



NEW SWANNINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Guidance for Prospective Governors

Being a school governor is both a rewarding and challenging experience. Governors provide strategic leadership and work in partnership with the Headteacher and senior leaders in schools to ensure that every child gets the best possible education.

The demands on governors and governing bodies have changed dramatically in recent years and this guidance has been written to help aspiring governors understand the expectations and demands of the role.

Becoming a Governor

This guidance is particularly directed at parents and staff members who are thinking of becoming a governor. Hopefully this provides you with a good overview, the commitment required and the expectations of the role. If after reading this you would like to find out any more information, please contact Mrs Ramsell.

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for the conduct of the school and must promote high standards of educational achievement at the school. In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b) Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In order to do this, governors need to gain knowledge of how their school operates through attending meetings, reading school documentation, analysing data and engaging in regular visits to the school.

The role of the governing body is one of oversight and it is not involved in the day-to-day management of the school. The Headteacher role includes the educational performance of the school and operational responsibility lies with them.

How the Governing Body Works

Governors at New Swannington Primary School are expected to do far more than merely attend meetings. Effective governors attend the school regularly to see and understand how the school operates. They undertake governor visits for a particular purpose and produce reports for their governor colleagues. Governors will be



expected to receive and understand reports from the Headteacher and senior leaders so that they can question, challenge and support, thereby improving the quality of the whole educational provision.

Structure

The governing body at New Swannington Primary School consists of:

- 1 Local Authority appointed governor
- 5 co-opted governors (appointed by the governing body as per guidance)
- 2 parent governors
- 1 staff governor
- 1 Headteacher

Frequency of Meetings

There are a minimum of four full meetings per academic year.

There are three main committees – which usually meet termly:

- Finance – including sub-committees for personnel, pay and performance management
- Curriculum – monitoring curriculum, assessment
- Health & Safety

All documentation relevant to each meeting is supplied a minimum of seven days in advance of each meeting, usually by email. Governors are asked to read these supporting papers and submit questions to the Headteacher and/or the chair of the relevant committee 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Examples of documents available prior to the meeting are:

- The Headteacher's report
- Governor monitoring visit reports
- Minutes of committee meetings
- Policies for review and approval

All governors, once trained, are expected to take responsibility for an area of the School Development Plan and to carry out monitoring visits and provide written reports to the governing body.

Average Time Commitment

The average time committee including meetings, background reading and school visits is as follows:

Meetings – 2 hours (usually a 5.30pm start – often via Microsoft Teams)

9 meetings per year

School visits – minimum 3 per year (3 days)

Background reading – minimum 20 hours per year

Expectation of Governors outside of meetings

The expectations of governors includes visiting school, attending events, representing the Governing Body, report writing, training and development:

- Approximately 10 hours per year – mostly evenings
- Visiting school during the school day
- Report writing – minimum of 2 per year

Expectation of Training

All governors are required to complete the school's induction program and undertake the initial new governor training session provided by the Governor Development Service of Leicestershire County Council, safeguarding training, which is also updated regularly, and other training as identified through the Governing Body strategic plan.

Code of Conduct

The governing body operates a code of conduct which sets an ethos of professionalism and high expectations of governors. You will be provided with this as part of the induction process for new governors and will be expected to work within it, since the governing body operates as a corporate entity with corporate responsibility.

Competency Framework

The Department for Education publishes a 'Competency Framework for Governance' which is designed to help governing bodies assess what knowledge, skills and behaviour are needed to govern the school most effectively. It can be found by using the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance.pdf

Skills and Experience

Governing bodies rely on a range of skills and experiences. You will need a strong commitment to the role, the inquisitiveness to question and analyse, and the willingness to learn. Good inter-personal skills, a basic level of literacy in English, and sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data are essential.

In addition to the skills outlined above we are particularly looking for governors with experience of working in the finance sector and/or experience of successfully bidding/applying for grants to enhance the skill set of the current governing body.

What is equally important to us is that you have a willingness to learn and undertake whatever training or development activity is needed to fill any gaps in the skills you have to contribute to effective governance.

Training and Support

The governing body is committed to developing the skills and experience of governors to promote success in the role. As a new governor you will attend induction training and a programme of further training to help you fulfil the role.

Appointment of Governors - Qualifications and Disqualifications for LA Maintained Schools

Please read the following list of disqualifications and qualifications for being a governor. If you are eligible, complete the governor appointment form and sign it to confirm your eligibility. If you are **not** eligible, you are unable to be considered for appointment/election as a governor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered pupils of the school cannot be governors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elected members of the LA cannot be a parent governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person is disqualified from being a <u>parent governor</u> if they are staff, who are paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve month period (at the time of election or appointment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person is disqualified from being a <u>local authority governor</u> if they are eligible to be a staff governor at the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office if that person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order, debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order) has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body is included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people is barred from any regulated activity relating to children is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a DBS check

Failure to attend meetings

If you fail to attend meetings, without the consent of the governing body, for a continuous period of six months you are disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor at that school. This does not apply to the Headteacher or to foundation governors appointed by virtue of their office. If you have been disqualified for failure to attend meetings as a foundation, LA or co-opted governor, you cannot be appointed as a governor for twelve months from the date of disqualification.

Notification to Clerk

You must notify the clerk if you are disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of the school.

More information

Details of the above restrictions may be found in The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and committee members in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work.

Once approved by the governing board, the Code will apply to all governors and committee members.

The governing board has the following 3 strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy 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

Newton Burgoland GB recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:

Ensure that other key players with a stake in the organisation get their voices heard by:

- Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.
- Reaching out to the school's wider community and inviting them to play their part.
- Using the views of stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures.

As individuals on the board we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school/s.
3. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
5. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
6. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.

7. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
8. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
9. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
10. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
11. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
12. We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
13. *We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. *We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
4. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the [register of business interests](#).
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
5. We will act in the best interests of the school/trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, 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.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

The Governing Body of adopted this code of practice and reviewed it on

Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting 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.

Annex

The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.

1. Selflessness School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. Integrity School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. Objectivity School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. Accountability School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty School and college leaders should be truthful.

7. Leadership School and college leaders 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. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **Trust:** *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **Wisdom:** *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.
- c. **Kindness:** *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- d. **Justice:** *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
- e. **Service:** *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.
- f. **Courage:** *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
- g. **Optimism:** *leaders are positive and encouraging*
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.