



St. Giles Junior School

Governor Handbook

Adopted by the Governing Board:

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

_____ Head Teacher

Date: October 2016

Date of Next Review: October 2019

Introduction



Welcome to your Governor Induction Pack for St. Giles Junior School. This pack helps to explain the roles and responsibilities of being a governor, how the governing board is structured in our school and how the governing board 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 board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

This pack includes the following:

- The purpose of the governing board
- 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 board membership and structure
- Useful terms and abbreviations
- Governor Code of Conduct
- The Nolan standards of conduct in various areas of public life.

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 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 Training and Development Directory
- papers from the last full governing board meeting
- The school website
- GovernorHub
- The School Governance Handbook

As a governor you will be asked to complete:



- A pecuniary interests statement
- A skill matrix

Many new governors have confessed to being quite bemused during their first meetings and some feel unprepared for the barrage of papers with which they were greeted. 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) and on line courses available to attend and all governors are encouraged to take advantage of the training on offer. These courses are free of charge to governors.

The purpose of the Governing Board

The governing board is the school's accountable board. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing board 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 board 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 board 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 board on the school's performance. In turn the governing board 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 Head teacher - 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 board.

Different Types of Governor at St. Giles Junior 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;

Co-opted 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 board from individuals who may be able to make specific contributions, but who is not a governor and has no vote at full governing board 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 board. All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made.

Specific Responsibilities of the Governing Board

- 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 board
- 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 board to consider adopting
- advising on and implementing the governing board 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 board work as a team. The Chair must have a clear view of the governing board 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 board.

The Governing Board at St. Giles Junior School has adopted the Circle Model of Governance whereby the Full Governing Board will meet twice a term (i.e. 6 times per academic year).

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 take part in learning walks with the SMT and are usually welcome, by invitation, to attend school performances, events and some staff training.

Some Governors have specific responsibility – e.g. SEND, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, 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 board 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 Board 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 board 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 will 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 board 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.

Quorum

If a meeting of the governing board 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 board 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, 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 will be given to you by the Clerk. ..

Minutes

The Clerk takes formal minutes of the meetings which are a record of what happens at that meeting. Once approved by the full governing board, the minutes are a public record and are displayed on the school website.

How the Governing Board is Structured at St. Giles Junior School

The Governing Board at St. Giles Junior School has adopted the Circle Model of Governance whereby the Full Governing Board will meet twice a term (i.e. 6 times per academic year).

In addition the Governing Board has 6 “Monitoring Pairs” to which 2 or more governors are assigned. The Monitoring Pairs take responsibility for a specific area of work and report back to the FGB. The frequency of these meetings varies depending on the task / area and can be from once per term to twice per academic year

Our Governing Board must also form committees (or panels) to deal with specific statutory functions. These are:

- Disciplinary, grievance and pay committee – We are required to have procedures in place for dealing with staff disciplinary matters, grievance and pay and for hearing any appeals that arise from these.
- Exclusion committees – We have a responsibility to consider certain student exclusions, and that the responsibility may be delegated to a committee comprising at least 3 governors.
- Complaints committees – A complaints committee may be convened to consider a complaint from a parent of member of the public, where it has not been resolved by the head teacher/
- Head teacher performance review committee and head teacher recruitment committees – we are required to appoint committees for functions such as the head teacher’s performance review, or the appointment of a new head teacher.

(Suitable and available governors will be asked to put themselves forward when the committee is convened).

.The Governor Code of Conduct



As Governors we are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life
(see appendix)

General

- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing 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 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 board. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board 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 board.

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 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 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 board and agreed with the Head teacher.



- 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 Head teacher.

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.

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.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing board'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 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 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 board, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing board.

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

Undertaking:

As a member of the Governing Board 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 Board, the Head teacher or staff.

Signed:

Printed name:

Date:



Appendix 1: 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.



Appendix 2: 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

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 board has delegated responsibility under the local management of school (LMS)
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BV	Best Value
C	
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
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
Clerk	the person appointed to carry out administrative duties to the governing board such as preparing the agenda, managing meetings and dealing with correspondence. The Clerk advises the governing board on legal and procedural matters
Collective worship	a single act of worship for all pupils required to take place in maintained schools
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 board



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 board
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

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 board shares with the LA and the Head Teacher the responsibility of ensuring that it is implemented

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
O	
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education. The board which arranges and sets education standards
P	
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PI	Performance Indicators
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
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 Plan
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 organisation, 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 board usually the church board largely financed by the local authority. The governing board 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