business Meetings of the full governing body normally take place once each term. Each committee normally meets once a term, but may meet more frequently depending upon current issues the committees are involved with.

We actively encourage our Governors to visit school as part of their role in monitoring and evaluation to observe practice, meet with staff and to familiarise themselves with the school. Governors are invited to Open mornings a year and to

take part in the three learning walks with the SMT. Governors are welcome, to attend school performances, events and some staff training. A current list of organised events is included in the supporting information.

Some Governors have specific responsibility – e.g SEN, Safeguarding Trips & Visits, Attendance etc.

Governors should try to build appropriate professional relationships with staff

Whilst we recognise that not all governors find it easy to visit school during the day due to work commitments, we expect that every governor would try to make 3 visits a year to see the school in operation during a normal school day.

### **Be Prepared for a Meeting:**

- read the papers before the meeting
- know who all the governors are (governors should wear lanyards)
- make sure you have all the necessary papers prepare your thoughts and questions before the meeting
- bring with you a pen, your diary and your annotated papers

### **Attendance**

Any governor who, without permission, is absent from meetings of the full governing body for a continuous period of six months will cease to be a governor. If you need to offer apologies for a meeting this should be done through the Chair or the clerk in advance of the meeting with the reason for your absence noted.

### **Confidentiality**

Governing body meetings are not open to the public. Visitors may attend by invitation but may be asked to leave if a confidential item is discussed.

Governors observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the governing body in meetings and from their visits to school as governors. How an individual governor votes should always be regarded as confidential. The minutes of any part of the meeting that are confidential should be kept separate. In the main confidential items will be those where the privacy of an individual needs to be respected.

### **Governors and the law**

The intention of the law is that governors should be accountable and business should be

transparent with any confidential items being kept to a minimum. Any old documents governors wish to dispose of should be shredded, given the sensitive nature of some of the information.

### **Frequency, notice & duration of meetings**

A school calendar is given out at the start of the academic year with all dates. You should receive your papers for the formal full governing body meetings seven days before the meeting with the papers setting out details of the date, time and place.

Committee meetings are organised by the committees and contact is made by email giving governors details of agendas or necessary information they need for a meeting.

### **Agenda**

The agenda, which will be contained with your notification for the meeting, will list all the items that are to be discussed at the meeting. Consider the agenda carefully before the meeting and make notes where there are items of particular interest or importance to you or where you want to ask a question.

You have the right to request that an item be placed on the agenda by contacting the Chair or clerk a few weeks before the meeting. If "Any Other Business" features on your agenda and you wish to raise an issue under this item you must discuss this with the Chair prior to the start of the meeting so the Chair can evaluate whether the meeting is an appropriate forum for the issue and can allow sufficient time for discussion.

### **Quorum**

If a meeting of the governing body cannot be held for a lack of a quorum (50% of current membership) or has to be terminated on that account before all agenda items have been completed, the clerk must convene a further meeting as soon as reasonably practicable. If the governing body decide to terminate the meeting before all agenda items have been completed, it must first fix the date and time for a further meeting at which the outstanding items will be considered and must direct the clerk to convene that meeting accordingly.

### **Register of Pecuniary Interests**

Governors and school staff have a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and affairs and the interests of the school. Each Governor is required to complete this register each year. A copy for you to sign is included in the supporting information and needs to be returned to the head teacher.

### **Minutes**

The clerk takes minutes of the Business meetings which are a record of what happens at that meeting. Minute takers at committee meetings are agreed at the start of the meeting. Once approved by the full governing body, the minutes are a public record and are displayed on the school website.

### **How the Governing body is structured at Danegrove School**

The whole Governing Body will meet once each term for a formal business meeting which looks at current issues within the school, notes from the Director of Education in Barnet, takes a report from the head teacher and also takes feedback from the committees.

Each Committee has a specific area of responsibility

Each committee has a core membership and arranges its meetings within the group, however all governors are invited to attend committee meetings where they feel they wish to be involved in a specific issue.

**Committees:** Welfare, Discipline and Curriculum  
Personnel  
Resources

Other groups such as a –Pay committee, a disciplinary committee or a group to consider a complaint will be made as needed.

## **The Governor Code of Conduct**

### **General**

- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 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. 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 body.

### **Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, 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 in full why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Headteacher.

### **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 Headteacher, staff and parents, 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 business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.

## **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

## **Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension 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;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.

The Governing Body of Danegrove adopted this code of practice in November 2015.

Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year.

### **Undertaking:**

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.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date: .....



# Appendix 1: Useful terms and abbreviations

## A

**Admission limit** the maximum number of pupils intended to be admitted into any year of a school

**AEN** Additional Educational Needs. A wider term than SEN, attempting to recognise additional needs

**AMP** Asset Management Plan

**Appeals** parents have the right of appeal against decisions relating to admission to schools, special educational provision and exclusion from school

**Appraisal** the periodic reviewing of staff to identify their future needs in terms of training and staff development generally

**APR** Annual Performance Review

**AQA** Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. The largest examining board in the UK

**Attainment** target the knowledge, skills and understanding which pupils are expected to have by the end of each national curriculum key stage

**AT** Attainment Target

**AWPU** age weighted people unit. The sum of money allocated to the school for each pupil according to age. This is the basic unit of funding for the school

## B

**Ballot** a method of voting, usually secret.

**Baseline assessment** assessment of pupils' attainment on entry

**Benchmarking** the technique which permits the comparison of data between schools or different departments and schools to allow performance to be assessed.

**Best value** replaces compulsory competitive tendering and confirms the need for all council services to be efficient, cost effective and responsive to client needs

**Budget share** the amount schools receive through the formula and for which the governing body has delegated responsibility under the local management of school (LMS)

**BME** Black and Minority Ethnic

**BV** Best Value

## C

**CAF** Common Assessment Framework

**CC** Children's Centre

**Capital expenditure** spending on building projects and large items of equipment

**Casting vote** an additional vote to be used by the chair when an equal number of votes are cast

**Child protection** governor the governor who oversees child protection

**Clerk** the person appointed to carry out administrative duties to the governing body such as preparing the agenda, managing meetings and dealing with correspondence. The clerk advises the governing body on legal and procedural matters

**Collective worship** a single act of worship for all pupils required to take place in maintained schools

**CRB** Criminal Records Bureau. A organisation created to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse by identifying unsuitable employees and volunteers working with these vulnerable groups

**CPD** continuing professional development

**CVA** contextual value added

## D

**DDA** disability discrimination act

**Delegated budget** money which governing bodies can use to their discretion

**Delegated powers** committee or the Head Teacher permitted to take action on behalf of the governing body

**DFES** Department for Education and Skills

**Devolved capital funding** funding allocated to schools specifically for large capital projects

**Directed Time** when a teacher must be available to carry out duties, including attending staff and parents meetings under the direction of the Head Teacher

## E

**EBD** emotional and behavioural difficulties

**ECM** Every Child Matters

**EDP** education development plan

**EWO** education welfare officer

**Ex officio** an individual who is able to attend meetings by virtue of holding a particular office

**Exclusion pupils** removed from schools for serious misconduct, either for a fixed period or permanent

**Extended services** a range of services or activities offered before or after the normal school day for the pupils, families and wider community

## F

**FTE** Fixed Term Exclusion

**FOI** Freedom of Information

**FSM** free school meals

**FTE** full-time equivalent

## H

**H&S** health and safety

**HE** higher education

**HLTA** higher level teaching assistant

**HMI** her majesty's inspector

**HMCI** her majesty's chief inspector

**HSE** health and safety executive

## I

**IBP** Individual Behaviour Plan

**ICT** information and communications technology

**IEP** individual education plan, drawn up for children with special needs

**IIP** Investors in People

**INSET** in service education and training for staff

**Instrument of government** the legal document setting out the composition of the governing body

**ISR** individual school range

ITT initial teacher training

## K

**KS** Key Stage - the national curriculum is divided into four key stages, key stage one pupils aged five to seven, key stage two aged seven to 11, key stage three 11 to 14 and key stage four aged 14 to 16

## L

**LA** Local Authority

**LAC** Looked After Children

**LA** Local Education Authority

**LMS** Local Management of Schools where schools manage their own budgets

**LSA** Learning Support Assistant

**LSC** Learning and Skills Council

## M

**M&E** Monitoring and Evaluation

**MAT** Multi-Agency Team

**MASH** Multi Agency Support Hub

**Mixed ability** teaching group in which children of all abilities are taught together

**MLD** Moderate Learning Difficulty

**MPS** Main Pay Scale

## N

**NAHT** National Association of Head Teachers

**NASUWT** National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers

**National curriculum** the curriculum required by law to be taught in all schools.

The governing body shares with the LA and the Head Teacher the responsibility of ensuring that it is implemented

**NCVQ** National Council for Vocational Qualifications

**NGA** National Governors Association

**NGFL** National Grid for Learning

**Notice** to improve OfSTED judgement

**NPQH** National Professional Qualification for Head Teachers

**NQT** Newly Qualified Teacher

**NUT** national union of teachers

**NVQ** National Vocational Qualification

## O

**OfSTED** Office for Standards in Education. The body which arranges and sets education standards

## P

**PFI** Private Finance Initiative

**PGCE** Postgraduate Certificate in Education

**PI** Performance Indicators

**PLASC** Pupil Level Annual School Census

**PM** performance management

**PoCA** Protection of Children Act

**PPA** planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers (10% guaranteed non-contact time)

**Prospectus** information about an individual school. Must be published annually

**PRU** pupil referral unit

## Q

**QCA** Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

**QTS** qualified teacher status

**Quorum** the minimum number of members at a meeting for decisions to be

Made

## R

**RA** record of achievement

**RAISE** Reporting and Analysis for Improvement Through School Self- Evaluation

**RE** religious education

**Risk assessment** assessment of the risks to health and safety pupils and staff are exposed to whilst undertaking specific activities

## S

**SAT's** standard attainment tasks used to assess attainment at the end of key stages of the national curriculum

**School profile** an online report to parents

**SIP** school development plan/school improvement plan

**SEF** self-evaluation form

**SEN** special educational needs

**SENCO** special educational needs coordinator. The teacher responsible for coordinating SEN provision in the school

**Secondments** the release of staffing on a temporary basis for work elsewhere

**SIP** School Improvement Partner

**SLD** severe learning difficulty

**SMT** senior management team

**Special measures** a school which, when inspected has failed to provide an acceptable standard of education

**Special school** a school for children and young people whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream school

**Stakeholders** person or group of people with an interest in a particular organization, for example a school, stakeholders being parents, staff, pupils, governors, the community etc

**Supply teacher** a teacher who works in the school on a temporary basis to cover staff absence

## T

**TDA** teaching and development agency

**TLR's** teaching and learning responsibilities

**TTA** teacher training agency

## U

**Unauthorised absence** absence by pupils from school which is not otherwise authorised

**UPS** upper pay scale

## V

**VA** voluntary aided. Schools set up by and owned by a voluntary body usually the church body largely financed by the local authority. The governing body employs staff, controls pupil admissions and religious education

**Value-added** the progress schools help pupils make relative to their individual starting points

**Virement** the transfer of certain sums of money from one budget heading to another