

St Mark's CofE Primary School

Standing Orders

STANDING ORDERS

The Governance Handbook, and the Statutory Instrument 'The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013' which regulates and directs how all schools are governed, now refers to all Governing 'Bodies' and 'Boards' as 'Boards' with 'FGB' referring to 'Full Governing Boards'. Other Government and County documents have reference to Boards and Bodies, whilst referring to the same governing body. Accordingly all references to 'Governing Boards' refers equally to 'Governing Bodies', and the word 'Board' and 'Body' are interchangeable.

The Standing Instructions are based on the requirements as laid down in the Governance Handbook, the contents of which are governed by the Statutory Instruments created under various Education Acts. In the event of ambiguity, the law as laid down in the Education Acts and the accompanying Statutory Instruments takes precedence over these Standing Orders. These Standing Instructions are based on the Governors Good Practice Guide produced by Hampshire County Council, the contents of which will apply if not covered or amended in the following paragraphs.

1. Membership

- The governing body will ensure it has sufficient governors to undertake its duties effectively. The statutory requirement is for a minimum of 50% of governors in post to form a quorum, provided that it maintains the minimum quorum for a full governing board meeting of not less than 4 (which must include a majority of Foundation governors).
- All governors will be appointed for a 4 year term of office.
- The governing body will ensure that it creates an environment which enables it to recruit and retain effective governors and which encourages the participation of all groups and sections of the community.
- The governing body will be proactive in recruiting governors whose appointment is their responsibility (Staff/Parent/Co-Opted/LA).
- The governing body will seek to recruit those people with the relevant skills and experience needed to strengthen the board whilst looking to maintain strong stakeholder representation from the local community.

2. Election of chair and vice-chair

Any changes to the governing board's arrangements for elections in these standing orders will be made in advance of any election.

- The chair and vice chair will be elected for one year and their term of office will end on the day before the first full governing board meeting of the academic year. (This meeting is normally held in September).

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- Candidates should self-nominate and do so in time to have their name included on the agenda for the meeting at which the election of officers will take place (i.e no later than 7 days before the date of the meeting).. Self-nomination at the meeting will only be accepted if no one has put themselves forward on the agenda.
- If they wish to, candidates will be able to make a personal statement to the meeting before the vote.
- The clerk will conduct the election (if required) of the chair. The Chair will conduct other elections.
- In the event of a tied vote for the Chair, the Co-opted Governors present at the meeting will decide on the winner by separate vote of the Co-opted Governors only, with the Chair of the FGB having a casting vote in the event of a further tied vote.
- In the event of a tied vote for other elections, the Chair has the casting vote.
- Where an election is contested voting will be by secret ballot of those present at the meeting where the vote is taking place. (A vote is not required if there is only one candidate for a post, the candidate being automatically elected to the post.)
- In the absence of any nomination for Vice Chair prior to or at the first full governing board meeting of the academic year, the Chair may appoint one or more governors to undertake the role of the Vice Chair.

3. Appointment of the clerk to the governing body

- The clerk will have a contract of employment that includes specific provisions in relation to their work as clerk. This will show hours, rate of pay, method of payment, overtime pay and period of notice.
- The governing body will arrange for the clerk to discuss their role with the chair of governors on an annual basis.
- The governing body will support the clerk in their continuing professional development, by enabling them to participate in the clerks' accreditation programme, the clerks' development programme, support meetings and inviting them to attend whole governing body training.

4. Meetings

- An annual calendar of dates for main and committee meetings will be set and published early in each academic year
- The governing body will plan its business across the year to take account of the school's internal management cycle and the ready availability of information and reports.

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- The governing body will hold the minimum number of meetings necessary to ensure the strategic business of the school is properly addressed. A statutory minimum of 3 meetings per year is required, however, it is expected that a meeting of the Full Governing Body will be held each half term making 6 meetings per annum.
- Meetings will focus the work of the governing board on its three core functions and provide evidence that it is monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes across the school, to ensure that the school improvement plan is successfully implemented, as well as meeting its statutory responsibilities.
- Governors will circulate and receive relevant information sufficiently in advance of meetings to enable informed discussion to take place and sound decisions to be made. (Agenda and supporting papers will be sent out in accordance with statutory requirements which is normally at least seven days prior to the scheduled date of the relevant Full Governing Body or committee meeting. Where, exceptionally, circumstances dictate that seven days' notice is not possible, agendas and supporting papers will be sent out as early as possible prior to the meeting). Notice of meetings, agendas and supporting papers will be sent by electronic methodology to the last email addresses advised to the clerk.
- Governors will read all relevant information forwarded to them so that they can effectively contribute during the meeting by providing support and appropriate challenge though the questions they ask.
- The submission of apologies should not be taken as the governing body giving consent to the absence with regard to the disqualification regulations for non-attendance, each case will be considered on its own merits.
 - Consent for absence may be granted by the governing body in advance on request from governors who know they will be unable to attend meetings for an extended period.
 - Where a governor's pattern of attendance is causing concern they will be alerted to this by the Clerk or Chair.
- The governing board will aim to complete each full governing board meeting within two hours and committee meetings within 1½ hours. Should the time limit be reached, remaining business may be held over to the following meeting.
- If there is a particular issue which may need considerable discussion and debate, consideration will be given to holding a separate meeting exclusively for this item – at a mutually agreed date and time allowing for adequate notice to be given and papers to be distributed.
- Any additions to the published FGB agenda (any other business section) will only be dealt with if agreed by the body at the beginning of the meeting, and only on an exceptional basis.
- The Chair may bring additional items to the meeting without notice in accordance with legislation and where adequate notice has not been possible.

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5. Governing body organisation

a) Committee structure

- The governing body will operate a permanent committee structure:
 - Resources (including Head Teacher review sub-committee).
- Subject to statutory regulations, the governing body will set up committees such as staff dismissal and appeal, pupil discipline, and admissions committees which will meet as and when required.
- Other committees and working parties will be set up as and when required.
- The governing body is required, on an annual basis to:
 - review the constitution and membership of its committees
 - review the terms of reference of its committees (apart from Pay which has a statutory terms of reference) – this task will be undertaken by the committees at their first meeting of the academic year and brought to the governing board for ratification
 - set the quorum for its committees (to be included in the terms of reference, and always to require attendance of the Head Teacher or their representative, plus at least one Foundation governor). A minimum quorum is three for the Resources committee, and two for the Pay committee, to include a Foundation governor at every meeting.
- Committees will elect their own chair annually, who will not be a member of staff or an associate member.
- Governors with children in the school, and staff governors (with exception of Head teacher), should not be members of the Pay Committee. except in exceptional circumstances to be agreed by the Head teacher and the Chair of Governors.
- Governors with children in the school, and members of staff who are also governors in any category (with the exception of the Head teacher) should not be present at the Resources committee when personnel matters referring to specific members of staff are being discussed.
- The overall effectiveness of the committee structure, and the way it works to support the core functions of the governing board, will be reviewed annually.
- Committee meetings should be arranged, whenever possible, to be held before FGB meetings with sufficient time for draft minutes and supporting papers to be created and circulated at least seven days prior to the date of the FGB meeting.

b) Delegation

- In addition to responsibilities retained at governing body level by regulations, the governing body will not delegate:

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- approval of the school improvement plan
- approval of the first annual budget in each financial year (approval of second or interim revisions is delegated to the Resources Committee as allowed by Statutory regulations)
- approval of key policies

- The Governing Body agrees to delegate rights of dismissal to the Headteacher.

c) General

- The governing body will ensure that there are opportunities for parents to engage with governors so that their views can be considered by the board.

6. School Improvement

The governing body:

- will focus on gaining a shared understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school
- will be actively engaged with school self-evaluation
- will continuously self-evaluate its own performance (*with a formal self-evaluation review undertaken periodically*)
- will be involved in setting the agenda for school improvement and contribute to setting the strategic direction for the school
- will use a variety of internal and external information / data to hold the school to account and, where required, take appropriate action to drive up standards
- will require written information termly from the head teacher covering:
 - pupil achievement and progress
 - an analysis of the school's performance data, including vulnerable groups, with details on how pupil premium has been used and the impact it has had
 - progress regarding the implementation of the school improvement plan
 - budget monitoring and forward financial planning
 - the effectiveness of performance management in the school
 - how it impacts on the quality of teaching and standards
 - the link between pupil outcomes and pay progression
 - strategic staffing issues
 - behaviour and exclusions
 - attendance data
- will receive and make use of external reports from the Local Authority and other agencies, where appropriate

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- will receive and make use of external inspection reports from Diocesan advisers and Section 23 inspections
- understand the requirements of the Ofsted Leadership and Management criteria, especially those relating to governance (refer to the Ofsted section in the A –Z index in Hampshire County Council Website)
- will ensure that the school has in place all relevant statutory policies and meets all other statutory requirements - for further information on these matters see the 'Policies and other statutory requirements HCC guidance' on the Hampshire County Council Governor Services website (under 'P' in the A- Z index)

7. Governor relationships

The governing body and Head Teacher / Senior Management Team will respect each other's roles and maintain a professional and open relationship, acknowledging the skills and contributions of all.

The governing body:

- will use staff and governor time appropriately, sensitively and effectively
- will have regard to the need for the Head Teacher and staff to maintain a reasonable work / life balance in the way it conducts its business
- will have regard to equality of opportunity for both current and future governors in planning the frequency and times of meetings
- believes conflict is best resolved openly through discussion, corporate decision-making and acceptance of the majority view - where this cannot be achieved, suspension of a governor will be used as a last resort, in accordance with current Regulations
- will be welcoming to new governors and ensure they receive appropriate induction and training
- will be represented at all significant school events (e.g. Christmas, Easter, and Summer Term EY, KS1 and KS2 performances, sports day, curriculum evenings, parent/teacher evenings etc) where parents or external visitors are invited.

All governors will each:

- share the workload and take on additional responsibilities as and when required to ensure the Governing Board fulfils its core functions
- take responsibility for at least one specific subject, area, or aspect of the school and provide an annual report on each to the Governing Body.
- undertake a focused school visit at least twice a year (providing a report to the Governing Board. A suggested format is attached in Appendix 4).

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- undertake training relevant to their role, to include attendance at a minimum of one training course per annum, plus the annual whole Governing Body training session, plus attendance at governor briefings when held.
- contribute to discussions, and support the corporate decision-making process, maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality and discretion
- always act in the best interests of the school
- conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the ethos and the religious character of the school, and in accordance with school and statutory policies.
- be mindful of internet security if e-mailing sensitive information and consider if it is appropriate to use a work e-mail address for governor business
- only act within the delegated powers granted to them by the governing board
- work with, and act under direction and guidance of, staff when attending or assisting with school events or undertaking visits whilst undertaking duties in connection with their role as a governor
- be respectful of the view of others and help to foster open and honest debate
- refer anyone with issues or concerns about the school to the school's Complaints Policy

Approved by Full Governing Board 18th September 2025

Next Review September 2026