



Being a new Governor at Pitcheroak School

Handbook

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Next Review: 3 years

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Pitcheroak School's Induction Policy For New Governors

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new Governors become familiar with:-

- Pitcheroak School and its community
- Procedures relating to the governance of Pitcheroak School
- The general roles and responsibilities of a School Governor

The school, its community and governance

In order to become familiar with the school, pupils, staff, Governors and the way in which the board of Governors work at Pitcheroak, new Governors will be given the following support:-

A letter of welcome or a telephone call will be made to the new Governor, inviting them to attend an initial meeting with the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. The meeting will be informal and will include a tour of the school and an opportunity to talk through the handbook. There may also be a discussion regarding whether the new Governor prefers to serve on the Staffing & Curriculum or Finance & Premises sub-committee.

Step 1

Completion of all required paperwork such as DBS etc.

Step 2

A meeting is arranged with the CoG to outline the role. CoG will:

- 1) issue an induction pack.
- 2) Signpost the new Governor to the school website where all of the relevant policies are kept and highlight significant policies that the new Governor may wish to familiarise themselves with.
- 3) provide the new Governor with the last 2 FGB's and sub-committee minutes.

Step 3

Informal meeting with the Headteacher to discuss key areas for consideration.

Step 4

New Governor to attend induction training.

Step 5

Follow up meeting with the CoG to review progress so far.

Induction Checklist

	Action Required post appointment	Tick
1.	Telephone call from Chair / Head	
2.	Welcome letter from Chair / Head	
3.	Chair / Head arranges meeting with new Governor before first committee meeting for tour of the school and to discuss their role and run through induction pack.	
4.	Chair arranges to meet the new Governor to walk into first meeting together.	
5.	New Governor to be introduced at the beginning of the meeting.	
6.	Chair / Head to spend time after the meeting with new Governor to answer any questions.	
7.	Ensure new Governor is aware of any training that is available.	
8.	Chair to meet with new Governor each term for the first year to ensure he / she is settling in and to discuss any problems that may have arisen.	

Useful Contacts and websites

Sheila Holden – Headteacher

Pitcheroak School
Willow Way
Batchley
Redditch
B97 6PQ
Tel: 01527 65576
Email: head@pitcheroak.worcs.sch.uk

WAG

Worcestershire Association of Governors
www.wagnet.org.uk

Martin Allen – Head of Governor Services

Governor Services
Childrens Services
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Governor Training: governortraining@worcestershire.gov.uk
General enquiries: governorservices@worcestershire.gov.uk
Tel: 01905 766108
www.edulink.networcs.net

National Governors Association (NGA)

2nd Floor SBQ1
29 Smallbrook Queensway
Birmingham
B5 4HG
Tel: 0121 643 5787
www.nga.org.uk

Governor Line

Tel: 08000 722 181
www.governorline.info

GovernorNet

www.governornet.co.uk

Modern Governor

www.moderngovernor.com
Modern Governor is the leading provider of online professional development for school governors. This website is useful to provide induction for new members.

Induction Programme

Subject	Contact	Signature of person who has provided induction	Date
A school tour and explanation of level of need of pupils	Sheila		
Disability Awareness Training	Sheila		
Governor Code of conduct	Sheila		
DBS Checks	Sam		
Skills audit	Lynda		
SEF	Sheila		
SDIP	Sheila		
Visits Policy	Sheila		
Photo Opportunity and Governor Profile for website	Sheila		
Chapter 1 of Governor Handbook and summary document (at end of handbook written by Governors)	Sheila		
Learning from the best summary (at end of handbook)	Sheila		
Implementing your school's pay policy (at end of handbook)	Sheila		
Safer Working Practices for staff in WCC schools leaflet (HR leaflet 33a)	Sheila		
Child Protection	Trish		
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedures – Hard Copy	Trish		
Online safety policy	Trish		
Fire Evacuation	Sheila		

Additional training identified if deemed necessary

Name of new Governor member:

Subject	Contact	Signature of person who has provided training	Signature of new staff member	Date
IEPs and targets	Jackie			
ASD and challenging behaviour	Paula			
Team Teach	Paula			
Pupil Risk Assessments	Paula			
Behaviour Management	Paula			
Signalong/ PECS/communication	Fiona			

What is expected from stakeholders?

The GB expects the school will:

- Understand and respect their role and purpose
- Recognise the shared commitment to improving the education provided for all pupils
- Respect Governors as volunteers who bring other skills; experiences and perspectives and value their contribution
- Work openly with the GB and provide clear, concise and relevant information in which to base decisions
- Enable all Governors to become involved in the life of the school
- Contribute to the induction, training and development of Governors
- Ensure that where educational jargon is unavoidable it is explained

The school expects the GB will:

- Respect the professional expertise of the Headteacher and staff
- Work openly in partnership with the Headteacher and staff for the benefit of the school and its pupils
- Demonstrate its commitments, collectively and individually
- Act and take decisions that are in the best interests of the school and not those of self, individuals or groups
- Support the school with parents and in the community
- Recognise the need for both Governor induction and on-going training and development

The expectations of individual Governors is that they will:

- Enhance the work of the GB
- Demonstrate their commitment by getting to know the school and becoming involved in school life and activities
- Prepare for meetings so that they are well informed, having at minimum read all the papers sent out with the agenda
- Attend meetings (FGB, committees, working groups) and play an active part
- Support the school with parents and in the local community
- Recognise the corporate status of the GB and the concept of collective responsibility
- Respect confidentiality and the need to act with discretion
- Accept responsibility for their own training and development

Frequently asked questions

What does a Governing Body do?

Governing bodies have three main functions:

- 1) Clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- 2) Hold the HT to account for the educational performance of the school, and the PM of staff
- 3) Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent.

How is the Governing Body made up?

At Pitcheroak School we have 9 Governors. They include parents/carers, staff from the school, people chosen by governors from the local community and people appointed by the local authority.

Why become a school Governor?

To make a positive contribution to the community by playing a part in improving children's education and supporting the school's staff. To develop new skills and apply existing ones and to work as part of the governing body team.

Who can be a school Governor?

Anybody over 18, with a few exceptions such as people who are undischarged bankrupt or those who have served a term of imprisonment. Schools need people for their local community to help them raise standards for all students. All applicants are subject to checks to ensure the safety and protection of the young people in our school.

Do I need special qualifications?

No! You need interest, enthusiasm, time and a genuine desire to support our students. We need people from our local community who can offer energy, experience and fresh ideas. However, all your existing skills and experience will be very welcome and as you acquire more, you will be able to apply those to other areas of your life.

How much time does it take?

Full governor meetings take place once a term and committees also meet termly. Governors act as a team and as such, the amount of time that each of them can give to the role may vary.

How can I get to know the school?

Following confirmation of your appointment, you will be contacted by either the Headteacher of the Cahir of Governors to discuss your membership of the Governing Body. You will be invited to visit the school to see the school in operation.

How can I gain information about the role and responsibilities of school Governors?

The clerk to the governing body is a source of useful information about what a Governing Body does and how the Governors work as a team in meeting their statutory duties. As a school we have an induction programme to follow with new Governors.

How will I receive details of governing body meetings?

At least a week before the meeting, the clerk to the Governing Body will send all governors a copy of the agenda and all papers relating to the meeting electronically. Minutes of meetings are normally sent to governors as soon as possible after the meeting itself.

Will I get any training?

Governor services offer a wide range of training courses for governors. Attending training courses is a good way of becoming an effective Governor, further developing your own skills and comparing notes with other Governors. These courses are paid for out of school budget.

Visit Protocol and Governor Visit Form

The teachers and staff at Pitcheroak School appreciate the time and commitment that Governors give to the school and enjoy welcoming governors during the school day. When a Governor wishes to visit the school, please give as much notice as possible. After visiting the school, the Governor should complete a 'visit form' and arrange to discuss the outcome of their visit with the Headteacher as soon as possible. This is to enable the Head to have an opportunity to investigate any issues that may have been raised and for the Head to then feedback to all Governors at the next Full Governors meeting if necessary.

A model Code of Conduct for Governing Bodies

Reviewed: September 2019

Introduction

Governing bodies find it helpful to their effective and efficient procedures to have a set of guidelines which they can give to their membership. A 'Code of Conduct' will enable individual governors to have a clearer understanding of their role.

The following code is suggested as a model. It provides a statement of the broad principles by which the governors of the school could operate. It may be adopted as it stands or adapted to reflect different governing bodies' ways of working. In either case, it should be thoroughly discussed and supported by every governor before being formally agreed. 'School' includes academies and it applies to all levels of school governance.

General

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

- The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievement of all its pupils.
- The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget

- Ensuring value for money is obtained

- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

- All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups or bodies, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Individual governors and the governing body have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- In so far as they have, or share, responsibility for the employment of staff, the governing body should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- The governing body should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- The governing body should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.
- Individual governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team.
- Individual governors have power only when it is designated specifically to them by the whole governing body.

Commitment

- Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the governing body of a school.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full governing body and committees is essential.
- Governors should know the school well, take opportunities to visit it as directed by the governing body and become involved in school activities.

Relationships

- Within the governing body, governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Individual governors and the governing body should develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, parents, other governors, the LA and their local community.

Confidentiality

- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.
- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.

- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Conduct

- Individual governors should express their relevant views openly within meetings, respect each others' views and accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- Individual governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so.
- All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, individual governors should not take on a complaint but should refer the complainant to the school's Complaints Procedure (referring the complainant to the headteacher would be the first course of action in most circumstances).
- Individual governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community and personal life should reflect this.
- Any interest that a governor may have in connection with the governing body's business must be recorded in the register of interests.
- Where an interest is declared, the governor must leave the meeting while the item is under discussion unless the governing body rule otherwise.

Training and development

- Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork. Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the governing body as a whole.

Mentoring

- An experienced governor who acts as a mentor to new governors can provide support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body. Governors should be prepared to act as mentors if directed by the governing body

Meetings

- Individual governors do not have any authority unless it has been delegated by the governing body. It is the collective decisions of the governing body that carries authority. The activities that governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' – in a meeting.
- It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Appendix 1 gives a suggested 'Meetings Charter' which promotes effective working.

Governor visits to the school

- Governor visits form part of the monitoring and evaluation role of the governing body and are an important way of gaining information about how the school operates as well as observing policy in action. To be successful it is important to have a policy with a clear set of protocols to ensure that expectations of staff and governors are clarified and that the expectations for the visit are clear.
- Individual governors have no right of entry to the school. Any visit should be delegated by the governing body in whom the collective responsibility resides. Visits should be strategically planned and, in best practice, linked to the school development plan or improvement strategy. (Governor Services training discusses the need for a policy and protocols to support governor visits in greater detail.)

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate with the governor in question.
- In serious cases, this could lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body. The governing body will only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

The Governing Body of [name of school] adopted this Code of Conduct on [date] (governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year).

Undertaking

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the wellbeing of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos.

APPENDIX 1

Meetings Charter

As a governor I expect:

- fellow governors to attend regularly and be punctual
- an agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before the meeting (statutory requirement)
- an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item
- a chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point
- my contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion
- the decision making process to be quite clear
- governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan
- governors to take collective responsibility for decisions
- minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting

Others can expect me to:

- attend regularly and be punctual
- read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about
- bring my papers to the meeting
- make relevant and positive contributions
- listen to and consider what other people want to say
- accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with

Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards

(2014 Version NGA National Governors Association)

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the particular school. 'School' includes academies, and it applies to all level of school governance.

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.

- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Register of interests

Name:	Job Title or position held:
Address:	Name and Address of Employer or Business:
Type of Governor:	Parent/ Co-opt/ Community/ Local Authority

Members of the Governing Body and school staff involved in decision making have a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and affairs and the interests of the school.

Individuals are requested to enter below details of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest of themselves or close relatives (e.g. spouse). The information will be held by the Clerk to the Governors in a Register of Interests.

The register will be updated on an annual basis, but it would be appreciated if individuals would notify the Clerk to the Governors of any change in circumstances during the year.

DECLARATION OF DETAILS OF PECUNIARY OR OTHER MATERIAL INTEREST

Signature:

Date:

Learning from the Best

School Governance

Summary for Governors

Ways the school could improve

- Information could be presented in charts and graphs more for pupil achievement
- Governors could use their external networks and professional contacts to identify skills gaps in GB
- Subject leaders could present reports 1) actions and developments 2) achievement and standards 3) personal development and well-being 4) the quality of provision 5) leadership and management 6) overall effectiveness
- Governors could consult with parents and pupils on a range of issues
- When considering new initiatives the GB could ask 1) what will be the difference for pupils? 2) what will be the difference for parents? 3) what will be the difference for staff? 4) what will be the difference for partners?
- Governors should ask pertinent questions that challenge the school
- The SDP should be a standard agenda item for the FGB
- Governors could act on individual questionnaire comments in writing back to parents
- Governors should promote the work of the school by encouraging links with different organisations
- Governors should undertake training
- Governors could have an annual away day for self-review and reflection