

Braywood CE First School



Policy for our Governing Body

“From tiny acorns, mighty oak trees grow, watered and nurtured by God”
(Mission Statement)

This policy summarises the 'Terms of Reference Regulations of 2000', which set down the legal framework for governing bodies.

Preamble

The Governing Body must act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interest of the school and be open about the decisions it makes and the actions it takes. In particular the Governing Body must be prepared to explain its decisions and actions to interested persons (though this does not mean the governing body is required to disclose information it has decided should be confidential).

The Role of the Governing Body

1. The Governing Body fulfils a largely strategic role in the running of the school.
2. The Governing Body will establish a strategic framework for the school by:
 - Setting aims and objectives of the school;
 - Setting policies to achieve those aims and objectives;
 - Setting targets to achieve those aims and objectives.
3. The Governing Body will monitor and evaluate progress towards the achievement of its aims and objectives and regularly review the strategic framework for the school in light of that progress.
4. In establishing and monitoring the strategic framework the Governing Body considers any advice given by the headteacher and must comply with any trust deed relating to the school.
5. The Governing Body will act as a critical friend to the headteacher and will support the head and offer constructive criticism.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and for the implementation of the Governing Body's strategic framework. She will advise the Governing Body in determining and reviewing its strategic framework for the school. In particular the Headteacher will formulate for consideration by the Governing Body

the aims and objectives for the school, policies to achieve its aims and objectives and targets for the school's development plan.

The Headteacher reports to the governing body on progress towards achieving its aims and objectives, three times a year in her Headteacher's Report.

Delegation of the Governing Body's Functions

In deciding how to delegate its functions, the Governing Body must consider its overall strategic purpose and the responsibility of the Headteacher for the operational management of the school. The Headteacher will comply with any reasonable direction made by the Governing Body in performing any function it delegates to her.

Governors obviously bring a wide range of skills and knowledge to the school when they enrol as a governor. These skills are obviously taken into consideration when delegating the role of specific individuals on the Governing Body.

(See Appendix 1 - Governors' Code of Conduct)

Monitoring and Evaluation by the Governing Body

The governing body has a statutory duty to oversee the policies and direction of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance.

Governors monitor the school in a number of ways including:

- Visits and talking to staff and pupils
- Reviewing the Headteacher's Report and asking relevant/searching questions
- Review of the school policies.
- Regular review of data through visits and committees
- Review of the School Development Plan
- Finance monitoring as outlined in the Finance Policy
- Performance Management of the Headteacher
- Reviewing benchmarking with other schools.

Our Governing Body meetings always involve a review of our policies; the Headteacher's Report; a financial statement and a demonstration of a curriculum area to ensure that our governors are familiar with the teaching and learning procedures of our school. Standards and data are annually discussed with all our governors as a regular area of our school improvement alongside appropriate targets which often form part of the Headteacher's performance review. The School Development Plan is a working document which is used by governors and staff.

The Governing Body must agree and implement a performance management policy setting out how teacher appraisal at the school is to be implemented. This includes the Headteacher's appraisal alongside our School Improvement Partner. The Governing Body must review the performance management policy annually and amend it as it sees fit.

The Finance Committee scrutinise the budget, our school's asset management plan, teacher's salaries etc. to ensure transparency and value for money. The comments and conclusions from this meeting are always fed back into the full Governing Body meeting for an inclusive approach which provides clarity of all members.

(See Appendix 2 – Functions of the Governing Body and its Committees)

There are many areas within the school which involve governor scrutiny including a review of our policies. Some are considered annually such as performance management, curriculum, health and safety and safeguarding issues, other policies are visited on a regular cycle of improvement often depending upon the school development plan.

(See *Appendix 4 – Scrutiny of School Policies*)

Organisation at Braywood

As a voluntary controlled school the instrument of government instructs that our Governing Body must be made up of the following:

2 Foundation Governors
2 LEA Governors
1 Community Governor
3 Parent Governors
2 Staff Governors

The Governing Body at Braywood usually meets 6-7 times a year.

Committees are set up by the Governing Body to carry out most of the detail work and bring in additional expertise to work on specific issues . Having a committee ensures that we can enable the main Governing Body meetings to concentrate on strategy and so help to use scarce governor time effectively To this end our Finance Committee meets prior to the full Governing Body meeting to discuss the finances in more detail.

If relevant we have an additional ‘extended schools’ meeting to discuss issues relevant to our Braywood Extra. Additional committees are set up as and when required e.g. Ofsted SEF to discuss more specific requirements.

Governor Visits

Visits to school enable governors:

- To offer the school a source of support and to be a ‘critical friend’
- To help governors know the school better.
- To inform any decisions that governors make.
- To recognise and celebrate the achievements of the school.
- Ofsted inspectors will be interested in both the process of governor observation and the content the comments.

Governors need to satisfy themselves that schools fulfils the role expected of them by our families. We have a Governor’s Morning in which all governors are encouraged to see the school in action. These visits help governors to learn more about how the school functions from day-to-day. If the Governing Body has greater first hand knowledge of the school; their ability to advise the school increases, together with their ability to make informed self evaluation or strategic decisions.

Appendix 1

Code of Conduct for the Governors of Braywood CE First School

General

- ▲ Our principal concern as a governing body (GB) and as individual governors is the welfare of the school.
- ▲ Our main focus is on school improvement and the raising of standards of pupil performance in the school.
- ▲ We recognise our responsibility for determining, monitoring and reviewing the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
- ▲ We recognise that the headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy and the day-to-day management of the school.
- ▲ We understand that all governors are equal members of the GB.
- ▲ We understand that we have no authority to act individually unless the GB has given us the delegated authority to do so and it is legally permissible.
- ▲ We know that we must act fairly and without prejudice in all matters, including our responsibilities as a good employer.
- ▲ We will encourage open government.
- ▲ We will give careful consideration to the impact of our decisions on people, organisations and the school.

Commitment

- ▲ We recognise the need to commit time and energy to being an effective governor.
- ▲ We will each involve ourselves in the work of the governing body by attending meetings, serving on committee(s) and accepting a fair share of responsibility.
- ▲ We acknowledge our needs for development and training as governors.

Relationships

- ▲ We will work as a team.
- ▲ We will develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher and staff, parents, the CSA and the diocese, and representatives of the community.

Confidentiality

- ▲ We will observe confidentiality as required.
- ▲ We will exercise prudence and tact if contentious issues affecting the school arise outside the GB.

Conduct

- ▲ We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the governing body.
- ▲ We will speak or act on behalf of the GB only when authorised to do so.
- ▲ In making or responding to criticisms or complaints about the GB, we will follow the procedures established by the GB.
- ▲ Our visits to school as governors will be within the protocol agreed by the governing body and staff.
- ▲ We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school.

Appendix 2

Statutory Functions of the Governing Body and its Committees

A Governing Body can delegate its statutory functions to a committee, a governor or the headteacher, subject to prescribed restrictions, described below. The Governing Body must determine the membership and proceedings of any committee. Each committee must have a chair, who is either appointed by the GB or elected by the committee.

The Governing Body may remove the chair of a committee from office at any time. The Governing Body must appoint a clerk to each committee, who may be a governor but may not be the headteacher.

It is for the governing body at a quorate meeting to establish a committee and determine its powers, membership and how the chair is to be appointed. The governing body must review its committee structure annually. For each committee, the GB at a quorate meeting, must decide:

- ▲ A title
- ▲ The constitution of the committee and its membership
- ▲ Procedures for appointing the committee chair and vice chair
- ▲ The committee's terms of reference

The committee members must ensure

- ▲ There is a named chair and vice chair
- ▲ There is an agenda for each meeting, circulated not less than seven days in advance except in instances where the chair calls a meeting as a matter of urgency
- ▲ The meetings are properly clerked (the clerk may be a governor)
- ▲ Minutes are produced and published
- ▲ Voting is properly conducted (the chair has a second or casting vote except in two instances: where the chair is an associate member (only full governors may have a casting vote); in the case of a panel selecting a headteacher or deputy head, where no-one has a second vote)
- ▲ Confidentiality is maintained

Other requirements

- ▲ There must be at least three governors on each committee
- ▲ Associate Members may sit on committees provided that the majority of members are governors: the GB will decide what voting rights the Associates may have and there must be a majority of full governors present when any vote is taken
- ▲ The Headteacher may attend all committee meetings, except those dealing with his or her pay and related matters or where a conflict of interest may arise
- ▲ The GB retains final responsibility for any decisions taken by its committees

Functions that may not be delegated and must be decided by the full GB

- The constitution of the GB and the Instrument of Government
- Committee structures and their delegated powers and responsibilities, and to receive reports from the committees
- Election of the chair and vice chair of the GB, and removal of the chair
- The suspension of elected governors
- Appointment of the clerk to the governors
- Appointment of community, partnership and sponsor governors and associate members, and their removal
- Confirmation of the appointment of the headteacher and deputy head

Functions that the GB may delegate to a committee, but not to an individual

- Functions relating to approval of the first formal budget plan of the financial year
- Functions relating to the alteration, discontinuance or change of category of maintained schools
- Functions relating to school discipline policies
- Functions relating to the exclusion of pupils (except in an emergency, when the Chair of Governors has the power to exercise these functions)
- Functions relating to admissions (VA and foundation schools)
- Functions relating to the school premises, including use of premises and the health and safety policy
- Approval of the school prospectus and School Profile
- Functions relating to the school's curriculum

Activities that must be dealt with by a committee or panel rather than the full GB

- Staff dismissal - including redundancy - and appeals
- Pupil exclusion appeals
- Selection of the headteacher and deputy head (the GB must approve the panel's recommendation)
- Headteacher's performance management
- Salaries of the headteacher and deputy head and award of performance points
- Use of incentive and discretionary allowances for staff
- Admissions (VA and foundation schools)
- School attendance targets
- Appeals against a direction to admit a child

Committee Terms of Reference

Staff Dismissal Committee

Powers	In accordance with Children's Services Authority procedures, to consider and make initial decisions about staff capability, staff discipline and staff dismissal
Status	Statutory
Membership	At least three governors, excluding governors with an interest requiring them to withdraw
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	The clerk to the governing body will clerk the meetings
Meetings	As required. The CSA to be informed of meetings. Confidential.
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee. To be distributed within one week

Staff Dismissal Appeals Committee

Powers	To consider decisions made by the Staff Dismissal Committee
Status	Statutory
Membership	At least three governors, excluding governors with an interest requiring them to withdraw and governors on the Staff Dismissal Committee
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	The clerk to the governing body will clerk the meetings
Meetings	As required. The CSA to be informed of meetings. Confidential.
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee. To be distributed within one week

Pupil Discipline Committee

Powers	To hear appeals from pupils and their parents or carers on permanent and temporary exclusions. (The committee may also meet if there is concern about the number of temporary exclusions a pupil has received or if an excluded pupil is likely to miss public examinations)
Status	Statutory
Membership	At least three governors with no previous knowledge of and not known personally to the pupil or the parents/carers. The headteacher may not be involved.
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	The clerk to the governing body will clerk the meetings
Meetings	As required. Confidential.
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee. To be distributed within one week

Pay Committee

Powers	To review the salaries of teachers as prescribed by the pay policy and notify them of the basis on which their place on the pay spine has been determined. To work with appointed governors to determine the pay of the headteacher and deputy head. To undertake salary reviews and to make recommendations to the GB
Status	Non-statutory, but strongly recommended
Membership	At least three governors: employees of the school apart from the headteacher may not be members
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	Recommended that the clerk to the governing body clerks the meetings
Meetings	Once a year, usually in the autumn term. Other special meetings if required
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee.

Sample activities

Staffing

- ▲ To draft, make recommendations to the GB consideration, and review annually:
 - ▲ a policy statement on staff consultation
 - ▲ procedures for dealing with discipline and grievances (and ensure that staff are informed of them)
 - ▲ criteria for redundancy (in consultation with staff)
 - ▲ a pay policy, including criteria for the use of discretionary points and recommendations about their implementation.

Staff Appointments

- ▲ To review the staffing structure whenever a vacancy occurs and at least annually
- ▲ To make recommendations to the GB, in consultation with the headteacher, about the involvement of governors in staff appointments
- ▲ To work as appropriate with the headteacher in appointing staff

Staff Budget

- ▲ To liaise with the headteacher and the finance committee when the budget is being decided to consider teaching and support staff levels

Pupils

- ▲ To consider the headteacher's statement on pupil discipline, including a policy for the exclusion of pupils
- ▲ To consider the headteacher's recommendations on pastoral care, pupil welfare, homework, the dress and appearance of pupils, and pupils' health and safety

Parents, Community, Public Relations

- ▲ To promote good relations with parents and the community
- ▲ To assist in producing the school prospectus for approval by the GB
- ▲ To work with the headteacher in producing a publicity and marketing policy for approval by the GB, and to oversee its implementation
- ▲ To make recommendations, advised by the headteacher, on community use of the premises

Curriculum Committee

- ▲ To advise the governing body on its statutory obligations regarding the National Curriculum
- ▲ To consider all curriculum policy documents and to report to the governing body on whether they have been adopted
- ▲ With the assistance of staff, to provide information on how the curriculum is taught, evaluated and resourced
- ▲ To review the policy and provision for religious education and collective worship
- ▲ To review the policy and provision for sex and relationships education
- ▲ To ensure that the requirements for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are met
- ▲ To ensure that the school meets the requirements of disability discrimination legislation, and to report on measures taken by the school to ensure that pupils with disabilities are treated no less favourably than other pupils
- ▲ To contribute to the curriculum component of the School Development Plan and to monitor its implementation
- ▲ To receive reports from the headteacher and other staff on the delivery of the National Curriculum, including testing and assessment arrangements, and to review the published information about school performance
- ▲ To agree the relevant annual Key Stage targets for pupil achievement, and report these to the full governing body
- ▲ To report to the full governing body at each of its meetings

Finance Committee

- ▲ Provide guidance to the GB on all financial matters
- ▲ Prepare and review statements of financial policy, short and long term
- ▲ Prepare, for the approval by the GB, a draft budget for LA delegated funds, Standards Fund monies and any other income or carry-forward sums
- ▲ Ensure Best Value principles apply to services purchased with delegated monies
- ▲ Monitor the budget using information provided by the headteacher and finance officer, ensuring that spending remains within prescribed limits
- ▲ Report the financial situation each term and make recommendations
- ▲ Propose an appropriate level of delegation to the headteacher for the day-to-day financial management of the school and ensure this is minuted by the GB
- ▲ Monitor income and expenditure of all public funds
- ▲ Audit all non-public funds for presentation to the GB
- ▲ Respond appropriately to audit report recommendations

Premises (or Environment) Committee

- ▲ Consider all matters relating to the buildings and grounds, including security and health and safety matters
- ▲ Inspect the premises at least annually and present a statement of priorities for maintenance and development for approval by the GB
- ▲ Approve the costs and arrangements for maintenance and repair within the budget, and refer spending above agreed limits to the Finance Committee
- ▲ Oversee the preparation and implementation of contracts, including for cleaning and grounds maintenance, and ensure Best Value principles apply
- ▲ Prepare a lettings and charges policy for approval by the GB body, and oversee the implementation of the policy
- ▲ Liaise as required with the CSA and, if relevant, the diocese
- ▲ Ensure the school complies with health and safety regulations
- ▲ On behalf of the GB, prepare, implement and evaluate a Health & Safety policy in line with legislation and the recommendations of the CSA and diocese

- ▲ Consider and make arrangements on risk management issues
- ▲ Ensure that recommendations for action following inspections and audits are satisfactorily carried out
- ▲ Ensure premises insurance arrangements are adequate

The School Development Group

The School Development Group is not a committee: it is a working group. It is a non-statutory body which exists to provide advice and guidance to the GB on matters relating to school development, in particular those concerning academic standards.

The SDG membership will be determined by the GB and varies from school to school but the meetings should commonly include the headteacher or deputy head and the chair or vice chair of governors.. The chair of governors will often act as chair of the SDG.

This is not a decision-making body – its purpose is to make recommendation to the GB – so there is no formal voting system and minutes are not required, though it is advisable that the key points of meetings are noted for distribution to governors.

Appendix 3

Code of Conduct During Visits

Each Governor when making a visit should follow this policy.

There are a number of reasons to for governors to make formal visits to the school. The purpose of these guidelines is to suggest how the visit could be conducted in a way that governors and staff gain the most from the experience. Visits should have a clear purpose and can be used for:

- ▲ Meeting with staff
- ▲ Looking at pupils work
- ▲ Reviewing areas and resources of the school
- ▲ Observing typical lessons in particular subjects, key stages or classes
- ▲ The use made of the buildings or the site and the condition of the premises
- ▲ Additional educational needs
- ▲ Impact of the religious character
- ▲ Lunch and break times
- ▲ Deployment of staff, e.g. caretaker, office staff, teaching assistants

Each governor is assigned to a specific curriculum area and often the visits would be specific to this subject. At other times though the governors are seeing the school in action and will be observing lessons from different curriculum areas.

What to do before the visit

- ▲ Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- ▲ Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Improvement Plan? What are the relevant school policies?
- ▲ Discuss the proposed agenda with the staff involved. How do they want governors to integrate into the lesson? Would note taking be allowed? It might be possible for you to see a copy of the lesson plan beforehand.
- ▲ Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. The teacher may be able to guide you on this.
- ▲ Discuss with the Headteacher/class teacher if any supporting information is available – OFSTED report, improvement plan, performance data.
- ▲ Ensure that you are familiar with health and safety procedures

During the lesson

- ▲ Be punctual, keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- ▲ Remember you are there to learn, it is a visit not an inspection.
- ▲ Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be.
- ▲ Get involved with the children if the teacher has agreed that this would be appropriate.
- ▲ Observe discretely. Remember that excessive note taking can be disconcerting and may make your visit look like an inspection.
- ▲ Don't distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- ▲ Listen to staff and pupils, be courteous, friendly not critical.

After the lesson

- ▲ Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?

- ↗ Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.
- ↗ Be open, honest, and positive.
- ↗ Discuss your observations with the Headteacher. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board.
- ↗ Reflect: how did that go? has the visit enhanced relationships? have I learned more about the school? Have I helped the governing body fulfil its duties?

Things you may consider when visiting the classroom

- ↗ Relationship between staff and pupils
- ↗ Relationships between pupils
- ↗ Variety of teaching styles
- ↗ Availability and role of support staff
- ↗ Behaviour and attitude of pupils — are they attentive, encouraged, motivated, listening, questioning, responding, rewarded?
- ↗ Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- ↗ How the pupils are grouped
- ↗ How different abilities are catered for
- ↗ Children's work
- ↗ Displays, is the school attractive
- ↗ Ethos — the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- ↗ Environment and working conditions, what is the school like to work in? is this a good place to work and play? What are the good points? What can be improved
- ↗ Quality and quantity of equipment and resources