



Petersfield Infant School Governing Body

Terms of Reference 2020/2021

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The function of the governing body of Petersfield Infant School is to:
 - ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school;
 - hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
 - oversee the financial performance of the organisation and make sure its money is well spent.
- 1.2. The governing body provides non-executive leadership. It operates at a strategic level, leaving the headteacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to it for the operational day-to-day running of the school.
- 1.3. As the accountable body, the governing body is the key decision maker. The governing body delegates some governance functions to committees or individuals, but remains accountable and responsible for all decisions made. The school's executive leaders operate within the powers and functions delegated to them by the governing body.
- 1.4. The governing body acts with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school, and is open about the decisions it makes and the actions it takes. It is prepared to explain its decisions and actions to interested parties.

2. Membership

- 2.1. As set out in the instrument of government that came into effect on 14 May 2015, the governing body is made up of 14 governors:
 - two parent governors;
 - one local authority governor;
 - one headteacher;
 - one staff governor; and
 - nine co-opted governors (the total number of co-opted governors who are eligible to be elected as staff governors, when counted with the staff governor and the headteacher, will not be more than one third of the total membership of the governing body).
- 2.2. The governing body operates and make decisions in the best interest of pupils, not in governors' own interests or as individuals lobbying for the interests of the constituency from which they were elected or appointed.



2.3. All governors are appointed for a four-year term.

2.4. The governing body may also appoint associate members for a period of between one and four years. The definition of associate member is wide and may include people who can contribute on specific issues related to an area of expertise. Associate members may be members of committees and attend full governing body meetings. Associate members are not governors, cannot vote on full governing body decisions and are not recorded in the instrument of government.

2.5. The governing body is responsible for recruiting new governors and will encourage all parts of the local community to consider getting involved.

3. Matters reserved to the full governing body

3.1. The governing body uses a scheme of delegation to set out clearly at which level each of its functions will be carried out. This scheme of delegation is consistent with the statutory duties on governing bodies, and is reviewed annually. It explains which functions have been delegated to committees, individual governors or the headteacher. Some functions cannot be delegated by law. Key responsibilities that the governing body does not delegate are to:

- approve the budget plan at the start of each financial year;
- agree the school improvement plan;
- appoint selection panel for headteacher and deputy headteacher;
- appoint the panel to carry out the appraisal of the headteacher;
- establish and review procedures for addressing staff discipline, conduct and grievance;
- produce school behaviour guidelines and present these for consultation;
- ensure the school has appropriate buildings and personal liability insurance;
- decide whether to offer extra-curricular activities and what form these should take;
- take any decisions about informal or formal collaboration with other schools, or conversion to academy status;
- adopt child protection and SEND policies;
- produce a set of written principles for the school behaviour policy; and
- set the times of school sessions and the dates of school terms and holidays.

4. Committee structure

4.1. The committees at Petersfield Infant School are:

- **School improvement committee** – responsible for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the National Curriculum throughout the school and assessing the rate of progress and standards of achievement of pupils by analysing data from various sources. Also for developing and reviewing school policies related to teaching and learning.



- **Resources committee** – responsible for co-ordinating and managing matters relating to finance, premises and personnel, including reviewing and adopting related policies.
- **Staff pay review committee** – responsible for agreeing pay policy and determining salary progression for all staff, including the headteacher, on recommendation from the Headteacher performance management committee.
- **Headteacher performance management committee** – responsible for setting, monitoring and assessing headteacher performance targets.
- **Referrals committee** – responsible for considering matters referred to the committee relating to parental complaints, pupil exclusions, staff dismissal appeals and staff grievances. This committee is convened only if required.
- **Steering committee** - responsible for overseeing and monitoring the structure and efficacy of the governors' committees and monitoring the headteacher's workload and work/life balance.

4.2. The governing body is responsible for appointing committee members and chairs. This is normally done annually at the first meeting of the autumn term, although additional members can be appointed at any time. The clerk maintains and publishes on the school website a list of members of each committee. The chair of governors and headteacher are automatically full members of each committee.

4.3. The governing body agrees terms of reference for each committee that record their remit and decision-making powers, in line with the scheme of delegation, and are reviewed annually. Committee chairs will not be a member of staff or an associate member. Committees and individuals report back to the full governing body on any decision made or action taken in carrying out their delegated functions. Agenda and minutes for committees are handled in the same way as for the governing body.

5. Election of chair and vice chair

5.1. The chair and vice chair are elected for one year at a time at the first governing body meeting of the academic year. Any changes to arrangements for elections are made in advance of any election.

5.2. Candidates may nominate themselves at any time in advance of a vote and can make a personal statement to the meeting before the vote if they wish. If there is only one nomination for a post it is not necessary to hold a vote, but the candidate will leave the room to allow the other governors to discuss in confidence whether to accept or reject that nomination.

5.3. Governors who are members of school staff cannot be appointed chair or vice chair.

5.4. The clerk takes the chair for the election of the chair of governors.



5.5. Where an election is contested, voting is by secret ballot, and the candidate who receives the largest number of votes is elected

6. Role of the chair

6.1. The chair, with support from the vice chair, is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the board. It is the chair's role to:

- give the board clear leadership and direction, keeping it focused on its core functions;
- encourage governors to work as an effective team, building their skills, knowledge and experience;
- ensure that all governors are actively contributing relevant skills and experience, participating constructively in meetings, and playing their part in the work of any committees;
- make sure every governor knows what is expected of them and receives appropriate induction and training; and
- have honest conversations, as necessary, if governors are not pulling their weight.

6.2. The chair will not exercise as an individual any of the functions of the board except where this has been agreed by the board, or in specific circumstances set out in regulations. These allow the chair to act in cases of urgency where a delay in exercising the function would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, a pupil, parent or member of staff.

6.3. If the chair is absent from any governing meeting or the post of chair is vacant, the vice-chair will act as chair for all purposes.

7. Role of governors

7.1. As a governing body, governors will seek a shared understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They will evaluate their own performance and review the effectiveness of the governing body annually. Governors will agree and implement a development plan to help achieve the governing body's aim to be the best it can be.

7.2. Each governor will follow the school's governor code of conduct in Annex A.

7.3. Governors and the headteacher will respect each other's roles and maintain a professional and open relationship, acknowledging each other's skills and contribution. The governing body will, in the way it carries out its business, be sensitive to the need for the headteacher to maintain a reasonable work/life balance



8. Role of the clerk

8.1. The role of the clerk is not only about good and effective organisation and administration, but also, and more importantly, about helping the board understand its role, functions and legal duties and supporting the chair to enable and facilitate strategic debate and decision making. It is the clerk's role to:

- provide the chair with a draft agenda at least two weeks before each meeting;
- ensure the governing body meets the statutory requirement to give the headteacher, all governors and associate members written notice of governing body meetings, and a copy of the agenda, at least seven clear days in advance of the meeting;
- attend meetings of the governing body and ensure draft minutes of the meeting are sent to the chair within 7 working days of each meeting, circulated to the full membership once the chair has reviewed, and signed (subject to the approval of the governing body) by the chair at the next meeting;
- ensure that signed copies of the minutes are provided to the school office, and that confidential minutes are clearly identified, so that they can be stored separately;
- invite all eligible governors to nominate themselves for the post of chair or vice chair in advance of the annual election;
- maintain a register of members of the governing body and of associate members and report any vacancies to the governing body; and
- carry out other tasks that the governing body may ask for from time to time.

8.2. The clerk will also act as clerk for the resources and school improvement committees.

9. Meetings

9.1. The governing body meets every half term (six times a year). The clerk will agree with the chair and publish an annual schedule of meeting dates for the governing body and its committees. In its programme of meeting agenda, the governing body will focus on its responsibilities in monitoring the progress and evaluating outcomes of the school improvement plan, within the full range of governing body responsibilities. Any governor who want to propose an item for the agenda must send details to the clerk and chair at least three weeks before the meeting.

9.2. Meetings will last for no more than two hours.

9.3. Any three members of the governing body may ask for an extraordinary meeting by writing to the clerk, and the clerk must convene a meeting as soon can reasonably be done.

9.4. Where the governing body records the acceptance of apologies for non-attendance, this implies consent for a governor to be absent. If a governor fails to attend meetings for a continuous period of six months, starting with the date of the first meeting the governor fails to attend, and without the consent of the governing body, they are legally



disqualified from continuing to be a governor of the school. Where the governing body is not satisfied with the reason given for non-attendance this will be recorded explicitly in the minutes.

10. Quorum

- 10.1. The governing body is quorate, and voting may take place, when one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the membership of the governing body (not including vacant positions) is present.

11. Voting

- 11.1. Decisions of the governing body its committees are made by a majority of the votes of the governors present and voting on the decision in question. Governors must declare pecuniary interests and the board should decide whether this represents a conflict such that the governor should withdraw from discussion and/or decision making.
- 11.2. Because governors must be present to vote, they cannot vote by proxy or in advance of a meeting. It is important that governors are present to hear and engage in the debate before casting their vote. The governing body may, however, in line with its policy on this, make arrangements for governors to be present at board and committee meetings ‘virtually’, for example by telephone or video conference, and to take part in discussion and decision-making remotely.
- 11.3. Where a vote is equally split, the chair (or the person who is acting as chair for the purposes of the meeting, as long as that person is a governor) will have a second or casting vote.

12. Risk management – escalation of risks and issues

- 12.1. The governing body monitors the school risk register and receives updates on the management of the main risks affecting the school through the headteacher’s report. Any committee or governor can raise a risk or issue that they think is severe enough to be considered or monitored by the full governing body.

13. Conflicts of interest

- 13.1. A conflict of interest is any situation in which a governor’s personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, stop them making a decision only in the best interests of the school. A conflict of interest happens when there is potential for a governor to financial or other benefit directly, or through someone connected to them (e.g. a partner, business partner or relative) as a result of a decision taken by the governing body, or when a governor’s duty to the school may compete with a duty or loyalty they owe to another organisation or person.



13.2. All governors are responsible for declaring any potential conflicts of interest at the start of each governing body meeting. If a governor is not sure whether or not they are conflicted, they declare the issue and discuss it with the other governors.

13.3. Where a potential conflict of interest is identified, the governing body will take steps to manage it. They will decide if the governor must not take part in discussion or decisions relating to a specific issue, or whether the nature of the conflict means either the issue must be addressed by not pursuing the proposed course of action; or, in the case of a serious conflict, that the governor must stand down from the governing body.

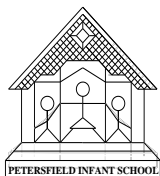
13.4. The governing body will keep a record, through its minutes, of how it has handled conflicts of interest, and publishes a register of governor's pecuniary interests on the school website.

14. Transparency

14.1. The governing body will make available for inspection by anyone who is interested, the agenda, minutes or papers of its meetings, except material relating to named members of staff or pupils, or any other material the governing body considers by its nature should be kept confidential.

14.2. Anyone interested to see governing body papers can apply to the school office.

Last updated	29 th September 2020
Approved by	Governing body
Due for review	September 2021



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to carry out its work within the school and the community. **This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law**

The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement plan with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the governing body we agree to the following:

Role and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the leadership team.
- 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 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 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 governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing body
- We will actively support and challenge the leaders
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the governing body and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation
- We will respect the role of the leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing body as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

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 why we are unable to
- We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (ie as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase)

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted



- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing body and school staff both in and outside of meetings
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governing body members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the leadership, 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
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Pecuniary Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Pecuniary Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board

Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor member leaves office

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 body will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice chair will investigate



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.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.