

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 is phenomenally well equipped for the next stage of their academic lives and beyond.

As governors, we will abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individual board members, 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.
3. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring checks.
5. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
7. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
9. 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.
10. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
11. We will fulfil our responsibilities to school staff, ensuring a safe working environment, support for their wellbeing, and acting fairly and without bias.
12. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.

13. We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).

14. We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act 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, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to 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 respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities and other schools.

3. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.

4. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.

5. 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 body 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 as a governor; 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 body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school 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.

Induction and Mentoring

Please see appendix 3 "Induction Policy" for details of induction and mentoring arrangements for new governors.

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:		SLT Link	
100 Day Priority		100 Day Target	
Purpose of visit:			
Date of Visit			
Lessons to be observed: Staff to be met: Paperwork/other material to be looked at:			
Summary of Visit			

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Progress and impact seen or cited by staff and children

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Conclusions:

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Safeguarding notes

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Follow up from visit

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How does this link to school self-evaluation and SMSC Development?

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Are there any areas to be considered for inclusion on the next 100 Day?

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Feedback to GB

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New Governors' Induction Policy

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. A list of the staff and their responsibilities
4. Plan of the School
5. List of the governors (including contact details) and their responsibilities
6. The committees and their terms of reference
7. Minutes of the two most recent governors' meetings (which will include the Head's report to Governors)
8. Dates and details of future meetings
9. The 100 day plan
10. The Ofsted report
11. Code of Practice (includes school visits guidance and blank visit forms)
12. Monitoring and evaluation policy
13. Governor Handbook
14. Governor Training: Support and Development programme
15. 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
- The current 100 Day Plan
- 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