

GOVERNING BOARD STANDING ORDERS FOR MAINTAINED SCHOOL

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STANDING ORDERS 2020-21

Parrett and Axe CEVA Primary School

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Introduction

This model set of standing orders for the governing board covers the principal areas of law and good practice and is intended to guide governors in determining the conduct of their business. Legal requirements are shown in the body text in **bold type**. Governing boards should also adopt a Code of Conduct, a brief statement of the types of behaviour expected of members of the board. (*A model Code of Conduct is available on the governor services website*). We would recommend that you ask governors to sign a copy of this annually as their agreement to comply with the code.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

This is an interpretation of Lord Nolan's seven principles, adapted for school governing boards.

As a public body responsible for the well-being of the school and accountable to the parents and the local community (and the diocese or foundation, where this applies), the governing board accepts the following principles as individual governors and corporately as a board.

	<i>The interpretation for governing boards</i>
Principle 1 Selflessness	The governing board takes decisions solely in the interest of the school and its continued development and improvement.
Principle 2 Integrity	The governing board does not place itself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties. Individual governors should not act or take decisions for their own personal gain. They must declare any interests and relationships.
Principle 3 Objectivity	In making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending staff for rewards and benefits, the governing board makes choices impartially, fairly and on merit.
Principle 4 Accountability	The governing board is accountable for its decisions to the public and particularly the school's parents, and accepts it must and will submit itself to appropriate scrutiny, including through inspection and financial audit
Principle 5 Openness	Whenever possible and practicable, we are open with our actions and decisions and the reasons underpinning them.
Principle 6 Honesty	Individual governors accept each has a duty to declare any private interests relating to duties as governor, and to resolve any conflict in a way that protects the public interest.
Principle 7 Leadership	The governing board promotes and supports these principles by leadership and example.

Governing board roles and relationships

The governing board and Headteacher work in close partnership. The Headteacher is the operational manager of the school, the governing board should have a strong focus on three core strategic 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 effective and efficient performance management of staff**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.**

The school development plan will generally provide the main mechanism for the strategic planning process. The governing board will monitor and evaluate progress and review the strategy for the school and in doing so will consider advice given by the Headteacher and the Self Evaluation Partner or external advisor.

The governing board will delegate sufficient powers to the Headteacher to allow him or her to perform the management duties of the post effectively and the Headteacher will report regularly to the board.

The composition of the governing board

The composition of the governing board is specified in the Instrument of Government.

The governing board will review its composition annually and will take into consideration such matters as the efficiency and effectiveness of the number of current governors and the ease or difficulty of recruitment. A skills audit should be carried out regularly to help with recruiting governors with the skills needed.

Where a change of Instrument is clearly desirable, this matter will be considered and any decision to change the instrument made as an agenda item at a meeting of the full governing board.

The election/appointment, induction and responsibilities of governors, officers of the governing board and the clerk

The election and appointment of governors

The clerk should ensure that the governing board is aware of forthcoming governor vacancies at least three months before those vacancies are due.

Parent governors are elected using the procedures and paperwork developed by and available from Dorset Governor Services. A copy of this is available on the Governor Services pages within Dorset Nexus. **Parent governor positions must be filled by carrying out an election, although an appointment to this category can be made by the governing body immediately following an unsuccessful election.**

Staff governors are also elected, again using the relevant Dorset procedure found on Dorset Nexus. Boards can only have one staff governor position on their instrument but can decide to appoint members of staff as a co-opted governor, although you should ensure that staff do not take up more than one third of the total number. The staff governor position is open to all staff and should it go to a ballot, if more people apply than positions available, then all staff are entitled to vote.

Local Authority governors are nominated by the Local Authority, by working with the governing board to advertise the position and determine what skills are currently needed. All applicants must complete an application form and the chair of governors must complete a meeting slip (showing whether the board are in support of each applicant, and a conversation has taken place around role and responsibilities). The LA will then make a nomination to the governing board.

The governing board will then make the appointment at a quorate full governing board meeting, ensuring that their eligibility criteria previously set has been met.

Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board using the process already decided upon on. The person to be appointed should have the skills, in the opinion of the board, required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

Foundation governors are appointed by the school's founding body, church or other organisation named in the instrument of government. In church schools the local Parochial Church Council will nominate applicants and the appointment will be approved by the diocese.

Partnership governors (in Foundation schools only) are nominated by parents of pupils on the school roll and by other members of the community served by the school. The governing board must ask parents and suitable others to provide nominations and will appoint partnership governors from among those nominated. Partnership governors may not be; pupils at the school, parents of pupils at the school, staff eligible to be staff governors, elected members of the LA or those employed by the LA in connection with educational functions.

Associate members may be appointed to the governing board in addition to the complement of governors. Associate members are **not** governors and do not count towards a quorum. They are appointed to contribute specific areas of expertise or advice. They may sit on committees and the governing board may bestow voting rights. They may attend FGB meetings but cannot be given voting rights at these meetings. Their term of appointment will be individual to each associate member and can be set between one and four years. This all must be decided upon and recorded on appointment.

The induction of new governors

The governing board have agreed a policy for the induction of new governors.

Information and support provided will be:

- Information about the governing body
- Which of this will be provided by the clerk
- Support from the chair
- Support from the headteacher
- Allocation of a mentor governor
- Expectation that new governors will attend training and make the most of the resources and guidance available to them
- The governing body's decision on entitlement to expenses
- Advice on what support may be provided by the new governor's employer
- Support for the new governor's first meeting

Appointment, induction and duties of the clerk to the governing body

The governing body must appoint a clerk to the governing board. The clerk must not be a governor, an associate member or the headteacher of the school.

The governing body may remove the clerk to the governing board from office.

Appointment

When a new clerk is to be appointed, the governing body should consider the model clerks' job description available from Human Resources, County Hall.

Induction

Once the new clerk has been appointed the chair of governors and headteacher will take the lead in implementing the induction programme agreed by the governing board.

The key elements of the induction programme include:

- Helping the new clerk to locate essential documentation, support and information – if the board buys the Dorset Governor Services SLA signpost here
- Job description: clarifying pay, hours and conditions of service
- Agreeing line management relationships (this is the chair's responsibility)
- Agreeing an annual appraisal for the clerk – this should be carried out by the chair
- Support for the clerk's professional development, including attendance at clerks' termly briefings and courses provided by Dorset Governor Services. Consider covering expenses to enable the clerk to attend these courses

Duties

The clerk shall:

- **Convene meetings of the governing board**
- **Attend meetings and produce minutes**
- **Maintain a register of members of the board, including associate members**
- **Maintain a register of governors' attendance at meetings and report on non-attendance to the governing body**
- **Give and receive notices concerning governor appointments, resignation and disqualification**
- **Advise and guide the board on legal and procedural matters**
- **Perform such other functions suitable to the post as may be determined by the governing body.**

The appointment of elected officers of the governing board: the chair and vice chair of governors and committee chairs

The governing board determines and agrees its own procedure for the election of the chair and vice chair of governors. Normally the election is held at the first meeting of the autumn term. Sometimes a mid-year election may be necessary, for example where an office holder chooses to resign in mid-term. If the chair resigns the vice-chair will step up as acting-chair until a successor can be appointed at the next meeting of the full governing body.

The legislative requirements are that:

- **Every governing board must elect a chair and vice chair**
- **The chair and vice chair must be members of the governing board and must be governors – associate members can not be elected to either position**
- **Prior to the election the governing board must determine the date on which the term of office of chair and vice-chair will end**
- **The election must be at a full meeting of the governing board**
- **Governors who are paid to work at the school cannot be chair or vice chair of the FGB**
- **The chair or vice chair shall cease to hold office when: s/he leaves the governing board, is paid to work at the school or is removed from office by the governing board**

The process –

In agreeing or reviewing its procedure for the election of chair and vice chair, the governing board will consider the following options:

- The length of the term of office. A common choice is one year although the chair and vice chair can serve longer – they can be re-appointed each year, but the NGA recommend that no chair serve longer than six years.
- Should governors be permitted to nominate themselves for office, or must the nomination come from another person?
- How will nominations be sought? For example, should nominations be sent in advance to the clerk – if so, how far in advance, and should the clerk write to governors inviting nominations? Or will nominations be acceptable during the meeting at which the election will take place. If so, should the clerk ask for nominations at the meeting?
- Should nominations be supported by a proposer and seconder?
- If there is only one nominee for each position, should that person be automatically elected, or should there be a ballot to ensure the majority on the governing body supports the nominations?
- How will votes be indicated – by show of hands or (preferably) paper ballot?
- Can candidates vote for themselves?
- Can absent governors be allowed a proxy or postal vote?
- A suggested process can be found on the governor services website

Other considerations

- The agenda for the governing board meeting at which the chair and vice chair elections will take place should list the election as the first item, and give details of any nominations received in advance
- The clerk will chair the part of the meeting dealing with the election of the chair
- The governing board should ask prospective chairs and vice chairs to leave the room while the ballot takes place and the outcome is discussed

- Once the chair is elected s/he conducts the election of the vice chair, using the same procedures adopted for the election of the chair

The appointment of committee chairs and vice-chairs

There is a legal requirement that each committee should have a chair. The law does not actually require a vice chair, though it is good practice to elect or appoint one if that is the committee's or governing board's wish.

The governing board will decide either to appoint committee chairs and vice chairs or to delegate that decision to the committees themselves.

An associate member may be elected or appointed chair of a committee. There is no set process for the election of committee chairs (and vice chairs if wanted) but it is probably a good idea to follow the same procedure as agreed for the chair and vice chair of the full governing body.

Removal of chair and vice chair from office

In certain circumstances, the governing body may, by resolution, remove the chair or vice chair from office. Where removal is being considered the governor proposing removal should attempt informal resolution by discussion with the chair or vice chair.

If a decision to propose removal is made this must be a specified item of business on the agenda of a full governing body meeting. Before the governing body resolves to remove the chair or vice chair the governor proposing the removal shall (at the meeting) state reasons for doing so and the chair or vice chair shall be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting.

At the meeting, following the withdrawal of the chair or vice chair, the governing board will discuss the proposition to remove and will vote by paper ballot. In the event of a tied vote the person chairing the meeting will have the casting vote.

Individual governors' roles and responsibilities

The governing body will appoint named governors to manage the Headteacher's performance management.

The governing board may also appoint named governors (often called link governors) for specific areas such as safeguarding, SEND, English, Maths, EYFS etc.

The governing board will review these positions at the first full governing body meeting of the school year and fill any vacancies.

Where appropriate, the governing body should adopt the governor job descriptions from the governor services website.

Expenses and pecuniary interests

Governors' expenses

The governing board must agree a policy on the payment of governors' expenses from the school's delegated budget, recognising that there is no statutory obligation on a board to pay expenses though the DfE recommends that it should.

In considering whether to make payment of expenses the governing board should consider such factors as equal opportunities and the recruitment and retention of governors as well as the cost implications of paying governors' expenses.

If the decision is that expenses will be paid the governing body's expenses policy must be in line with legislation and detail the areas in which expenses can be claimed, the rate of payment and how individual governors' claims are submitted and processed. (*A model policy is available from governor services*).

Pecuniary and business interests

The governing board must maintain a register of governors' pecuniary and business interests

- The register is maintained by the clerk to the governing board and is kept confidentially in the school
- New governors will be asked on appointment to complete a form detailing pecuniary and business interests
- Existing governors will be reminded at least annually (at the first full governing board meeting of the autumn term) to sign a new form (or sign and re-date the existing form), even if there is no change in their circumstances, to show that the information is current
- Individual governors whose circumstances change in respect of pecuniary and business interest during the year should take the initiative in completing a new form
- Declaration of Business Interests must be a standing item on every agenda: FGB and all committees.

A governor with a pecuniary or business interest will withdraw from the meeting during the discussion of that item if the governor, or a close relative (as defined) stands to gain financially from the decision, has a personal interest in the matter under discussion, or is related to a parent, pupil or employee under discussion. The school must publish information for governor Business Interest forms on the school website.

Declaration of Business Interests should be at the top of the agenda for every meeting (full governors and committees) to prompt governors to declare their interest and withdraw. The clerk should minute that this matter was raised and the response from those present.

Where a governor has a personal, pecuniary or business interest in an item under discussion at a meeting, the clerk will draw this to that governor's attention if the governor has not already personally identified an interest at the start of the meeting.

Meetings of the governing board

The governing board conforms to the legal requirement to meet three times each academic year.

Meetings of the governing board are convened by the clerk.

The clerk will give written notice of the meeting, a copy of the agenda and any reports or other papers to each governor, the Headteacher and associate members at least seven clear days in advance of the meeting, except in cases of emergency where the chair considers a meeting is needed to decide on a matter requiring urgent consideration, when this period may be shortened.

Any three members of the governing board may request a meeting by giving written notice to the clerk that includes a summary of the business to be transacted. The clerk must convene the meetings as quickly as is reasonably practicable.

Full notice is required of any meeting at which consideration is to be given to the removal of chair or vice chair, the suspension of any governor, or a decision to serve notice of discontinuance of the school.

The governing board expects all governors to make every effort to attend and contribute to all meetings of the full governing body and the meetings of the committees of which they are members.

The governing board will agree the annual number of its meetings and how many times it will meet in each term.

At the first meeting in the autumn term the governing board agrees the times and dates for full meetings of the governing board for the rest of the academic year and agree that if the business has not been completed in this time that the governors present may decide to continue the meeting to deal with the agenda items or discontinue and re-schedule.

The times and dates of meetings of committees are decided by the governing body or the individual committee for the full year, taking account of governing board meeting dates.

The day and time of meetings are reviewed annually taking into account availability of most governors, and work-life balance for staff governors and the Headteacher.

Voting

The quorum for a meeting of the governing board and for any vote on any matter shall be one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the actual membership of the Governing Board, excluding vacancies. (For example, if your governing body has sixteen places but only thirteen are filled, the quorum is half of thirteen rounded up, so seven.)

Every question to be decided at a meeting of the governing board shall be determined by a majority vote of the governors present and voting on the question.

Where there is a tied vote the chair, or the person acting as chair (provided s/he is a governor), shall have a casting vote (associate members acting as chair do not have a casting vote).

- Normally decisions will be agreed by the chair seeking a consensus view at the end of a discussion
- Where the chair or another governor (with the support of the governing board) considers it appropriate to take a formal vote, the governing body shall determine whether this will be by show of hands or ballot
- A secret ballot will be organised where this is agreed by the governing board
- All formal resolutions put to a vote require a proposer and seconder and will be decided by a simple majority vote, with the chair having a casting vote
- The clerk will record the voting figures, including abstentions
- Information on how individual governors voted is confidential to the meeting and should not be published

Drawing up agendas

For full meetings of the governing board the agenda will be considered between the chair of governors, the Headteacher and the clerk at least three weeks before the meeting. At the agenda meeting priorities will be discussed and the agenda agreed. *(The board should have a year planner to help with this).*

Governors may request for items to be placed on the agenda for governing body meetings by contacting the clerk or the chair. These requests will be considered at the agenda setting meeting.

The chair makes the final decision on agenda items, placing priority items near the top of the list. The chair should not use this power to forbid discussion of matters put forward by governors.

The agenda of every meeting of the governing body should include an item concerned with school development, often supported by a written report by the Headteacher, his or her staff nominee or the school development group.

Each agenda item will include a brief description to help governors to prepare properly for that part of the meeting and any papers needed for that item will be identified.

The agenda and any supporting papers (and, if not previously distributed, the approved draft minutes of the last full meeting of the Governing Body and the minutes of committee meetings) will be sent to all governors to arrive at least seven days before the meeting in question.

Only governors who have received minutes may vote on whether the minutes may be accepted.

The same processes are used in drawing up committee agendas. The committee clerk, committee chair and Headteacher will be involved in this case.

The governing body will decide whether to include Any Other Business on the agenda for full governing body and committee meetings. It is good practice not to do so. However, if the item is included the governing board should decide how individuals can raise such additional matters. A suggestion would be for the board to decide whether such additional items can be dealt with at the meeting, referred to one of the committees, deferred to a later meeting or should not be included on any agenda.

Minutes

The clerk (or person appointed to act as clerk) will ensure that minutes of the proceedings of a meeting are drawn up and signed (subject to the approval of the governing board) by the chair at the next meeting.

The governing board must, as soon as reasonably practicable, make available for inspection by any interested person a copy of:

- **The agenda for every meeting**
- **The signed minutes of every such meeting**
- **Any reports or papers considered at any such meeting**

The governing body can exclude any material relating to:

- **A named person who works, or it is proposed should work, at the school**
- **A named pupil at, or candidate for admission to, the school**
- **Any other matter that, by reason of its nature, the governing body is satisfied should remain confidential, having in mind the requirements of freedom of information legislation**

The minutes will be drawn up by the clerk and kept as a permanent record in a format to be agreed by the governing board.

Draft minutes should be checked for accuracy by the chair and headteacher within ten days of the meeting. The clerk will send these approved draft minutes to all members of the governing board as soon as they are available.

On approval by the governing board at the next relevant meeting, the chair will initial and date each page and sign the copy to approve the minutes. Other significant documents coming to the governing body for adoption or approval will be signed and dated by the chair on approval by the governing body, with an initial on each page of the document.

A copy of the approved minutes will be sent to governor services as soon as practicable by email, and a set must be available for inspection by parents and members of the public at the school. Consider posting the minutes on the school website. The minutes of confidential items will only be available to the governors attending the meeting at which they were discussed (see Confidentiality below).

Attendance and apologies for absence

The governing board expects all governors to make every effort to attend full governing board meetings and meetings of the committees of which they are members.

The Headteacher, whether or not a governor, is entitled to attend all meetings of the governing board but will be asked to withdraw from meetings during discussion and decisions on the head's pay or in any other matter where a conflict of interest could arise.

If the Headteacher cannot be present at a FGB meeting the deputy head or other nominated member of staff may be invited to attend but will not have a vote.

The clerk records the names of all those present at the meeting, including his or her own name and the names of associate members plus any visitors and observers.

The minutes will record the late arrival or early departure of governors or associate members.

A governor who is not able to attend a meeting should give apologies, explaining the absence. The governing body will decide at the meeting whether to accept the apologies and this should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, following a vote if necessary. Where a governor fails to attend a meeting and does not give apologies beforehand, the absence is noted in the minutes.

Governors are disqualified from serving if they miss meetings for six months consecutively, starting from the first meeting missed.

- Any governor or associate member who fails to attend a meeting of the full governing board for six months from the first meeting missed will be automatically disqualified unless the board has accepted apologies, in which case the six month period starts again from the first meeting at which apologies are not sent or are not accepted. The clerk will inform the governor or associate member of the disqualification rule before the end of the six month period.
- Where a governor or associate member is missing meetings, the chair of governors will arrange to meet the person to discuss any difficulties and provide support well in advance of possible disqualification.

Correspondence

The clerk will produce a list of incoming and outgoing governors' correspondence as part of a written report for each full governing board meeting and will maintain a file of correspondence in the school available to all governors. The clerk should ensure that it is appropriate for any item to be shared before doing so.

The chair, headteacher and clerk will agree which items of incoming correspondence will be presented for discussion at full governing board meetings. This must not, however, include letters of complaint sent to the clerk. Letters of complaint will be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure.

The governing board will determine who should write letters, policy papers or discussion documents and other materials on its behalf. No governor should write such a letter or policy paper or make a public statement without the authority of the governing board.

Confidentiality

Although minutes of governing board and committee meetings are public documents, the discussions within the meeting are confidential. All members of the governing board must respect the general confidentiality of the detailed discussions that take place in meetings.

The governing board may keep certain parts of its discussions confidential and omit details from the public minutes. A matter is confidential if so declared by the chair of governors or committee chair at a meeting with the agreement of members present and having regard for the requirements of freedom of information legislation. Generally this is done to protect the identity of persons under discussion including a parent, pupil, member of staff or governor. These items should be minuted separately as a confidential minute.

The governing board will determine the circulation of confidential minutes arising from governing body and committee meetings. Confidential minutes will be available to all persons present at the meeting at which the matter was discussed and, at the discretion of the governing board, to other governors who need to have this information in order to form future judgements and decisions. Confidential minutes will not be available for circulation to parents or members of the public except where disclosure is required under freedom of information legislation.

The minutes of confidential items will be printed on coloured paper for ease of identification. The clerk will ensure they are kept in a secure place in the school once approved. All other copies should be destroyed. Extreme care should be taken when emailing confidential minutes and should be avoided wherever possible.

A confidential matter is not to be discussed by any governor outside the meeting, including with fellow governors. Individual governors will be asked to account for any breaches in confidentiality and the governing board may vote to suspend or remove a governor who has breached confidentiality.

Rights of persons to attend meetings

In addition to governors, those who may attend a governing board meeting are:

- **The Headteacher of the school (whether or not a governor)**
- **The clerk to the governing board**
- **An associate member – although the governing board may exclude an associate member from any part of its meeting which s/he is otherwise entitled to attend when the business under consideration concerns an individual member of staff or pupil**
- Anyone else by invitation of the governing board. (*Governing bodies may agree that some or all of their meetings will be open to the public, including staff and parents – except that members of the public must withdraw when confidential matters are under discussion.*)
- The governing body may invite observers to its meetings and this could include the deputy Headteacher and other staff members.

Non-governors are not entitled to speak at meetings unless invited to do so by the chair and they cannot vote. The governing board may ask visitors to leave a meeting at any time.

Conflicts of interest

Where there is a conflict between the interests of any person and the interests of the governing board that person should withdraw from any meeting of the governing board or its committees and should not vote. In a situation where the principles of natural justice require a fair hearing and there is any reasonable doubt as to a person's ability to act impartially he or she should also withdraw from the meeting and not vote.

If there is any dispute as to whether a person must withdraw from a meeting the other governors present at the meeting must decide on this.

Examples of cases where a fair hearing must be given include decisions relating to staff or pupil discipline or admission of pupils. The restrictions on persons taking part in proceedings do not stop a governing board or committee from allowing someone who can offer relevant evidence to a case in question from giving that evidence.

Action following meetings and urgent actions

The governing board will authorise the chair or clerk to ensure that action agreed at meetings is followed up by the named person within the agreed timescale.

The chair, clerk and Headteacher will monitor progress of actions when planning the next full meeting of the governing board

Where urgent action is needed, the chair (or vice chair where the chair is unable to exercise this responsibility) has power to exercise any function of the governing board where delay would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school or to any pupil, parent or staff member. (In this context 'delay' means delay for a period longer than the earliest date on which it would be reasonably practicable for a meeting to be held of the governing board or of a committee to which the function in question has been delegated).

The chair will use these powers only when absolutely unavoidable and will report any urgent action taken at the next full meeting of the governing board, usually in writing as part of a chair's report to governors.

Extraordinary meetings

Any three members of the governing body may requisition a meeting by giving written notice to the clerk that summarises the business to be conducted. The clerk must convene a meeting as soon as is

practicable. At least seven days before the meeting the clerk must give each governor, associate member and the Headteacher (if not a governor) written notice of the meeting, a copy of the agenda and any papers to be considered. If the chair considers there are matters that demand urgent consideration, s/he can determine a shorter period of notice, but that period must be at least seven days if matters to be discussed include the removal of the chair, the suspension of any governor, changing the school's name or if a proposal to close the school is to be considered.

As a matter of courtesy the chair should be informed when any three governors plan to request an extraordinary meeting. Governors considering requesting an extraordinary meeting will be expected to have given consideration to the implications for governors' time and to have weighed up other options, such as an agenda item at the next full meeting of the governing board.

Committees and Working Parties

Committees

It is usual for the governing board to delegate decision-making powers for some matters to its committees. Committees operate in a broadly similar manner to the governing board; they must have a chair, they may have a vice chair (although this is not a legal requirement), there has to be a clerk (this must not be a member of this committee), meetings must include an agenda and papers (distributed with due notice), minutes must be approved and published, unless confidential.

- **The governing board must determine membership and proceedings of any committee it decides to establish**
- **The governing board must review annually the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any committee**
- **The quorum for a meeting of a committee is three governors who are members of the committee**
- **Each committee must have a chair, who is either appointed by the governing board or elected by the committee, as determined by the governing board**
- **The governing board may remove the chair of a committee at any time**
- **The governing board shall appoint, and may remove, a clerk to each committee. This must not be the Headteacher. The clerk shall convene and attend meetings and ensure that minutes are drawn up**
- **The membership of any committee may include associate members, provided that a majority on the committee are governors**
- **No vote shall be taken at a committee meeting unless the majority of members of the committee present are governors**
- **Associate members may have voting rights on committees if these are granted by the governing board**

Working Parties

Working parties exist to consider short-term projects and initiatives. They are established, and their membership is set, by the governing board. Working parties do not have delegated powers and can make no decisions on behalf of the governing board, to whom they should report regularly.

Other procedures

Governors' visits to school

Governors' visits are an opportunity for governors to collect information on the impact of policies and plans, to meet staff and to understand better how the school operates. While there may be an element of monitoring in a visit, governors must not monitor the quality of teaching- this is the Headteacher's responsibility. Visits will usually focus on any special responsibilities held by governors or priorities in the school development plan.

The governing board should adopt a visits policy developed in collaboration with staff - a model policy is available from governor services. The policy will lay out clear protocols for the preparation for meetings, the visit itself and post-meeting action. Every governor should visit the school at least once a year, but usually once a term, and the governing board may agree an upper limit on the number of visits per governor to avoid infringing on the time and other commitments of teaching staff. The timing and date of visits should be agreed well in advance with the Headteacher.

Feedback on each visit should be presented to the governing board, the visited teacher being invited to contribute. The process of this should be decided by the board in advance.

A log of governors' visits should be kept by the clerk or a designated governor, including the dates and purposes of visits and the teachers and classes visited.

Complaints from parents and carers

The school must have a Complaints policy and any complaints received must be dealt with in line with this. This is likely to mean that the subject teacher or tutor will be invited first to deal with the complaint, or the Headteacher may deal with all complaints in the first instance. *(Dorset Council has a complaints policy which schools are encouraged to adopt. There are separate arrangements for dealing with complaints on admissions, the curriculum, exclusions and SEN.)*

In no circumstance should any governor attempt to become involved in the resolution of a parent's complaint except by advising how the process works.

It is important that governors are not involved unless they are called on to perform.

Ofsted has the power to investigate parental complaints on whole school issues (not about individual pupils) including complaints that:

- The school is not providing a good education
- The pupils' needs are not being met
- The school is not well managed
- Pupils' wellbeing is neglected

Generally, Ofsted will become involved only where the local complaints procedure has been exhausted and can, in extreme cases, organise an immediate inspection.

The suspension of governors and removal from office

The governing body may suspend a governor from its meetings for a fixed period of up to six months.

The grounds for suspension are if the governor:

- **works at the school and is subject to disciplinary proceedings**
- **is subject to court or tribunal proceedings, the outcome of which could mean that s/he is disqualified from holding office as a governor**
- **has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the school's ethos or religious character and has brought, or could bring, the school or the governing body into disrepute**
- **is in breach of the duty of confidentiality to the school the staff and the pupils**

A governing board can vote to suspend a governor on any of these grounds but does not have to. Suspension on points 3 and 4 should be used only as a last resort after other efforts to seek resolution have been used.

Any motion to suspend must be specified as an agenda item at a meeting of which at least seven days' notice has been given. Before the governing board votes to suspend a governor, the governor proposing suspension must give the reasons for doing so and the governor proposed for suspension must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting so that the vote can take place. If it is decided that suspension will be invoked, a second vote takes place to determine the period of suspension. All voting is by secret ballot.

A governor who has been suspended must be given notice of any meetings and must be sent agendas, reports and papers for meetings missed during suspension and shall not be disqualified from continuing to hold office for failure to attend meetings for six months.

The reasons for proposed removal must be made known to the governor who will have an opportunity to make a defence. A vote by secret ballot will be taken on a resolution to remove.

The local authority may remove an authority governor and the diocese a foundation governor.

Any governor will automatically be removed from the governing board if disqualified by reason of unauthorised absence from governing board meetings for more than six months or if s/he is subject to any other legal grounds for disqualification.

Communication matters

1. 'Communication' refers here to communication to the governing body from the LA and the DFE, among others, and communication from the governors to these bodies. The governing body needs to agree the route for these communications, which is normally through the clerk to governors.
2. All governors should complete a form with their contact details. These will be stored by the clerk. This information will be published on the school website, on the DfE website Get Information About Schools and added to the LA's online register of governor information Dorset Nexus.
3. The governing board should make decisions on the extent to which email will be used for sending out agendas, papers and minutes. Votes can not be made by email. While chairs may use email circulation to inform members of the governing body or to discern opinion no decisions may be made through this means.
4. The governing body can decide that members can be present at board and committee meetings "virtually", for example by phone or video conference, and therefore to participate in discussion and decision making remotely.

Safeguarding Pupils

All governors on first appointment will be required to undergo checks to determine suitability to have access to children and young people in accordance with any legal requirements or policy of the local authority or the governing body. Any governor refusing to take these checks will be disqualified from membership of the governing body.

Code of Conduct

Every governor will be requested to sign the Code of Conduct declaration upon appointment and each subsequent year, usually in the autumn term.

Procedures for adopting, reviewing and changing Standing Orders

- Standing Orders are agreed at a full meeting of the Governing Body
- These Standing Orders were drawn up to clarify our procedures and agreed at a meeting of the Governing Body on _____ (date)
- They will be used in conjunction with DFE regulations and guidance and our own Instrument of Government
- The Standing Orders will be reviewed annually
- Every governor will be provided with a current copy of these Standing Orders

Signed by Chair of Governors: