



St. Anne's Church of England VA Primary School

GUIDELINES FOR THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

The aim of this policy is to clarify issues around the recruitment, roles, responsibilities and rights of the governing body of St. Anne's Church of England VA Primary School (St Anne's). Full regard should be made to both current and future legislation relating to governors including identified policies and the current 'Instrument of Government' (see Appendix 1).

This policy is written in line with 'Parents and Schools.' (NAGM) & 'Governors: who are they & what do they do' (NAGM). (NAGM=*National Association of Governors and Managers*)

1. Governors' Authority, Accountability and Overall Responsibility

Schools operate in accordance with a range of policies and legal requirements determined by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. The governing body and head teacher have been entrusted with the responsibility for establishing and maintaining its aims, values and Christian ethos, deciding its policies, supervising its management and monitoring its performance, leaving the head to manage the school from day to day. This is undertaken in line with both recognised legal and Local Education Authority (LEA) procedures and the policies approved by the governing body. As unpaid voluntary public servants, the governors help to sustain the school's identity and provide a link with the community served by the school. The governors are best thought of as trustees for the performance of the school, in the interests of both current and future pupils, and aim to promote high standards of educational achievement in everything they do.

2. Status of the Governing Body

The governing body exercises its powers and duties collectively, but governors' committees have been established to act on behalf of the governing body in certain matters. These delegated areas are identified in the committee remits (Appendix 1). All governors have an equal say on the governing body, an equal right to serve on its committees and to stand for election as chair or vice chair of the governors.

An issue that cannot await the next meeting, or a specially convened meeting, may be acted upon by the chair or vice chair on behalf of the governing body. Similarly, if neither the chair or vice chair is available and inaction would seriously harm the school or the people in it, the head can act as necessary but must seek the governing body's retrospective approval as soon as possible.

The governing body of St Anne's is by law an 'exempt' charity which means that it has charitable status but cannot be registered as a charity.

3. General Procedures

Governing bodies meet at least once each term. Governors are also expected to find time for serving on committees of the governing body, visiting the school, attending school events, training and the preparation and follow-up involved in all these

aspects of their work. The school has a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation policy, which forms the main framework by which governors monitor the effectiveness of the school (see Monitoring & Evaluation policy).

4. Different Types of Governors

As defined in our Instrument of Government St Anne's governing body consists of:

- 3 parent governors – elected by parents
- 1 LA governors – usually representatives of political parties
- 2 staff governors – elected by teaching or non teaching staff at the school
- 9 foundation governors (8 elected by a nomination from St Andrew's PCC & Vicar of St Andrews Church, Congresbury- (ex officio)
- 1 co-opted governor

5. Eligibility of Governors

The eligibility of people to serve in each of these categories together with the respective periods of office can be found in the 'Instrument of Government'. Procedures for the disqualification of Governors can be found in 'Changes to the law that affect the proceedings of Governing Bodies' DfEE Circular.

6. Election of Representatives to the School Governing Body

The election of representatives to the School Governing Body must be undertaken in accordance with established procedures. These procedures can be found in 'Appointing School Governors', School Governor Service.

7. Governor Induction

See appendix a)

8. Accountability

Governors are accountable to:

- the LA, which maintains the school, for its good performance and for the effective use of the funds which the LA has delegated to them;
- the parents, pupils and community served by the school for the good education of the pupils;
- the staff, as good employers;
- the Diocesan Board of Education which established and helps maintain the school.

9. Financial Liability

The members of the governing body have no personal financial liability for any action of the governing body (see Financial Administration Policy).

Capital funding (including LCVAP grant (90% from DfE with 10% governors liability) is not a personal liability, but a collective responsibility. This may be funded from the school's revenue budget as long as it is in surplus. If the governors' 10% liability is particularly onerous, it is possible to apply for a Diocesan grant over 1,2 or 3 years to spread the burden.

10. Function of the Governing Body

In fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for the overall management of the school, governors at St Anne's have the following specific duties:

10.1. Admissions

As a Voluntary Aided School the governors at St Anne's are the admissions authority. The governing body must ensure that:

- the admissions arrangements accord with the school's trust deed and admissions policy;
- they follow the agreed admissions policy when allocating places to the school;
- they consult with local LA's and our neighbouring admissions authorities on its admissions arrangements at the start of each academic year;
- they admit any pupil who has had an appeal for admission upheld by an independent panel.

10.2. School Day and Year

The governing body is responsible for

- fixing the dates of school terms and holidays,
- setting the start and finishing times of the school day and mid day breaks.

10.3. Curriculum

The governing body is responsible for:

- promoting the statutory aims of the curriculum and ensuring compliance with the National Curriculum and the teaching of Religious Education and collective worship;
- ensuring statutory testing and assessment of children;
- setting targets for pupil achievement in specified National Curriculum subjects and for reporting on school achievement in its annual report;
- deciding the appropriateness and content of any sex education;
- ensuring that non partisan political views are adopted by the school and in children's activities.

10.4. Special Educational Needs

The governing body must ensure that the school complies with the statutory code on SEN (see SEN policy).

10.5. Control of premises

The occupation and use of the school premises, during and outside school hours is under the control of the governing body. In exercising control outside school hours, the governing body must have regard to the desirability of making the premises available for community use (see Lettings Policy).

11. Relations with the Foundation

The governing body must respect the wishes of the foundation, as expressed in the school's trust deed and instrument of government.

12. Relations with the Head Teacher

The head teacher is responsible for all aspects of the day to day management of the school and for assisting the governing body in the formation and implementation of the schools aims, objectives, policies and plans. The head is accountable to the governing body for all that the head does. The relationship of the governing body with the head should be seen as a partnership, which operates so as to reflect the roles assigned by law to each partner (see 'School teacher pay and conditions' document).

13. Relations with Staff

The governing body should behave as a good employer. It should value the staff and support the head teacher in promoting job satisfaction, effective staff development, and constructive staff involvement in what happens at the school.

14. Relations with Parents and Carers

Many of the governing body's duties are designed to ensure that parents are informed about what the school does and tries to do, what it is providing for the pupils and how they are progressing. Conversely the views of parents should be brought to bear on the governing body's work.

Governors should attempt to secure and develop a positive rapport between the school and all parents, which is based on mutual respect and trust. One of the keyways that this is achieved is through explaining the school aims, objectives, values, expectations and policies to every parent. This has been partly achieved through the development of the School Mission Statement and the 'Home - School agreement.'

The Governing body has a number of specific statutory responsibilities towards parents. These include producing:

- a school prospectus
- a 'home-school' agreement, in consultation with parents
- information for parents in relation to the curriculum
- pupil records
- pupil behaviour procedures
- a policy concerning charges made for certain school activities

The above should be supplemented by a wide range by non-statutory arrangements, by which parents are individually and collectively informed, consulted and involved in the work of the school.

Although the responsibility for non-statutory arrangements generally falls to the head teacher, governors should keep themselves informed about such arrangements. Such arrangements should include:

- supporting or monitoring the Friends of St Anne's School
- procedures for reporting children's academic progress, behaviour or well being to parents
- consulting with parents over major issues
- supporting the head teacher in disseminating curriculum issues to parents

- supporting extra curricular activities such as prayer meetings, church outreach etc.

15. Role of Parent Governors

St Anne's has three elected parent governors. Parent governors must serve as members of the corporate governing body and generally have the same powers, duties, rights and responsibilities as other governors, some of who may also have a child at school.

Parent governors are not on the governing body simply in order to represent the interests of parents, because all governors must have regard to the rights and duties of parents. They are not bound to carry out the parent body's wishes, because they are not the mandated delegates of the parents. However, by having a child at the school parent governors are well placed to understand the needs and points of view of parents.

Parent governors are not the official link between the governing body and parents but can strengthen the governing body's relationship with parents by keeping in touch with them through both formal and informal channels of communication.

When dealing with individual concerns from parents, a parent governor should:

- listen carefully to parents concerns, keeping an open mind on the issue;
- be aware that the school has to act in the best interest of all the children in school;
- clarify that, being an individual governor, they cannot act for the governing body;
- be aware of the schools procedures for dealing with parental concerns, and in appropriate cases advise parents that these procedures must be followed before the governors can be involved;
- avoid being an intermediary between a parent and the school on a matter of substance;
- not publicly criticise the head teacher, but ensure that grievances are handled in the appropriate way;
- identify that there may be little or nothing that the school can do in response to the parents point where it concerns matters outside the control of the school, e.g. LEA Funding, class sizes, etc.;
- be prepared to explain the reason for any decisions the governors may have made;
- inform the head teacher of any concerns prior to a governors' meeting for an informed discussion ;
- raise any parental concerns as a confidential point on the agenda, after any advice from the head teacher;
- raise any significant staff concerns with the head teacher rather than the governors, as internal discipline procedures may need to be implemented prior to it being an issue for governors to consider.

16. Training

As a result of continual changes in education, governors recognise the need for up to date training. At the start of each financial year, the governors consider the different training packages available from the LEA subject to the schools financial allocation. Newly appointed governors are particularly encouraged to attend training.

17. Governors' Expenses

Governors have the right to submit claims for the reimbursement of certain types of expenses. Governors felt that it should be left to the discretion of individual governors to submit any claims. Governors should also note that all claims submitted are funded from the formula allocated budget and that no separate budget is available to meet governors' claims.

Eligible expenses can be claimed for:

- child care or baby sitting arrangements
- care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative
- support for governors with special needs (e.g. audio equipment)
- support for governors whose first language is not English
- telephone charges, photocopying, stationery etc.
- travel and subsistence

18. Governors' School Visits

See Appendix b)

Confirmation the Staff Induction Policy in respect of St. Anne's Church of England VA Primary School has been discussed by the Governing Body.

Signed by:

Chair of Governors: Date:

Head teacher: Date:

Agreed at the Governing Body Meeting on:

Appendix a)

Governor Induction policy

This policy should be taken and used as part of St Anne's overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, instrument of government aims and values as a Church of England school.

The Governing Body and Head teacher 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.

PURPOSE

- To welcome new governors to the Governing Body and enable them to meet other members
- To encourage new governors to visit the school to experience its atmosphere and understand its ethos
- To meet the Head teacher, staff and children
- To explain the partnership between the Head teacher, school and Governing Body
- To explain the role and responsibilities of governors
- To give background material on the school and current issues
- To allow new governors to ask questions about their role and/or the school
- To explain how the Governing Body and its committees work
- To allow new governors to join the most suitable committee(s)

New governors will

- Be welcomed to the Governing Body by the Chair
- Be invited by the Head teacher to visit the school
- Have the opportunity to tour the school and meet staff and children
- Receive an informal briefing on the school from the Head teacher
- Have the opportunity to meet informally with an existing governor who will then act as their mentor
- Be accompanied by their mentor to their first full Governing Body meeting (if required)
- Have the opportunity to review their first meeting with the mentor

New governors will receive from North Somerset

- The Instrument of Government
- Welcome to Governance book
- Guidance Booklet
- Governor Support and Development Pack

New governors will receive from the clerk

- The Department for Education and Skill's "Guide to the Law for Governors"
- The school prospectus
- Essential safeguarding information

- Details of the Governing Body committees including their terms of reference
- DBS forms
- Dates for future governors' meetings including committees
- Details of how to contact the other governors
- Details of how to contact the school including the e-mail address
- A calendar of school events
- Recent school newsletters

New governors are also recommended to read

- The School Improvement Plan
- The latest Ofsted report and action plan
- The SEF
- The Scheme for Financing Schools

Areas that the Head teacher will cover include

- Background to the school
- Current issues facing the school
- Governors in school policy

Areas that the mentor will cover include

- An overview of the governor's role
- How the full Governing Body and committee meetings are conducted
- How to propose agenda items
- Governor training – both statutory and specific, relevant training.

New governors will need to provide

- All contact details – to the clerk
- Completed Pecuniary Interests form – to the Bursar
- DBS check – to the Bursar
- Appointment of Governor Acceptance Form – to North Somerset

Governors in School Policy

This policy should be taken and used as part of St Anne's overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, instrument of government aims and values as a Church of England School.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The governing body has a crucial role to play in the life of our school. Many statutory responsibilities in relation to the school lie with the governing body, and the effectiveness of governors in carrying out their responsibilities is a central part of the overall effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school.
- 1.2 Their key roles are to oversee the strategic development of the school, through the school improvement plan. This involves monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness, and offering support and challenge to the school. However, governors do not involve themselves in the day to day management of the school.
- 1.3 Governors are volunteers and many will have full time jobs of their own and may be unavailable during the school day. Nevertheless, in order for governors to properly fulfil their role, it is essential that they understand and experience the life of the school.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 We aim for governors to be able to fully carry out their responsibilities outlined in the introduction above. To this end, the school welcomes the governing body's active involvement in its life. Governors are encouraged to visit the school during the working day, with the aim of:
 - being able to advise the whole governing body on aspects of the fulfilment of its statutory role;
 - meeting with the head teacher, senior staff, external advisers or local authority officers;
 - improving governor understanding of the ethos of the school and the curriculum;
 - observing school policies in action;
 - carrying out specific responsibilities on behalf of the governing body, e.g. health and safety checks;
 - observing, in order to become familiar with classroom practice;
 - developing governor links with staff, new staff, pupils and parents/carers;
 - attending school functions;
 - carrying out specified monitoring responsibilities in relation to the school improvement plan;
 - monitoring whether the budget decisions of the governing body are enabling the school to provide value for money;
 - gaining an enhanced level of understanding of aspects of the school's work so that the governing body is sufficiently well informed for its decision-making and policy development;
 - assisting the head teacher in staffing organisation, job descriptions, person specifications and selection interviews;
 - ascertaining the need for particular resources.

- 2.2 The role of a governor on a school visit does not include making qualitative judgements on professional, educational matters, for example, the quality of teaching in individual lessons.

3 Timetable of visits

- 3.1 We hope that all governors will be able to visit the school during the working day at least once a year, to observe the school in session, in addition to any other incidental visits.
- 3.2 We offer all new governors an introductory visit as soon as possible after their appointment.
- 3.3 We recognise that pre-planning is essential if the governor's visit is to be worthwhile, and that professional courtesies are to be observed. Visits will always be discussed and arranged through the head teacher. Staff will always be notified of the purpose of the visit in advance, if it is intended that governors will visit classrooms or observe learning activities.

4 Visits to classrooms

- 4.1 The school welcomes governors' presence in lessons. The school will prepare for such visits by providing visiting governors with information about the purpose of the lesson and suggestions for the role a governor might play, for example, a sample list of questions that pupils might be asked during their independent work.
- 4.2 The governing body agrees that any report, written or oral, made to the governing body following classroom visits, will have been discussed with the head teacher and member(s) of staff beforehand. The governing body recognises that no teacher or other member of staff should be identifiable through the report, and that no qualitative judgement about a professional matter, for example, the quality of teaching in individual lessons, will be made.
- 4.3 The governing body recognises that any information about any individually named pupil's attainment or progress should not form part of the visit or be communicated in any subsequent report.
- 4.4 Governors recognise that no comment about the lesson, its content or the pupils should be made within the hearing of any pupil.
- 4.5 Governors agree that visits to classes, of which their own children are members should be avoided where possible.

5 Activities away from classrooms

- 5.1 Individual governors are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of the work of the school through links to specific subjects/key stages/classes. Subject managers are given time within their work plans to discuss subject policies, strengths and areas for development within the subjects, including overall standards, and action plans for school improvement. Governors, for their part, are encouraged to report the main points to the performance and standards committee.
- 5.2 Governors are encouraged to attend all events at which parents/carers are present. They should wear an identification badge and be available to parents. Any feedback received from parents should be discussed with the head teacher and, if appropriate, reported to the governing body in such a way that no parent or carer can be identified.
- 5.3 Governors are encouraged to attend and play a full part in staff professional development days. Details of the following term's training activities will be

passed to the clerk at the end of the previous term. Governors planning to attend should inform the head teacher beforehand.