

Combe Pafford School

Governors' Procedures & Terms of Reference



Policy confirmed by the Governing Body of Combe Pafford School

Date: **July 2023**

To be reviewed annually

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Combe Pafford School has high expectations of the governing body. They are the strategic leaders of our school and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. The following statements capture the vital role that governors play

'Governing boards have a significant degree of autonomy in our increasingly school led system. They are the vision setters and strategic decision makers for their schools. They play a vital role in ensuring the best possible education that takes every child as far as their talents allow. Crucially, that means creating robust accountability for executive leaders by using and being familiar with objective data on the performance of pupils, teachers and finances to ask the right questions. It means ensuring resources are allocated to strategic priorities and safeguarding the highest standards of financial propriety – for example on executive pay and expenses and on related party transactions. It also means ensuring that schools prepare pupils for life and the workplace and implementing their Prevent duty and promoting fundamental British Values to protect them from the risks of extremism and radicalisation'.

And

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

The Governing Body has three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;*
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and*
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.*

Governance Handbook

It is essential that our governing body recruits and develops governors with the skills to deliver these core functions effectively. However, it is equally important to emphasise that the skills required are those to oversee the success of the school, not to do the school's job for it.

While it is essential to build a strong and cohesive non-executive team, the most robust governing bodies welcome and thrive on a having sufficiently diverse range of viewpoints such that open debate leads to good decisions in the interests of the whole school community.

Governing bodies can suspend a governor for acting in a way that is contrary to the ethos of the school. This would include undermining fundamental British values or acting with extremist intent. The governing body should move to suspend and potentially remove from office any governor acting in this manner.

Governors need to know their school, if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. Many governors find that visiting, particularly during the day, is a helpful way to find out more about the school. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, governors can see whether the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans they have signed off and how they are working in practice. Visits also provide an opportunity to talk with pupils, staff and parents to

gather their views. Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning. They are also not school managers and should make sure they do not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school. Both are the role of the head teacher.

OFSTED has published the criteria that inspectors will use to judge the effectiveness of a school's governance. These criteria are consistent with the core functions of all governing bodies set out above.

Under OFSTED's Common Inspection Framework, governance is evaluated as part of leadership and management. There is not a separate judgement for governance.

Paragraph 28 of the framework says that when making a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which leaders, managers and governors:

- *Demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all children and learners can achieve and ensure high standards of provision and care for children and learners*
- *Improve staff practice, teaching, learning and assessment through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development*
- *Evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement*
- *Provide learning programmes or a curriculum that have suitable breadth, depth and relevance so that they meet any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children, learners and employers, nationally and in the local community*
- *Successfully plan and manage learning programmes, the curriculum and careers advice so that all children and learners get a good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment*
- *Actively promote equality and diversity, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners*
- *Actively promote British values*
- *Make sure that safeguarding arrangements to protect children, young people and learners meet all statutory and other government requirements, promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism.*

Liability

The governing body is legally responsible for the conduct of its school. However, individuals are generally protected from personal liability. Provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, any liability will fall on the board even if it exceeds its powers, rather than on individuals.

The Governance Structure

Our Funding Agreement (21 Jan 2013) sets out the number and type of governors required.

At Combe Pafford School we have 5 different types and a total of 15 places on the governing body:

The Head Teacher - automatically has the option of a place on the governing body

A minimum of Parent Governors – chosen from parents of children registered to attend school. Parents nominate themselves and require 2 other parents' nomination. If there are more nominations than vacancies, then there is an election at which all parents can vote.

Up to nine Community Governors – who either lives or works in the community served by the school or is a person who, in the opinion of the governing body is committed to the government and success of the school

Up to two Staff Governors – elected by staff.

One other Governor appointed by the Members

Governors have a term of office of 4 years from the date they are appointed.

Time off work By law, employers must give employees who are school governors 'reasonable time off' to carry out their duties. The employee and employer must agree on what is 'reasonable time off'.

The Role of the Chair

An effective Chair of Governors:

1. works with the head teacher to promote and maintain high standards of educational achievement
2. ensures that the governing body sets a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school
3. with the governing body, holds the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the performance management of staff
4. ensures oversight of the financial performance of the school and effective use of the school's resources

The chair needs to ensure that all governors understand the role and responsibilities of the governing body,

The key roles of the chair are outlined below:

1. **Leading effective governance:** giving the governing body a clear lead and direction, ensuring that the governors work as an effective team and understand their accountability and the part they play in the strategic leadership of the school and in driving school improvement.

2. **Building the team:** attracting governors with the necessary skills and ensuring that tasks are delegated across the governing body so that all members contribute, and feel that their individual skills, knowledge and experience are well used and that the overall workload is shared.
3. **Relationship with the head teacher:** Being a critical friend by offering support, challenge and encouragement, holding the head teacher to account and ensuring the head teacher's appraisal is rigorous and robust; a good comparison is with the role of the chair of a board of trustees who works with the chief executive of an organisation but does not run day-to-day operations.
4. **Improving your school:** ensuring school improvement is the focus of all policy and strategy and that governor scrutiny, monitoring and challenge reflect school improvement priorities.

Leading the business: ensuring that statutory requirements and regulations are met, that the school provides value for money in its use of resources and that governing body business is conducted efficiently and effectively.

FULL GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS

The Full Governing Body (often known as FGB) meets at least four times per year. Meetings are held at regular intervals throughout the school year and normally take place on Mondays at 4.30pm at school.

At least 7 days before the meeting you will receive by email and in a hard copy booklet, via the clerk:

- The agenda (with the date, time and location of the meeting) – showing a list of the items scheduled to be discussed;
- Previous minutes with an Action List;
- You will also receive by email, within 3 days of the meeting, (and for some documents, hard copies will be available at the meeting)
- Additional supporting material relevant to the agenda. All these documents will allow you to prepare in advance for the meeting. Some of the documents you receive are just for information purposes, however others will need to be agreed or ratified by the FGB. Preparation will involve reading through the documents and making notes of any further explanations or clarifications you require. You may feel that you wish to challenge some issues, in which case it is worth preparing what you would like to say.
- Terms of Reference for the Full Governing Body are reviewed by the FGB annually they outline the role and function of the FGB and include a list of the functions that CANNOT be delegated to a committee and must be dealt with by the FGB.

COMMITTEE AND STATUTORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There are many tasks that need undertaking and to operate efficiently we have established committees to whom some of our responsibilities are delegated. We currently operate the following committees:

- Pupil and Curriculum
- Personnel
- Estates and Security (Premises, Health and Safety)
- Finance

These committees meet up independently of the full governing body and report back to the next FGB. The members of each Committee are elected at the first Full Governing Body meeting in September. A vital part of this delegation by the FGB is to strictly define what a committee should and shouldn't be doing. Each Committee will have their own Terms of Reference (see below); at the end of the academic year each committee will review and monitor these to ensure that they are accomplishing what they were intended to do. Each Committee usually meets once a term or more frequently if required, at a mutually agreed time at school. At least 7 days prior to these meetings you will receive by email, via the clerk:

- The agenda (with the date, time and location of the meeting) – showing a list of the items scheduled to be discussed.
- Previous minutes.
- You will also receive by email, within 3 days of the meeting additional supporting material relevant to the agenda, (some of which may also be available in hard copy at the meeting)

As with FGB meetings it is important to prepare any issues prior to the meeting. Some of the documents will be for information purposes, however some will need to be agreed and then sent to the next FGB meeting for ratification. Governors receive the minutes for all the committees, whether you sit on the committee or not. This is to ensure that you are kept up to date with what each committee is discussing and agreeing. You are welcome to attend a committee meeting whether you sit on the committee or not, although previous agreement will need to be received by the Chair of the committee. If you do attend you will not be allowed to vote on any issues but you may ask questions and contribute to the discussion as directed by the Chair. Governors new to the roll are encouraged to attend all the committee meetings to get a flavour of how they operate and what they discuss. They are then encouraged to be members of committees where they will be best positioned to utilise their strengths and skills.

Statutory Panels

As well as the four committees, there are several statutory panels that the governing body is required to have in place. At Combe Pafford, governors are invited to volunteer to be on these as and when a statutory committee is required to convene depending on availability. These statutory committees often do not need to meet but when they are, each governor will be notified promptly and a suitable date and time will be arranged.

The Statutory Committee's include:

- Pupil Discipline/Exclusion
- Pay (usually the Personnel Committee)
- Complaints
- Appeals

- Head Teacher's Appraisal.

Each panel will consist of at least 3 governors, although staff governors are not allowed to serve on these due to the nature of the discussions.

Link Governors

There are also areas of responsibility that any governor can represent as a Link Governor.

MEETING PROCEDURES Code of conduct

Governors will be required to agree to the code of conduct as recommended by the NGA.

Attendance and Quorum

Attendance at all the meetings is expected, and in the event of non-attendance it is necessary to send apologies prior to the meeting to the Chair or the Clerk. It is important that each meeting is quorate for it to be effective. For FGB a quorum is 50% of the membership, (for individual committees see terms of reference below). If a meeting is not quorate the meeting will be unable to convene. Non-attendance over a 6-month period may result in governors disqualifying themselves from continuing as a governor.

Confidentiality

It is worth noting that during meetings subjects may be discussed that are confidential and should not be discussed or disclosed to anyone else outside of the meeting. Documents considered to be confidential will be noted as such and must not be disclosed to anyone outside of the governing body. Confidential items will be left off the main documented minutes but instead minuted separately (Part 2 business); these minutes should not be disclosed to anybody outside of the governing body. Governors should be careful when any reference to individuals arise, especially when dealing with staff and personnel issues. Members of staff or those with a personal interest in a particular agenda item must disclose their interest to the Chair, or in the case of the Chair, the Vice-chair, and will be asked to leave the meeting while the discussion takes place. It will be noted in the minutes that people have been asked to leave, and when they return.

Discussions

A challenging but positive governing body is more efficient in its duties. Never be afraid to ask a question or state your viewpoint, you should act in the best interest of the school and as a governor you are accountable for its actions. Always seek clarification on any issue you are not sure about and feel free to challenge.

The Chair is responsible for running the meeting and the governing body works best when everyone is a participant and gets the opportunity to put forward their thoughts/ideas. It is important not to interrupt and try to ensure that you don't dominate the conversation. Think about what you want to say and prepare before the meeting where possible. Other than during an open discussion or when

comments are invited, you may need to indicate to the Chair if you wish to say something.

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection frameworks will look for the extent to which the governors challenge the school to meet its objectives and further improvement. Therefore, decisions we make and actions we take must be well thought through and applied.

Approval and Voting

At meetings items may need to be formally approved or ratified by the FGB. The Chair will ask the governors if the item is agreed. Should a circumstance arise where not all governors agree then a vote will occur, normally this is just a show of hands, however a secret ballot could be held if governors desired. If you feel that for any reason you are unable to vote then you can abstain from voting. The Chair has the casting vote in the event of a tie. The voting mechanism of the governing board is vital; it is done in this way specifically to present the outside world with a collective view.

Within the meeting minutes, a vote is not disclosed by how individual governors voted but rather by a count of for and against. It is also noted should any governor abstain from voting.

Minutes

At all FGB and committee meetings the Clerk will be in attendance to take minutes, these will be typed up and once agreed by the Chair will then be distributed in draft form via email to all governors ready for the next FGB meeting. Any confidential matters discussed will be typed up and issued separately to the main minutes.

Confidential minutes must not be disclosed to anybody outside of the governing body.

The minutes will also contain an action list highlighting any actions that governors/staff were required to carry out; this list forms the basis of the Matters Arising agenda item.

At the next meeting the previous minutes will then be reviewed and agreed pending any amendments highlighted by the governors. The Chair will then be required to sign the minutes to verify that they have been agreed.

Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair of the FGB or committee will lead the meeting and keep order. There is only a Vice-Chair for the FGB. The Vice-Chair will lead the meeting should the Chair be unavailable.

One week prior to the last FGB meeting of the school academic year the clerk will invite nominations for both the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. Governors can nominate themselves or another Governor for the position, which is held for one school year. At the meeting the governors who have been nominated may be asked to leave the room and the rest of the governors' present will vote. If there is only one nominee then voting will be by a show of hands, but if there is more than one nomination then a secret ballot will be conducted by the Clerk.

Committee Chairs are decided by the members of each committee at the last meeting of the year of that committee. This is less formal and is normally done by a show of hands.

Adding items to the Agenda

If you wish to add an item to the agenda you will need to contact either the Chair or the Clerk – please allow a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the meeting. Alternatively, each meeting will discuss items for the next agenda; this gives members an opportunity to raise any items they wish to be discussed in the future. It is not good practice for to be added to the agenda once issued since it is important to allow for supporting papers to be issued whilst giving governors enough preparation time, however, if necessary, due to time constraints, items may be added as AOB but should be raised with the chair at the beginning of the meeting.

Register of Pecuniary Interest / Declaration of Interest

Once appointed as a governor and at the beginning of each academic year it will be necessary for you to sign the Register of Pecuniary Interest. It is important to declare any monetary, financial or commercial interests, conflicts or potential conflicts of interest that you may have as soon as possible. This is to safeguard not only you but all the governing body to ensure that no serving governor is contributing to discussions or votes in which they have an undisclosed business or personal interest that they could benefit from.

Declaration of Interest is an agenda item for all full governing body and committee meetings; this gives each governor an opportunity to declare any interest they may have concerning any item on any agenda. This will be confirmed and recorded in the minutes of each meeting.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

As a governor, it is important to remember that you are responsible for ensuring that the financial regulations are adhered to, as there are certain regulations and procedures, including the Budget, which needs to be approved by the governors annually. These documents can be located within the main office at the school and are available to view anytime.

The FGB as a whole is responsible for agreeing the school budget for each financial year which runs September to August. The finance committee will discuss the budget first in detail and once they have agreed it, it will be presented to the FGB for ratification.

A list of these documents is as follows:

Funding Agreement

Academies Financial Handbook

Combe Pafford School's Finance Policy is specific to the school and is designed to clearly define and document responsibilities and procedures within the financial management of the school.

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

Governors have decided that they undergo a DBS check, even though it is unlikely you would have unsupervised access to children. When visiting schools, governors should always be under 'reasonable supervision' by an employee at the school. (See Governor Visits Policy).

Further information can be found in the Governors' Handbook (& guide to the Law). An on- line version of this is available on the Department of Education website. The Handbook contains all information

relating to the legalities of being a governor.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

TERMS OF REFERENCE FULL GOVERNING BODY (FGB)

(last updated September 2023)

1. To agree and set the strategic direction and vision of the school
2. To set and review terms of reference for the FGB and all committees
3. To maintain and update annually a register of business interest declarations for publication on the school's website
4. To appoint a chair and vice-chair of governors annually
5. To ensure all governors adopt an agreed code of conduct
6. To carry out an annual appraisal of the Head Teacher's performance
7. To monitor and evaluate the performance of the school by receiving reports from the head teacher
8. To consider whether to exercise delegation of functions to individuals or committees and to establish the committees' terms of reference
9. To receive reports and ratify recommendations from committees or from individual governors
10. To receive and approve the SEF for internal management and OFSTED purposes
11. To receive and approve the school's development plans
12. To receive and review reports generated externally, eg school improvement partners; OFSTED
13. To set and monitor annual progress targets for all pupils, especially vulnerable groups
14. To set annual attendance targets
15. To appoint a safeguarding governor and receive regular reports
16. To review and approve a detailed annual budget plan
17. To approve and sign statutory financial statements as approved by the external auditor
18. To appoint and auditor on an annual basis, considering the recommendations made by the SBM and Head Teacher
19. To decide whether to delegate power to spend the delegated budget to the head teacher and if so establish financial limits of delegated authority (see Finance Policy)
20. To review and approve the school's staffing structure on an annual basis
21. To agree selection panel for head teacher and deputy head appointments
22. To suspend or end suspension of head teacher
23. To appoint or remove the chair and vice chair
24. To appoint or dismiss the clerk
25. To recruit and appoint new governors where appropriate
26. To suspend a governor
27. To ensure a policy review cycle is in place
28. To consider if Governors are able to claim expenses
29. To receive a Heads report at each meeting
30. To oversee fair and effective complaints procedures

Quorum: A quorum will be 50% of the total number of members of the governing body. If a governor leaves during the meeting and it loses its quorum the meeting must be adjourned. Any 3 members of the Governing Body may ask for an extra meeting to be held. Although decisions may be delegated, the Governing Body remains responsible for any decision made under delegation.

Meetings: At least four per year as a minimum; two in the autumn term and one in the spring and summer terms

Chair: The Chair of the Governing Body shall be elected by the FGB at the last meeting of the summer term to begin office in September.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

Autumn 1

1. To agree and confirm members of committees
2. To confirm the annual meeting plan
3. To consider and approve a Pay Policy
4. To consider and approve an Appraising Teacher Policy
5. To consider and approve the Virtual meetings policy (during COVID)
6. To consider and approve the use of pupil premium/additional funding for the year
7. To ensure a related Parties form is completed by each Governor
8. To receive a Heads Report

Autumn 2

1. To receive and consider recommendations from all Committees
2. To approve the statutory accounts
3. To receive a report on safeguarding from the DSL presented by the Safeguarding Governor
4. To receive a Heads Report

Spring

1. To receive and consider recommendations from all Committees
2. To receive a report on safeguarding from the DSL presented by the Safeguarding Governor
3. To receive a Heads Report
4. To consider and approve the Uniform Policy

Summer

1. To receive and consider recommendations from all Committees
2. To receive a SEF report
3. To receive consider and approve a draft of the proposed SDP for the following year
4. To approve the budget for the following academic/financial year
5. To receive a report on safeguarding from the DSL presented by the Safeguarding Governor
6. To receive a CLA report
7. To elect a Chair and Vice Chair of Governors for the following year.
8. To receive a Heads Report



Governor Visits Policy

Whilst Governors are very welcome to visit the school, the following policy should be followed:

- Do make arrangements with the Headteacher or member of staff you intend to visit.
- Please sign in at the reception desk
- Be clear about the purpose of the visit.
- Do plan your visits carefully and consider any School Development Plan Target where you are a Key Governor.
- Do observe and ask questions.
- Do praise anything that impresses you and note it.
- Do not demand a visit.
- Do not visit the school with the intention of “inspecting” it.
- Do not raise matters of concern without first consulting the Headteacher.
- Please ensure you record your visit in your in Governors’ Folder
- Please try to visit regularly to show your support for the school, ideally 3 visits a year
- Please ensure you wear your Governors I/D badge when visiting the school.
- Please ensure you adhere to the schools parking policy

Visits are important for Governors to get to know the school, but remember having planned your visit to keep a record of your observations.

JANE HALLWOOD
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

