



Welcome to Holway Park School Governing Body

Everyone in governance should be aware of and accept 'The 7 principles of public life', (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership) as set out by Lord Nolan.

The respective roles of governance and management

Governance is strategic and management is operational. This distinction between governance and management needs to be clearly understood by all, so that governors are not asked to, and do not try to, involve themselves in day to day management. Governors are not to carry out other work within a school on a pro-bono basis. School leaders must not be micro-managed. The governing body should concentrate on matters related to strategy and school improvement, delegating to school leaders those tasks which are operational (for example, drafting policies, making judgements about teaching quality, and recruiting and deploying staff below senior leadership level).

Duty of care and well-being:

The governing body must remember that it has a duty of care to the school leader, including ensuring a safe and secure working environment, a reasonable work-life balance, and support for their well-being. The Headteacher has the responsibility for ensuring a safe and secure working environment, a reasonable work-life balance and support for staff well-being supported by the governors. Governors can do this through conversation about strategies and initiatives that create a healthy working environment for all staff and help to reduce excessive workload demands from within the school.

Setting the strategic direction

Along with the Head Teacher, it is the job of a governing body to set the school's aims and objectives around how the school will develop and improve. The governing board, in partnership with the organisation's leadership, should determine and articulate a clear vision as to where they want the school to be in 3–5 years' time.

Each individual governor is responsible for contributing to the board's discussions and in meeting its core functions Holway Park School has specific governors for safeguarding and special educational needs and disability (SEND).

Boards must ensure they understand the full diversity of the cultural context of the school and the community it serves. Having some people on the board who have no close ties with the school, or who come from outside the ethnic group of the majority of pupils, can help ensure that the board has sufficient internal challenge to the decisions it makes and how it carries out its strategic functions.

Every effort should be made to ensure the organisation'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; and encourage pupils to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and accompanying guidance. The board should ensure that this ethos is reflected and implemented effectively in school policy and practice and that there are effective risk assessments in place to safeguard and promote students' welfare.

Holway Park School facilitates a whole school approach to safeguarding, ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront of all we do through the annual adoption of our school child protection and safeguarding policy (LA Model policy), through the annual safeguarding audit completed by the safeguarding governor and DSLs; the safeguarding governor reports to full governors outcomes from this audit. Through checking the SCR (Single Central Register) by the CoG

(Chair of Governors), Headteacher and office manager. Through discussions with the Headteacher re staff safeguarding training, governors safeguarding training and annual update of KCSIE (Keeping children Safe in Education).

The coronavirus outbreak has shown the importance of risk assessments, and that the board should be assured by the Headteacher that adequate risk assessments are conducted and that protective measures are in place to reduce risks to children and staff. Risk assessments and plans should be reviewed, as necessary.

Creating robust accountability

Governing bodies should play a strategic role and avoid routine involvement in operational matters. The governing body is there to support and challenge the school's senior leader. They play a crucial role in holding the Headteacher to account for securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. By asking pertinent questions about the school's performance data, governors aim to guarantee high standards in education.

Ensuring financial probity

Governing bodies have a strategic role in the financial management of schools. Their key responsibilities include, agreeing the financial priorities identified through the school development plan, 3 year financial plan and the annual budget.

Code of conduct:

Each governing body adopts a code of conduct setting out the expectations placed on governors. This code should set out any expectations on confidentiality of sensitive or personal information and include a commitment to the seven principles of public life.

The chair

It is the chair's responsibility to give the board clear leadership and direction, keeping it focused on its core functions. The chair should encourage the board to work together as an effective team, building its skills, knowledge and experience. The chair should ensure that everyone is actively contributing relevant skills and experience, participating constructively in meetings, and is actively involved in the work of committees. The chair, in conjunction with the clerk, should also ensure that everyone understands the expectations placed upon them

Headteacher Role:

The role of the Headteacher is to implement the strategic framework established by the board, which they will help develop as a member of the board. Crucially, it is the Headteacher, not the governing board, who is responsible for the operational and day-to-day running of the school.

One of the Headteacher's responsibilities is to provide information to the board so that the board can meet its core objectives. Governors should agree with the Headteacher the data and information they need in order to fulfil their duties. The aim should be to avoid duplication and unnecessary additional workload for school leaders and teachers, while ensuring governors have the information they need to assist them in meeting their legal duties.

At meetings, the Headteacher will present a written report to the committee. The report need not be extensive but it should provide management information and data, information relating to school and pupil performance, latest positions regarding priority areas for improvement, staffing updates etc. therefore, supporting the board to undertake their strategic function. The board will use this to inform their discussions and challenge the Headteacher.

Headteacher Eligibility:

The Headteacher is a governor by default, although they do not have to take up the role. They can resign their governor role at any time in writing via the clerk. The Headteacher can also withdraw their resignation from the board should they wish.

Parent Governor Role:

The role of a parent governor is not as a spokesperson for the views of parents. They are the same as any other governor on the board, providing a 'parental viewpoint' They must not bring up individual children or parent issues including their own child/ren at meeting. Parents with concerns should be guided through the raising concerns procedure. All governors need to bear in mind that indiscreet talk about what has been said at a governing body meeting can cause problems, and care needs to be taken when reporting back to parents & carers on the outcome of meetings.

Staff Governor Role

Staff governors are elected by the staff of the school and bring with them professional experience and knowledge. Staff governors are representative staff members rather than representatives of staff, bringing a staff viewpoint and perspective to discussion and debate. They should not be seen as a 'go-between' or staff delegate Staff governors are not delegates and are not obliged to get voting instructions on matters to be decided, nor to vote in accordance with the staff body's views, they vote according to their own conscience and with the well-being of the school foremost in mind.

Like other governors, staff governors do not have the power to take action on behalf of the governing body. Most governing bodies keep confidential items to a minimum. However, all governors need to bear in mind that indiscreet talk about what has been said at a governing body meeting can cause problems, and care needs to be taken when reporting back to other members of staff on the outcome of meetings.

Co-opted Governor Role (including remote governors)

A co-opted governor is a person appointed by the governing body and who, in the opinion of the governing body, has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. As a co-opted governor, you may have an area of specialist knowledge or experience or bring a wide range of skills and experience to your role as a governor.

As a co-opted governor, you act in the best interests of the school and wider community and cannot be mandated to take a particular stance on issues.

Meetings:

It is the joint responsibility of school leaders and the governing body to ensure that meetings are well planned, at appropriate intervals and with manageable agendas. They should be appropriate to the remit and driven by school improvement priorities. The school leader should be present or represented at full governing board meetings. Governing boards must have regard to the work-life balance of school leaders when arranging meetings, and school leaders should have regard to governors and trustees' work and other commitments.

The governing body meets 4 times each year as a full governing body. Each of the two committees meet 3 times each year.

Delegation:

The role of the governing board is to ensure that areas for which they are responsible are being delivered effectively, rather than delivering it themselves. Governing boards have considerable freedom to delegate to committees or to school leaders; they should ensure they make effective use of this. The board's delegation of powers document identifies each year areas of delegation and is reviewed and agreed at the first business meeting each year. Governing boards should be mindful of the need to retain a strategic focus and delegate where appropriate to the school leaders.

Conflict of Interest

In order to make credible decisions that are in the best interest of pupils it is essential that the board has an effective approach to conflicts of interest. All boards should prevent conflicts of interest from affecting their decisions by removing them or managing them as appropriate. For example, it is unlikely that the conflict of interest that would arise from a close family relationship existing between someone on the board and a senior leader could be managed fully, and hence in most circumstances this situation would be best avoided altogether.

Visiting the school

Visits during the school day provide important opportunities for governors to better understand their school and to support their monitoring role. Governors are invited into the school by the Headteacher, these visits are planned and a governor cannot simply turn up at the school for an unplanned visit. (Governors Visits Policy). Visits should always have a focus linked to the strategic priorities, and governors need to be clear about their role (i.e. they are not inspectors). School leaders should welcome governors to visit schools. Visits should be arranged in accordance with an agreed protocol which is communicated in advance to governors and school staff involved in visits. All parties need to be sensitive to the pressures of the school calendar, and governors other commitments. Holway Park pre Covid and once it is safe to resume, hold an opportunity each term for governors to visit classrooms, look at children's work and discuss with co-ordinators specifically identified priorities from the SDP under very clear protocol.