

# **Governor Induction Handbook**

## **Information for New and Prospective Governors**



**2016-2017**

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## **1. Introduction**

School Governors make a positive contribution by giving up their time and bringing their skills and experience to help the school provide the best possible education for every pupil.

The Department for Education has high expectations of governors and the responsibilities and demands placed upon governors are increasing.

At Redhill Primary School, we believe that it is essential that all new and prospective governors fully understand the role and its statutory duties.

We ensure that all new governors have a full and comprehensive induction before commencing their role and that they are given support from an experienced governor to enable them to fulfil their role effectively and with confidence

## **2. This Handbook**

This handbook is intended to provide part of the induction procedure for new governors through which they will gain a better understanding of their new role and to provide them with essential sources of information. An induction checklist will be completed at the formal induction (Appendix 1) and filed in the central governance record.

It is also a useful document for prospective governors to read and consider before deciding whether to apply for any vacancies within the governing body that may arise.

## **3. What is the Role of the Governing Body?**

Every governing body has three core functions:

### **a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction,**

Governing bodies are the key strategic decision making body of every school. It is their role to set the school's strategic framework and to ensure all statutory duties are met. The governing body should ensure that it has a clear vision. This should include ambitions for current and future pupils as well as the school's relationship with other schools. Every effort should be made to ensure that the school's ethos promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.

**b) Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff**

Effective governing bodies hold their Headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by asking the right questions. It is essential that governing bodies use and are familiar with specific data about their school to help them inform these questions. This may involve asking questions about any underperforming groups of pupils and whether school leaders have credible plans for addressing underperformance or less than expected progress.

**c) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

The third core function of the governing body is to make sure money is well spent. It should do this by ensuring that it has at least one governor with specific, relevant skills and experience of financial matters. All governors however should ideally have a basic understanding of the financial cycle and the legal requirements of the school on accountability and spend. Asking the right questions is equally important in relation to money as it is to educational performance. Questions to ask may include whether resources are allocated in line with the school's strategic priorities and whether the school is making best use of its budget, including in relation to planning and delivery of the curriculum.

**4. The Powers of the Governing Body**

The governing body is recognised in law as a corporate body, which means that it has a legal identity separate from that of its members.

Individual governors have no power or right to act on behalf of the governing body except whether the full governing body has delegated a specific duty to that individual. The governing body can also delegate certain responsibilities to any committees that it has established.

**5. The Governor and Headteacher Relationship**

It is essential that governors have a clear understanding of the role of the Headteacher and that they form a good and effective working relationship that, in turn, facilitates good leadership and management.

The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day running of the school and the governors should not get involved in this.

The governor's role is not to simply rubber-stamp every decision of the Headteacher. The governing body has a right to discuss and question whilst always respecting the professional roles of the Headteacher and staff. The governing body answers for its actions to parents and the wider local community for the performance of the school

## **6. Constitution of the Governing Body**

Governance is most effective with a small core group of members with a balance of skills and experience as this enables every governor to contribute to the work of the governing body. Each governor serves a term of office for 3 years although a governor can resign from their position at any time.

At Redhill Primary School our governing body comprises:

Headteacher	1
Staff Governor	1
Parent Governors	2
Co-opted Governors	3
LA Appointed Governor	1

The performance of a governing body has a real impact upon the success of the school. The governing body at Redhill is resolutely committed to regularly evaluating its performance and ensuring, through the use of a skills audit, that we recruit governors with skills and experience that will enhance the existing make up.

## **7. Meetings**

There is a clear expectation that all governors attend every meeting. Apologies must be sent to the Chair of Governors with a note of the reason for absence which will be recorded within the minutes.

Full Governing Body meetings take place 5 times per year ( 2 in autumn term, 2 in spring term and 1 in summer term). Governors will receive packs containing the agenda and relevant documents 7 days before each meeting through the post from the Local Authority. It is essential that all governors read and fully consider the materials prior to each meeting to ensure that they are in a position to pose effective questions.

Meetings are held at school on a Monday from 4.15pm until around 6pm. Some of the extra-ordinary committees dealing with pay, complaints, appeals and disciplinary issues are often required to meet at short notice and within school hours.

Finance Committee meetings are scheduled to enable matters to be summarised to all members and key decisions and documents ratified at the Full Governing Body meetings.

## **8. Committees**

Some governors are required to sit on committees that meet separately to the Full Governing Body.

### **The Finance Committee**

The Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and 1 other governor are required to sit on the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee advises on:

- The School Budget and Voluntary Funds
- Use of Resources and Best Value
- Staffing
- Premises and Building Maintenance
- Health & Safety

The main functions of the Finance Committee are:

#### Finance

- Budget setting
- Budget monitoring and questioning reasons for significant over or under spends
- Agreeing the end of year surplus or deficit
- Agreeing any expenditure over the Headteacher's authorised limit
- Asset management planning for significant capital expenditure
- Review main contracts and ensure Best Value for all resources
- Review and Audit reports and monitor the implementation of recommendations
- Scrutiny of School Fund Accounts
- Reviewing charging policies
- Gain assurance of school's finance procedures and systems of control
- Ensure requirements of School's Financial Value Standard is achieved

#### Premises

- Ensure that the school premises and grounds are managed effectively and consider any major alterations required

- Ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation/requirements
- Ensure that robust Risk Management procedures are in place and advise the Full Governing Body about any significant issues.

### **The Headteacher's Performance Management**

The Chair and Vice Chair of Governors sit on this committee who, with the support of the Local Authority, carry out the annual performance management review of the Headteacher.

### **Other Committees**

Other committees meeting when required and these comprise:

- Pay reviews
- Appeals
- Complains
- Pupil discipline
- Staff Grievance

### **9. Link/Special Interest Governors**

All governors need to know their school well if accountability is to be robust and their vision for the school is to be achieved. At Redhill therefore, we require all governors to take an interest in a specific area or year group for example, we have governors with areas of special responsibility such as Safeguarding or Special Educational Needs and also governors who are linked to year groups to monitor the progress or the pupils within those cohorts.

Link/special interest governors are encouraged to visit the school to meet with pupils and staff members.

The Link Governor role should be thought of as an ongoing process of visits to keep up to date with changes to the curriculum and legislation, working practices at the school and the monitoring of data and action plans to evaluate the impact that these have had upon the success of the school.

When visiting the school, it is important to remember that governors are not inspectors. It is not the role of a governor to assess the quality of or method of teaching. Both are the role of the Headteacher. If governors wish to spend time in a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so.

After each visit into school, governors are required to complete a report detailing the key aspects of their visit and submit it to the Chair who will ensure that the report is distributed to all governors at each Full Governing Body Meeting as this then enables the full governing body to have that depth of understanding about the whole school.

## **10. Governor Mentor**

As part of your induction process, you will meet with an experienced governor who will then act as your mentor to guide you in your new role. At Redhill, we believe that this coaching model is invaluable in fostering confidence amongst new governors to enable them to fulfil their new role effectively.

Your mentor will support you at meetings, on visits into school (if required) and can advise on training needs.

## **11. Effective Governance**

The core features of effective governance include the governing body having:

- The right people with the necessary skills, time and commitment and sufficient diversity of perspectives to ensure internal challenge, all actively contributing in line with clearly defined roles and responsibilities under an effective chair and an explicit code of conduct, and with active succession planning.
- Clear governance structures with tightly defined remits, particularly in relation to functions delegated to committees
- Clear separation between the strategic and operational in terms of the role of the governing body and the school leaders
- A positive relationship between the governing body and its school leaders enabling robust constructive challenge on the basis of a good understanding of objective data particularly on pupil progress, staff performance and finances
- Robust processes for financial and business planning and oversight and effective controls for compliance, propriety and value for money and
- Processes for regular self-evaluation, review and improvement including skills audits, training and development plans, and independent external reviews as necessary.



## **12. Governor Professional Development**

The governing body at Redhill is committed to ensuring that all governors have relevant and appropriate training to enable each governor to make an effective contribution. We recognise that training is essential in order to ensure that governors have the skills and knowledge that they need. Every governor needs to keep up to date with key education and legislative changes that may affect their school and their role.

The Local Authority provide a wide range of training courses and training is discussed and planned regularly at meetings and a training record and training impact document is maintained by the Chair of Governors to ensure that we have a balance of training and also to monitor the impact of the training upon our effectiveness.

## **13. Getting to know our school**

It is essential that all governors know their school well if accountability is going to be robust and their vision for the school is going to be achieved. Visiting the school, particularly in the day is a very good and helpful way to do this. At Redhill, governors are encouraged to visit the school during the day, to talk to pupils, to go on learning walks, to talk to staff members, to observe lessons, to look at pupil books, to attend special assemblies/celebrations and to become involved in the life of the school.

All governors have a duty to obtain view of all stakeholders (staff, pupils and parents)

## **14. Complaints**

The governing body has a duty to consider complaints about the school and any service it provides.

The school has a complaints procedure (available on the website) for dealing with complaints. Most complaints will be resolved by the class teacher or the Headteacher. If however, a complaint cannot be resolved by the Headteacher then the parent can then put their complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors. The final stage for any complaint would then be for it to be taken to the Complaints Committee.

## **15. Safeguarding**

At Redhill, safeguarding is taken very seriously with a high level of priority.

All governors are now required to hold an enhanced DBS check. All governors are required to read key documents such as “Keeping Children Safe in Education” and the Safeguarding Lead Governor must have relevant Child Protection training.

If during any visit into school any governor has any concerns over a child’s well being then these should be reported to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads who are Claire Lamb (Headteacher), Mandy Ward (Deputy Headteacher) and Denise Rock (SENDCO).

## **16. Inspection**

Schools are inspected by Ofsted.

As part of every inspection, the quality and effectiveness of governance is a central part of the overall judgement on the leadership and management of the school. Ofsted has published the criteria that inspectors will use to judge the effectiveness of a school’s governance (The School Inspection Handbook September 2015)

The Chair of Governors and one or two others will be required to attend a meeting with the Ofsted Inspector during any inspection. As strategic leaders of the school, governors will be part of the inspection process. The criteria include a strong focus on how governing bodies use data to challenge and hold the Headteacher to account and how they evaluate their own impact and develop their own skills.

## **17. Register of Business Interests**

The governing body and staff have a responsibility to avoid any conflict of interest arising between their business and personal interests and affairs and the interests of the school. All governors must complete the Register of Business Interests form at meetings and this will be available on the website. The register must be updated at least annually.

## **18. Helpful Hints for New Governors**

- Don’t be afraid to ask questions
- Be prepared! Make sure you have read all paperwork prior to meetings and if there is anything you are unsure about, seek clarification from your mentor prior to the meeting.
- Make sure you are familiar with key documents such as the Raising Attainment Plan and familiarise yourself with the school website and the key policies
- Get to know the school and the staff

- During meetings, you can express your views on matters within the agenda. Any personal concerns should be raised outside of the meetings.
- It may be useful for you to shadow your mentor or another experienced governor during school visits initially to gain insight into the workings of the governing body
- Read external documents such as the DfE Governance Handbook

## **19. Additional Governor Involvement**

At Redhill, we also encourage our governors to become involved in the life of the school through participation in activities outside of their core functions such as

- Attendance at school concerts/performances
- Attendance at special assemblies
- Attendance at the Christmas lunch
- Being involved in fundraising activities such as the Summer Fayre
- Supporting pupils with activities outside of school such as educational visits
- Attendance at sporting events

## **20. Alternatives to becoming a governor**

If, after reading this handbook you decide that becoming a governor is not right for you then there are alternative ways to become involved with the school for example:

- Becoming a volunteer in school
- Joining the Friends of Redhill to organise fundraising events
- Joining one of the parent groups such as the Health and Wellbeing working group

Thank you for taking the time to read this Handbook. Becoming a governor is a significant commitment and we really appreciate it.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Governor Induction Checklist**

Name..... Date.....

#### **Meeting with Chair of Governors**

Areas that will be covered:

- Meeting the Headteacher
- A tour of the school
- Overview of the role of a governor
- School vision and ethos of the school
- Current issues facing the school
- Allocation of a governor mentor

#### **Documents for new governor to complete**

- Contact details form
- Governor skills audit form
- Governor Code of Conduct
- ID documents/DBS checks

#### **Governors will receive**

- Schedule of meeting dates
- Minutes of the last full governing body meeting
- Latest Headteacher's report
- Latest version of KCSIE
- A copy of the Child Protection Policy

#### **Governors should read**

- The Child Protection Policy
- KCSIE
- DfE Governance Handbook
- School staff list
- School Prospectus
- School vision and aims
- School Newsletter
- Latest Ofsted Report

- Key School Policies (on the website)
- Pupil Premium Statement
- Parent View

### **Useful Sources of Information**

[www.dfe.gov.uk](http://www.dfe.gov.uk) Department for Education website. The Governance Handbook can be found here.

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Office for Standards in Education website

[www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk) The National Governor's Association website

## Appendix 2

# EDUCATION (SCHOOL GOVERNMENT)

## REGULATIONS

### **Disqualification of people from the membership of School Governing Bodies**

In summary, the following people may not serve as governors:-

1. People who are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 during their period of office.
2. People who have failed to attend Governing Body meetings for a continuous period of 6 months, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the Governing Body
3. People who have had their estate sequestrated (temporarily repossessed) and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced.
4. People who are subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order
5. People who are subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under Section 492(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a county court administration order)
6. People who have been removed from the office of a charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions)(Scotland) Act 1990 from being concerned in the management or control of any body.
7. People who are disqualified from working with children or have a disqualification order under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
8. People who are included in the list of teachers or workers prohibited or restricted from working with children or young people (Section 142 of Education Act 2002, previously "List99")
9. People who are disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families.
10. People who have in the previous 5 years been sentenced to 3 months or more in prison (whether this was suspended or not) without the option of a fine

11. People who in the previous 20 years have been sentenced to two and a half years or more in prison.
12. People who have at any time been sentenced to 5 years or more in prison
13. People who in the previous 5 years have been convicted of an offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 (Nuisance or Disturbance on Educational Premises)
14. People who refuse an application being made to the Criminal Records Bureau for a DBS certificate
15. In addition, anyone who, whilst serving as a governor, becomes disqualified from holding office as a governor of any school shall, upon being disqualified, give written notice of the fact to the Clerk to the Governing Body of the school.

In order to safeguard the interests of our pupils, you should declare any criminal convictions that you may have, including any that have become spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Glossary of Useful Abbreviations**

APS	Average Points Score
BV	British Values
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
CP	Child Protection
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CIC	Child in Care
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DFC	Devolved Formula Capital
DFE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
EHCP	Education, Health Care Plans
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EAL	English as an additional language
FC	Finance Committee
FOI	Freedom of Information
FSM	Free School Meals
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
H&S	Health and Safety
HT	Headteacher
HTR	Headteacher's Report
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IHCP	Individual Healthcare Plan
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child



LAAC	Looked After and Adopted Child
NAHT	National Association of Headteachers
NGA	National Governors Association
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NOR	Numbers on Roll
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
PP	Pupil Premium
PPG	Pupil Premium Grant
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
RAISE online	Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self Evaluation
RAP	Raising Attainment Plan
SATS	Standard Assessment Tests
SDP	School Development Plan
SEF	Self Evaluation Form
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDCO	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator
SFVS	Schools Financial Value Standard
SIA	School Improvement Advisor
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMSC	Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural
Statementing	The formal assessment of SEND pupils requiring specific additional resources/funding
TLR	Teaching and Learning Responsibility (additional management responsibility for which the teacher received extra pay)

## Appendix 4

# FEATURES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

Effective schools generally share certain characteristics:

<b>Professional Leadership</b> The Headteacher is the professional leader of the school. An effective Headteacher is purposeful, fully involved in what goes on in the classroom and helps to make sure that staff have opportunities to show leadership and participate in making decisions	<b>Monitoring Progress</b> Staff systematically monitor and evaluate the achievements and progress of all pupils and of the school as a whole
<b>Shared Vision and Goals</b> Staff and Governors work together with clear aims and vision and with a common ambition	<b>Pupil Rights and Responsibilities</b> The school promotes pupils' self-esteem. It encourages them to take responsibility, particularly for their own work
<b>Rich Learning Environment</b> The school provides a climate in which pupils are able and willing to learn. The atmosphere is orderly and purposeful and the working environment is attractive	<b>Purposeful Teaching</b> The quality of teaching is high, particularly because lessons are efficiently organised, have a clear purpose and are well structured. The teaching takes account of the fact that different pupils learn in different ways.
<b>Teaching and Learning</b> The school's activities have one central purpose – to help pupils to learn and achieve their full potential	<b>A learning Organisation</b> The school presents learning as something that is for the adults working there, as well as for pupils. The school provides training and development for all staff including school based staff development.
<b>Clear and High Expectations</b>	<b>Home-School Partnership</b> Relations between home

<p>The school has high expectations of its pupils. The expectations are communicated clearly to pupils and lessons are challenging</p>	<p>and school are supportive and co-operative. Parents get actively involved in their children's work and in the life of the school</p>
<p><b>Positive Reinforcement</b> Discipline is clear and fair. Staff ensure that pupils know how they are doing and that they are praised for good work and rewarded for good behaviour.</p>	



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Headteacher: Mrs Claire Lamb

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Mandy Ward

Chair of Governors: Mrs Beth Tutchener-Ellis