



DERWENT VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

GOVERNOR INDUCTION PACK





Vision

'Achieving together'

We aim for all our children to:

Achieve their full potential

Achieve high academic standards

Respect themselves, others, and the environment

Work independently and collaboratively

Make positive contributions as citizens

Stay healthy and safe

Acquire the skills they need for adult life

What are the 3 core functions of our Governing Body?

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is spent effectively in this era of budgetary constraints.



Welcome to Derwent Vale Primary School & Nursery

Dear Governor,

Congratulations on your appointment. We are delighted to welcome you to our Governing body and to our school.

At Derwent Vale Primary School & Nursery we are very fortunate to have a small, dedicated team of governors who are skilled in their role as supporters and critical friends of the school. We believe that effective school governance is at the centre of a good school, and we do all we can to promote and develop our governors through our work across the school.

Today's world is very competitive, and staff and the Governing Body of Derwent Vale Primary & Nursery School are committed to continue to raise our already high standards and in a creative, stimulating environment help our children gain the necessary skills to become happy and fulfilled adults.

The governing body and headteacher believe it is essential that all new governors receive an induction package covering a broad range of issues and topics. There is a commitment to ensure that new governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. The process is seen as an investment, leading to more effective governance and retention of governors.

We continue to be proud of our school and wider community.

Steff Fleming

Mrs Stefanie Fleming
Chair of Governors



Purpose of this pack:

- To welcome new governors to the governing body and enable them to meet other governors and members.
- To encourage new governors to visit the school to experience its atmosphere and understand its ethos.
- To explain the partnership between the headteacher, school and governing body.
- To explain the role and responsibilities of governors.
- To explain how the governing body and its committee's work.

New Governors will:

- Be welcomed to the governing body by the chair.
- Be invited by the headteacher for an introductory meeting and tour of the school (when needed)
- Can meet informally with the chair.
- Can review their first meeting with their mentor.

New Governors will receive an Induction Checklist outlining information to be provided and action required during the first few months in the role. Information will be provided in various formats (paper, online, verbally) and will be annotated as received/actioned on the checklist.

New governors will receive a pack of information with a copy or access to the following documents:

- Governor details form
- Self-Declaration form,
- Register of Business/Pecuniary Interests,
- List of current governors and contact details
- Code of Practice
- List of meeting dates
- Instrument of Government
- Minutes of the last two governing body meetings
- List of committee membership, with terms of reference
- The Department of Education 'Governance' Handbook'
- Latest School Prospectus
- Details of Governor Training and Modern Governor Log in details
- Recent school newsletters
- Access to or a copy of the School Improvement Plan
- Access to or a copy of the last Ofsted report (and action plan if appropriate)
- Details of how to access all school policies
- Access to the school self-evaluation
- School staff list including subject areas
- Schools' visitor policy
- Link to school website



Areas that the headteacher meeting will include:

- Background to the school
- Current issues facing the school
- Visiting the school
- The relationship between the headteacher and the governing body

Areas that the chair meeting will include:

- An overview of the governor's role
- How the full governing body and committee meetings are conducted
- Governor's responsibilities regarding pecuniary interests
- How to propose agenda items
- Governor training

New governors will be asked to complete and sign the Induction Checklist

New governors will be required to apply for an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate.

It is also seen as best practice for governors to complete the Level 1 safeguarding and Channel (Prevent Duty) e-learning training. This can be accessed via the National College website which school will provide log in details for.

Top tips and advice for new governors:

- Be prepared to commit time to the role, being a governor involves time, but it is rewarding. Get to know your school.
- There is training involved with the role, some of this is essential and may need to be done annually such as Safeguarding.
- Attendance at meetings, essential even if at the beginning you are just listening. This will help you know and understand the business of the governing body.
- There are 7 mandatory Full Governing Board meetings per year, half of the governors plus one must attend to be quorate. There are more informal Action Group meetings which are usually held on Zoom.
- Prepare well for meetings, read the papers before the meeting, prepare your thoughts and questions before the meeting
- Confidentiality, remember governing body meetings are not open to the public and we must adhere to the Code of Practice for Governors.
- Consider the best interests of the school and its pupils.
- Monitoring the work of the school is required, this will involve visits to the school and talking to staff. You may also be asked to be involved in staff recruitment including shortlisting and taking part in the interview process.
- Governors will be asked to attend and contribute to discussions when Ofsted carry out inspections.
- All Governors are equal and decision making is corporate, bring your view, but abide by the corporate decision. Don't be part of decision making where a personal interest or occupation allows you to become biased – declare an interest and withdraw.
- If you don't feel you have enough information to decide, then say so.
- Remember the governing body steers, the headteacher manages the rowing and the vessel.



The role of the Governing body

School governors are volunteers who help to run the school and make a positive contribution in making a difference to education in their communities.

The main aim of the governing body is to maintain and improve the school's standards of education. Its work can be divided into four key areas:

1. Setting the school's vision and strategic aims, agreeing plans and policies, and making creative use of resources.
2. Monitoring and evaluating performance, be a source of challenge and support to the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team to support and challenge them in managing the school.
3. Ensuring that the school is accountable to the children and parents it serves, to its local community, to those who fund and maintain it, as well as to the staff it employs.
4. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its money is well spent.

Governing Body Powers

The Governing Body is recognised in law as a corporate body, which means it has a legal identity separate from that of its Governors.

It also means that individual Governors have no power or right to act on behalf of the Governing Body except where the whole Governing Body has delegated a specific duty to that individual. The Governing Body can also decide to delegate certain responsibilities to Committees that it has established.

Governors will, therefore, take collective responsibility for the decisions reached by the Governing Body to publicly support decisions.



Committees

There are two main committees which meet four or five times each year:

1. Finance & Buildings
2. Staffing and Curriculum Committee.

The quorum for each sub- committee is three governors, plus the Head Teacher. The agenda and minutes are drawn up by the clerk to the governors.

Finance & Buildings Committee

Terms of Reference:

- To make recommendations on the maintenance of the buildings, fabric, and fittings
- To monitor and update the Health & Safety Policy and to carry out risk assessment and update where necessary
- In consultation with the Head Teacher confirm school budget for the year looking at priorities for expenditure - purchase of equipment, resources, routine maintenance etc. for approval by governing body
- Plan any capital builds and soliciting for tenders etc.
- Work within best value
- Monitor budget expenditure

Staffing & Curriculum Committee

Terms of Reference:

- To work with the Head Teacher in the appointment of new staff, making sure that the legislation on discrimination and equal opportunities is observed
- To review annually, levels of pay for Head Teacher and staff
- To decide on staffing levels in consultation with the Head Teacher
- To ensure that procedures relating to teacher misconduct are followed
- To update and organise the induction process for new governors
- To take a particular involvement in the drawing up of school, curriculum, development, and management plans
- To monitor and evaluate curriculum provision in the school
- To prepare in co-operation with the Head Teacher, targets for school improvement to be approved by the full governing body
- To review the curricular aspects of the school prospectus annually and have it approved by the full governing body
- To make recommendations to the governing body on the provision of sex education, drugs, SEN and to consider complaints relating to the curriculum referred to it by the governing body
- To provide a Pupil Discipline Committee
- To review relevant staffing and curriculum policies



Training

The Governing Body encourages all Governors to undertake training. All Governors, however experienced, need training to improve their effectiveness in the role and to keep abreast of developments that may affect their school and their role as a School Governor.

There is a wide range of training and support for Governors that is provided by the Local Authority and external providers.

Links and support will be given to allow you to access the training services currently used by the Governing Body and a list of essential courses that you are required to complete will be provided.

Governors are encouraged to discuss their training need with the Chair and Head Teacher.

Meetings

The guide timetable for Governing Body and Committee meetings is compiled every September and the date of subsequent meetings are agreed at the time of meetings.

Agendas for Governing Body meetings are despatched at least 7 days in advance of the meeting. If you would like to ask for an item to be included on the agendas of either the Governing Body or a Committee, please contact the Chair or the Clerk prior to the meeting.

Confidentiality

All Governing Body papers, including Minutes, must be open to inspection by any member of the public unless it has been determined that an item is confidential. That item will be minuted separately. Governors may, at any point, in the meeting, also request for their discussions to be confidential, which will, of course, be minuted accordingly.

Dealing with complaints

The school has procedures for dealing with parental complaints that tries to ensure that they are dealt with at the lowest appropriate level e.g., the pupil's teacher. Sometimes that might not be enough and a meeting with the Head Teacher may be necessary.

Should a parent wish to take the complaint further it should be put in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body who will deal with the complaint in accordance with the Governing Body's procedures.

The best advice is that if you receive a complaint from a parent direct him/her to the school in the first instance!



Useful Contacts

1. The school
2. School website: www.derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk
3. Governor Support Team :
Education and Skills
Cumbria House,
117 Botchergate
Carlisle, Cumbria,
CA1 1RD

Email: GST@cumbria.gov.uk

Email: lindsey.slater@cumbria.gov.uk
faith.matthews@cumbria.gov.uk

Website:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/governorservices/default.asp>

4. The Clerk to Governors: Marion Robson admin@derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk
5. The Chair of Governors: Steff Fleming sfleming@derwentvale.cumbria.sch.uk

Useful Documents

1. School's current Prospectus
2. National Governors Associations Code of Practice
3. Head Teachers last report to the Governing Body.
4. Learning Improvement Services Governor training programme
5. Policy and Governor visit protocols



Useful Sources of Information

School, Governing Body and Cluster

The headteacher, chair, governors and the clerk can provide you with support and working together in clusters sharing knowledge, ideas and information can enhance school improvement.

Department for Education

Contains a range of information and resources, e.g., teaching and learning; pupil support; leadership and governance and statutory policies www.DfE.gov.uk

The Governance Handbook

The DfE has produced the Governance Handbook which provides information about the role and legal duties of governing bodies in maintained schools and academies (including free schools) which can be found at:- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

Ofsted website includes inspection guidance, handouts, and framework www.ofsted.gov.uk

Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders (CASL) / Local Alliance of System Leaders (LASL)

CASL and LASL is a structure which supports (and, if necessary, drives) the improvement work throughout education settings in Cumbria.

Learning Improvement Service (LIS)

LIS is part of the CASL partnership and can provide different levels of support http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/Landing_page/schoolsandlearning.asp

Governor Support Team (GST)

GST is part of Learning Improvement Service <http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/governorservices/>

National Governors Association

The National Governors Association (NGA) represents school governors from all state funded schools; including those from LA maintained schools and academies in England. The website includes Code of Conduct models for both academies and maintained schools. www.nga.org.uk



Glossary—Useful Acronyms and Abbreviations

APP	Assessment of Pupil Progress
AR	Annual Review
CASL/LASL	Cumbria Alliance of System Leaders/Local Alliance of System Leaders
CPD	Continual Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
EAL	English as Additional Language
EHC plan	Education, Health and Care Plan
EYFS	Early years foundation stage
GA	General Advisor
GB	Governing Body
H & S	Health and Safety
HT	Headteacher
INSET	In Service Education and Training
KS 1, 2, 3	Key Stage 1, 2, 3
LA	Local Authority
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for standards in education
RAISE online	Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through Self-Evaluation
SATs	Standard Attainments Tests
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
TA	Teaching Assistant



New Governor Induction Checklist

Please indicate when you have: -	Completed	Date
Been welcomed to the governing body by the chair		
Met with the headteacher/chair for an introductory meeting and tour of the school		
Met informally with the chair or an existing governor		
Applied for an Enhanced Criminal Record certificate		
Completed the 'Governor Self Declaration' form		
Been allocated a 'mentor'		
Completed Safeguarding E-learning		
Completed Prevent Duty E-learning		

Please indicate when you have received: -	Completed	Date
Governor induction pack		
Governor details and self-declaration form (complete and return)		
Confirmation of identity (complete and return)		
Register of business interests/pecuniary interests form with guidance notes (complete and return)		
Dates for governors		
List of current governors and contact details		
Governor terms of office and vacancies		
Governor chair succession plan		
Governor roles and responsibilities		
School staffing & governor list / committee list including subject areas		
Instrument of governance & checklist		
Governing body decision planner		
Terms of reference (buildings & finance / staffing & curriculum committees)		
Code of practise for Governing Bodies and Governors		
Protocols for visits to school by members of the governing body		
Governor monitoring visit guidance		
Financial procedures manual		
Latest school improvement plan		
Governor health check and action plan		
Governor skills audit		
Website page – access site to find latest newsletters, school prospectus and policies		
Ofsted report		
Minutes of last 2 full governing body meetings		
Department of education 'Governance' handbook* competency framework. For the latest version log on to www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook		
Link to National College and Learning Links (E-learning websites)		
Link to Cumbria Local Safeguarding Children Board – LSCB www.cumbrialscb.com		