

Code of Practice

Cottenham Primary School Governing Body

GENERAL

- This policy will be reviewed and agreed annually
- The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievements of all its pupils.

AIMS AND VISIONS OF COTTENHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Every child understands there is no limit to their potential
- Every child will receive an excellent all round education through and inspiring, purposeful and enriched curriculum
- Every child will be provided with the foundations to face the various challenges of life
- Every child is an integral part of our community and shares its values

The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:

- **Setting the vision for the school and strategic development.**
- **Holding head to account and ensuring that there is strong leadership.**
- **Ensuring Financial Probity**

Governors have responsibility for determining; monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates. The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and operation of the curriculum.

All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups (e.g. Local Authority, Staff, Parents) their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.

Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times. In so far as they have, or share, responsibility for the employment of staff, governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.

Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.

Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team.

Individual governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole governing body.

Governors should be aware of the latest Guide to the Law.

The following extract is taken from School governance “Learning from the best” May 2011

In reflecting on their own effectiveness, other governing bodies might wish to consider asking themselves some key questions. The questions below are offered as a starting point to help governors reflect on the important work that they do.

- How do we understand our roles and responsibilities and how they differ from those of the headteacher and senior staff?
- What do we know about the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching in the school?
- How do we know that the information we have about our school is robust and accurate?
- How do we provide the right balance of professional support and challenge for the headteacher and senior staff to help them improve the school’s effectiveness?
- How do we make best use of the skills and expertise of all members of the governing body?
- How do we know that the governing body is as effective as possible and could we do things better?
- How do we review our own performance regularly?
- How do we plan our training and development?
- Do we consider what might be needed when governors leave? How do we ensure we still continue to have the necessary skills and knowledge?
- How do we ensure that members of our governing body are prepared to step into important roles such as the chair of the governing body and chairs of committees?

RELATIONSHIPS

Governors will strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.

Governors will develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, parents, pupils, the LA and their local community.

For best practice in visits, please see appendices 1 and 2 “Best Practice guidelines” and Governor visit forms.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents including even informal comments within the realms of social media.

Although decisions reached at governors’ meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.

Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Confidential Minutes. It should be sufficient to discuss confidential minutes at meetings. Recorded minutes should only be circulated to the Chair of Governors, Headteacher and Clerk. The Clerk will securely save a copy. Governors should not be in possession of confidential minutes.

Please also refer to the Guide to the Law for full list of responsibilities

CONDUCT

Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.

Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically authorised to do so.

All visits to the school should be undertaken within a framework, which has been established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher. (See visits best practice and Appendix4)

In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.

Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this.

Any pecuniary interest that a governor may have in connection with the governing body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests.

Governors should withdraw from any meeting in which they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest. It may only be necessary to withdraw for the part of the meeting where the 'item' is discussed.

A person who is paid to work at the school is not regarded as having a pecuniary interest if his/her interest is no greater than that of other persons paid to work at the school.

A governor paid to work at the school, other than the headteacher, must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to the pay or performance appraisal of any particular person working at the school. This does not affect general discussions about general policy.

The headteacher must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to their own pay or performance appraisal.

WEBSITE PROTOCOL

Documents to be discussed at FGM and sub-committees will be posted to the website rather than circulated by email.

For each meeting the clerk or committee chair will create a new page and post an agenda and any supporting documentation. Attendees will be notified by email at least one week before the meeting, and it will be their responsibility to visit the appropriate page and read the documents.

Minutes of the meeting should be added to the page not more than one week after the meeting, and an email notification sent out.

The chair of the committee is responsible for uploading the minutes, not the minute taker.

Any corrections to the minutes to be notified within one week and carried out promptly.

Documents for discussion should be sent to the clerk or committee chair for uploading.

Where policies are to be discussed, these should be listed in the agenda and attendees should refer to the current versions on the website.

Any changes to policies should be agreed at the meeting, and a named person tasked with making the changes to the Word document and loading a PDF to the website. Minutes should reflect this as fully as possible.

As a minimum, any policies reviewed should have an updated cover sheet showing the date of the review.

MEETINGS

Individual governors do not have the authority in a school. It is the decisions of all the governors together that carry authority.

Meetings Charter

It is expected that;

- Everyone attends regularly and is punctual.
- An agenda and relevant documents are sent/received at least seven days before every meeting. This is relevant to chairs of sub-committees, who will be asked to take on this responsibility.
- Similarly, minutes from meetings should be produced within seven days following a meeting. They should summarise views succinctly, and record decisions accurately.
- All agendas will make clear the purpose of each item (for example if a decision is required) when necessary.
- The Chair will keep to the agenda, pace the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draw on all members for contributions and keep discussions to the point.
- Everyone's contribution will be heard; everyone can contribute to the discussion
- The decision-making process should be quite clear
- Governors to take collective responsibility for decisions

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Governors are expected to keep up to date with developments in education as best they can. Each individual governor is not expected to be an expert on all areas. However, across the governing body as a whole, there should be a good spread of knowledge and expertise to make critical analysis possible.

This includes;

Attending one in-house training session per year.

Attending at least 1 course of their own choice from the Governors' training handbook. New governors should try to attend all those for completion of the induction programme.

Governors may also seek to attend some in-school training with staff where relevant to an area of the SSP they are monitoring.

Mentoring

Please see appendix 3 "Induction Policy"

COTTENHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL
GOVERNORS' BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Governors and staff need to work together in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. These guidelines are here to help achieve this.

Purpose of visits

- To ensure that governors are involved in school self-evaluation and specific monitoring tasks linked to the School Strategic Plan.
- To ensure that Governors are aware of developments, changes and current practice in school.
- To enable Governors to hold headteacher to account for the performance of the school.

Scope of visits

Visits should be linked to specific tasks or activities outlined in the School Strategic Plan or highlighted by the Headteacher or may be a matter of particular interest to the Governing body, provided this is agreed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Visits may be to observe lessons, discuss agreed topics with members of staff, the Head and/or Deputy or a combination of the above.

The purpose of the visit should always be communicated and agreed by the Headteacher and staff in advance.

Governors must, at all times, remember to respect all areas of confidentiality – including staff, children and family background.

Governors must always remember that they are 'lay people' when visiting classrooms, and should in no way attempt to pass professional judgement on what they see. Sometimes governors may be involved in the direct observation of teaching – this may be with another governor or senior member of staff.

Governors must be very clear about their role. Governors are not in the role of a professional colleague or an Inspector.

Any comments about observations and their visit should be shared with the Headteacher or Deputy and can then be passed on if appropriate.

A written report of the visit should be completed as part of the evaluation and monitoring process. It should clearly show the nature of the visit, what was being monitored and any observations noted by the governor. All reports should be with the Head or Deputy before being reported to the whole governing body. A copy of the report should be held in the school self-evaluation portfolio for future reference.

Cottenham Primary School

Governor Visit Monitoring Form			
Name:		SMT Link	
RAP Priority		RAPTarget	
Purpose of visit:			
Date of Visit			
Lessons to be observed: Staff to be met: Paperwork/other material to be looked at:			
Summary of Visit			
Progress and impact seen or cited by staff and children			
As a result of.....			
Conclusions:			
Follow up from visit			

How does this link to school self-evaluation and SMSC Development.	
Are there any areas to be considered for inclusion on the next RAP?	
Feedback to GB	

Appendix 3

New Governors' Induction Policy

Written in accordance with the DfES Guidance issued in October 2001, ref. DfES/0736/2001

The Governing Body and Headteacher believe it is essential that all new governors receive a comprehensive induction package covering a broad range of issues and topics. There is a commitment to ensure that the new governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. The process is seen as an investment, leading to more effective governance and retention of governors.

All new governors will be issued with access to documents as listed below.

1. DBS appointment form
2. The Teaching and Learning Policy
3. The school's prospectus (includes the most recent annual report to parents)
4. A list of the staff and their responsibilities
5. Plan of the School
6. List of the governors (including contact details) and their responsibilities
7. The committees and their terms of reference
8. Minutes of the two most recent governors' meetings (which will include the Head's report to Governors)
9. Dates and details of future meetings
10. The Raising Attainment Plan (RAP)
11. The Ofsted report
12. Code of Practice (includes school visits guidance and blank visit forms)
13. Monitoring and evaluation policy
14. Governor Handbook
15. Governor Training: Support and Development programme
16. Guide to the Law for School Governors.

New governors will have a mentor. This will be either the chair or a designated mentor agreed by the chair. The mentor will be responsible for:

- introducing new governors to the whole governing body;
- helping to organise appropriate training;
- helping new governors to understand all the documentation, the role of the governing body and all its committees;
- exploring with new governors their areas of interests and their strengths in order to help them become involved in the most useful or interesting committees;
- being available by phone or email to answer any questions.

New Governors (with the exception of governors who are already staff at the school) will meet the Head for an informal briefing within the first month. They will be invited to visit the school, meet staff and students, tour the premises to enable them to get a feel for the environment.

Areas that the Headteacher will cover include:

- background to the school;
- current issues facing the school;
- visiting the school;
- the relationship between the Headteacher and Governing Body.

New governors will be strongly encouraged to participate in the county-led governor induction training. The mentor and/or the training link governor should assist with this.

New governors will be introduced at the beginning of their first meeting, and all governors briefly introduced to them. Login details for the website will be issued at this meeting. An opportunity for informal conversation “over coffee” at the end of the first meeting should also be made possible.

New governors should feel that they could ask for advice or help on any matter from their mentor, the Head or the Chair. They should feel that they are able to participate fully in the work of the governing body within their first year of governorship.

New governor checklist

(Governor please sign once actioned)

Have you:

- Had a DBS check
- Been welcomed to the Governing Body by the Chair
- Been invited by the Headteacher to visit the school
- Toured the school and met staff and children
- Received an informal briefing on the school from the Head
- Met informally with an existing governor (who will act as mentor)

Have you been given access to:

- Current school policies
- School prospectus
- List of the staff and their responsibilities
- Plan of the School

- List of the governors and their responsibilities
- Committees and their terms of reference
- Minutes of the two most recent governors' meetings
- Dates and details of future meetings
- School Strategic Plan or RAP
- Ofsted report
- Code of Practice
- Governor Handbook
- Governor training: Support and development programme
- DfES "Guide to the Law for Governors"
- Governor area of school website

Name: _____

(Please print name)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please retain original signed copy for your own records and forward a copy to the
Chair of Governors within 3 months of appointment