



Brampton Abbots CE Primary School



Bridstow CE Primary School



Oak Meadow Federation

GOVERNANCE POLICY SUITE

This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Governing Body at least annually.
All references to 'the school' imply both Brampton Abbots and Bridstow Primary Schools.

Date signed off by full governing body: 17th October 2023

Signed Daniel Brearey, Head teacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Brearey'.

Paul Mason, Chair of governors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Mason'.

Date next review due: October 2024

Introduction

Our vision is rooted in Psalm 1:3: 'You are like a tree, planted by streams of water that never run dry. Your fruit ripens in its time; your leaves never fade or curl. In all you do, you prosper'. To this end, and in order to create a positive learning environment, it is essential that our governance framework is clear, open, honest and inclusive.

This suite of policies aims:

- to set out the expectations of governors' behaviour;
- to be clear on what is acceptable for governors to claim expenses for.

This policy suite contains the following chapters:

[Chapter 1](#): Governors' Code of Conduct

[Chapter 2](#): Governors' allowances

[Chapter 3](#): School visits by governors

[Chapter 4](#): Committee Terms of Reference

Other key school documents to refer to are:

- Instrument of Government

Complaints and whistleblowing

Complaints should follow the procedures as set out in the Complaints Policy on our website. Staff also have a responsibility to raise any concerns following the school's whistleblowing policy.

Compliance

This policy is set out in line with the [DfE Governance Handbook 2020](#) and [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) .

CHAPTER 1: GOVERNORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the Governing Body and individual governors will operate. The Governing Body accepts the following principles and procedures.

General framework

We are responsible for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the schools operates.

We recognise that our headteacher is responsible for managing the schools and implementing policies and the curriculum.

We accept that all governors have equal status, and although appointed by different groups (i.e. parents, staff, LA) our overriding concern will be the welfare of the schools as a whole.

We have no legal authority to act individually, except when the government has given us delegated authority to do so.

We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we are responsible for staff, we will fulfil all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of, the employer.

We will encourage open government and shall be seen to be doing so.

We may consider how our collective decisions may affect other schools.

We accept that as governors we will act at all times in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life as established by the Nolan Committee 1996: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Commitment

We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. We expect governors to attend all meetings where possible. If a governor has not attended three consecutive meetings then we will explore why this is, and may ask governors who are unable to fulfil their role to resign.

We will each involve ourselves positively in the work of the governing body, attend regularly and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.

We will get to know the schools well by taking part in the schools' programme of activities, where possible, and other planned opportunities for participation.

We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development.

Relationships

We will strive to work at all times as a team.

We will seek to develop effective working relationships with our headteacher, staff, parents, the Diocese, the LA, other relevant agencies and the community.

We will provide appropriate support for the headteacher and staff of the schools and do all we reasonably can to enable them to work effectively and efficiently.

We will deal with differences of opinion with colleague governors and staff in an amicable and courteous way, at all times, avoiding aggressive or offensive behaviour.

We will speak or act on behalf of the governing body only when we have been specifically authorised to do so.

In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting either school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.

Our visits to the schools will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing body, and always by agreement with the headteacher and staff.

In discharging our duties, we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our schools.

Confidentiality

We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the governing body in meetings and from our visits to schools as governors.

We will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the governing body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.

We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting either school arises outside the governing body.

We will accept the authority of the Chair during all meetings of the governing body and its committees.

We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means we will not speak out against decisions, in public or private, outside the governing body.

Suspension

If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, we will do so by following the Procedures Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Removal

We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies which have the power to remove those they appoint.

If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor, we will do so by following the Constitution Regulations in order to ensure a fair and objective process.

CHAPTER 2: GOVERNORS' ALLOWANCES

This chapter sets out the terms on which allowances to governors will be paid. This will ensure that no member of the community is prevented from becoming a governor on the grounds of cost.

Governors may claim allowances to cover expenditure necessary to enable them to perform their duties. This does not include an attendance allowance, or payment to cover loss of earnings.

Any expense being claimed must be made by completing a claim form (see Appendix 1) and submitting it to the school office either in person, email or posted to the school address.

Allowances will only be paid on the provision of a receipt and will be limited to the amount shown on the receipt.

Claims can be made for the following:

- extra costs incurred because they have a special need or English as a second language;
- travel and subsistence costs outside of attendance at meetings;
- telephone charges, photocopying, postage, stationery, etc.;
- childcare if required to undertake responsibilities during the day when they would normally be caring for their child;
- other justifiable allowances.

Claims will be paid in arrears on a case-by-case basis. Reimbursable costs should be agreed in principle by the governing body before they are incurred. Claims that appear excessive or inconsistent may be investigated. All claims will be subject to an independent audit.

Travel expenses where the governor's own car has been used will be paid in line with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) approved mileage rates, which are published on [the HMRC website](#).

CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL VISITS BY GOVERNORS

This chapter provides a framework for governors to make focused visits to either school so that they can build an effective working relationship with the staff and have a better understanding of the context in which they work. Governors will observe one or more policies and plans being implemented on a day-to-day basis, and their findings should help the whole governing body and its committees make well-informed judgements about the progress being made towards the priorities and targets in the School Development Plan (SDP). This process will enable the governing body to recognise and celebrate the efforts and successes of pupils and staff and to identify further areas for development.

Visits are not about making judgements on the quality of teaching – that is the headteacher’s responsibility – nor about checking on the progress of individual children.

At the beginning of the academic year, the Governing Body will, with the help of the headteacher and staff, organise a schedule of visits through the year to complement the SDP and comply with statutory duties. The aim will be to achieve a minimum of one visit per governor per year. Governors may be invited to join small SDP teams (no more than 3 in each) to focus on specific areas of the SDP. Visits may be conducted in pairs or by individual governors. The headteacher will guide the governing body on the areas of the curriculum, policies and SDP priorities and targets.

When organising and conducting a visit, governors will be courteous and considerate, at all times respecting the professional roles of the headteacher and staff. Working to the schedule agreed with the headteacher and staff, they will confirm with the headteacher the date, timing and focus of each visit at least one week in advance. This will include agreeing what will be observed and to whom it would be useful to talk. If time permits, they will discuss the proposed agenda with any staff involved. They will prepare by reading relevant documentation/guidance.

Teachers and support staff will at all times be courteous and considerate, recognising the contribution made by the governing body to the school. They will make practical suggestions on the focus for governors’ visits to ensure that they are productive and enjoyable for all concerned. This will include specifying the evidence that could be shared with governors. Whenever practical they will invite their link/curriculum governors to relevant staff meetings and training sessions.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

At the end of each visit, the governor(s) will discuss what they have observed with the headteacher, who will feed back comments to the staff concerned as appropriate. The visit and observations made will be recorded on the Governor Visit Report Form (see Appendix 2, which also provides guidelines for conducting school visits), showing the link with the SDP or statutory duties, as appropriate. Governors’ visits will be an item on the agenda of the termly meeting of the full governing body, where the full discussion held at committee level will be reported as a brief overview.

CHAPTER 4: COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Each year the governing body will elect a chair and a vice-chair from among their number to act for the duration of the school academic year.

A governor who is employed at the school as a teacher or as any other member of the school's staff is not eligible to be chair or vice-chair of the governing body.

A chair will be elected annually for each sub-committee by that sub-committee. Associate governors may be elected as sub-committee chairs.

TEACHING AND LEARNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Membership At least six governors including the headteacher

Quorum Three members of the sub-committee

Delegated responsibilities:

1. To oversee relevant SDP priorities or those raised by the headteacher
2. To monitor how the curriculum, including RE, is taught, planned, evaluated and resourced
3. To monitor progress towards clear targets by key stage, core subjects, year group, gender and ethnic groups and to note successes and areas for further development
4. To consider reports on the school's performance data relative to national averages and similar schools, including attainment, attendance and exclusions data
5. To monitor the use and impact of Pupil Premium, Sports Premium and other premium funding, and the associated documentation
6. To monitor safeguarding arrangements and ensure that all statutory requirements are met
7. To monitor and evaluate provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs and other vulnerable children
8. To monitor and oversee the schools' admissions procedures
9. To assist with new appointments to the school where necessary / appropriate
10. To review at regular intervals the policy suites that cover the various aspects of teaching and learning, including Curriculum Content, Curriculum Delivery and Behaviour.
11. To ensure that all committee members have appropriate induction and on-going training
12. To provide feedback to the full governing body at each of its meetings

FINANCE AND RESOURCES SUB-COMMITTEE

Membership At least five governors including the headteacher

Quorum Three members of the sub-committee

Delegated responsibilities:

1. To propose an annual budget to the governing body, built on achieving key priorities and accurate forecasts of spending, that ensures our key aims of excellent learning and high achievement for current pupils whilst ensuring adequate but not excessive resources are available for future years
2. To monitor the execution of the budget by reviewing at each meeting a financial monitoring report detailing actual expenditure and income against the budget, and forecasts for the end-of-year position

3. To decide, where necessary, amendments to the budget to address changes in priorities and spending patterns during the school year
4. To ensure adherence to LA Financial Regulations and Finance Policy at all times and to enforce such procedures as are necessary to prevent fraud
5. To agree the level of delegation to the headteacher for the day-to-day financial management of the federation
6. To ensure that the school funds and governors' funds are spent in accordance with their aims and to ensure the audit of non-public funds for presentation to the governing body
7. To create and maintain a staffing establishment for the whole school showing all posts with relevant information about their pay and grading
8. To monitor performance reviews and carry out all pay reviews
9. To act as the first stage of the formal process by which all employees can raise questions and concerns about their pay
10. To identify priorities for improvement and decide allocation of resources
11. To ensure that school buildings and grounds are safe and well maintained
12. To oversee the preparation, tendering, adoption, and implementation of contracts.
13. To review annually the Finance and Estate Management policy suites
14. To ensure that all H&S procedures are kept up to date and followed as identified by the appointed Health & Safety advisor
15. To ensure that suitable risk assessments have been prepared and action taken to minimise risk
16. To contribute to the formation and regular updating of Asset Management plans
17. To monitor the letting of premises and all out-of-hours use
18. To ensure all committee members have appropriate induction and on-going training
19. To provide feedback to the full governing body at each of its meetings

APPENDIX 1: GUIDANCE AND RECORD FORM FOR SCHOOL VISITS

Here are some suggestions for a governor visit.

Before the visit

- Within the relevant committee, decide on a focus for the visit. This may be suggested by the governing body's monitoring of the development plan, by suggestions from the headteacher, or by discussions within the governing body. Some possible areas of focus are:
 - relationship between staff and pupils;
 - relationships between pupils;
 - variety of teaching styles;
 - availability and role of support staff;
 - behaviour and attitude of pupils;
 - enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils;
 - how the pupils are grouped;
 - how different abilities are catered for;
 - children's work;
 - displays;
 - ethos – the atmosphere and values that are evident;
 - use of space and working conditions;
 - quality and quantity of equipment and resources.
- Agree with the headteacher the final visit focus and an appropriate time which suits both the governor and the member(s) of staff who will be involved.
- Meet the responsible member of staff outside teaching hours before the visit to discuss the focus.
- Agree how you will be introduced to the pupils and be involved in the lesson or activity you are observing.
- Read any appropriate policy documents and/or curriculum guidance.

During the visit

- Try to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Observe discreetly.
- Get involved with the pupils' activities when invited, but do not intervene.
- Show an interest and ask questions, but do not monopolise the teacher's time.
- Never comment on the teacher's conduct of the lesson or on individual pupils.
- Do not allow yourself to become an instrument for advancing particular issues.
- Do not express your own opinions when pressed on controversial issues.

After the visit

- Discuss your observations with the relevant member of staff where appropriate.
- Make notes while the visit is still fresh in your mind.
- Never include comments about individual children – if you have concerns, discuss them privately with the teacher and the headteacher.
- Remember that monitoring the performance of staff is the professional and operational matter which is the role of the headteacher, not the governors.

- Prepare a draft report of your observations and share it with the member of staff and the headteacher, using the Visit Feedback form (see below).
- Taking their comments into account, prepare a final written report to be circulated to the relevant committee before the next meeting.

Preparing a Report to the Governing Body

This is most important, as the report will be evidence of the monitoring role of the governing body. The report need not be long, and it is better in note form than in a long essay. Please use the suggested format in the form below.



GOVERNOR VISIT REPORT

<u>GOVERNOR</u>	<u>DATE OF VISIT</u>
<u>FOCUS OF VISIT</u>	<u>ACTIVITY/FORMAT</u>
<u>Key questions to answer:</u>	
<u>Outcomes:</u>	
<u>Further comments:</u>	
<u>Signed:</u>	<u>Date:</u>



GOVERNOR EXPENSE CLAIM FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Claim period: _____

I claim the total sum of £ _____ for governor expenses as detailed below.
I have attached relevant receipts to support my claim.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

EXPENSE TYPE	£
Support for a special need or English as a second language	
Travel or subsistence	
Telephone charges, photocopying, postage or stationery	
Other (please specify)	
Total expenses claimed	