

# A Handbook for Governors of Schools in Wales

## PART 2

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# 1. THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governors of schools have no powers to act as individuals unless very specific tasks have been delegated to them by their governing body. The functions of governing bodies are exercised corporately. That is, the decisions taken are those of the governing body as a whole, exercising collective responsibility. It follows that one of the most important tasks of a governing body is to build itself into an effective team.

A team is a group of people working together with a common purpose. Each team member has unique qualities, experience, skills and special interests that must be integrated with those of other members. Individual differences are a team's greatest asset since they help to allocate particular tasks amongst members of the team. Refer to our skills audit resource.<sup>1</sup>

A good team is one whose members are aware and supportive of each other. They share the work. They are eager to learn and develop. They know and abide by the rules that safeguard every individual's space. They accept responsibility for the quality of their work together.

A team may be considered effective if:-

- 1) it capitalises upon its strengths and appoints new members when it needs a better range of skills and experience;
- 2) it gives priority to the continuous training and development of all its members;
- 3) it shares the workload and gives individuals opportunities to develop specialist roles;
- 4) responsibilities are corporately exercised;
- 5) time is allocated to periodically review of the team's effectiveness.

## i) Capitalising on governing body strengths

The effectiveness of a governing body clearly depends on the qualities, skills and experience its members bring to the service of the school. With its ever increasing role and responsibilities, no governing body can afford to have its effectiveness impaired by individuals who lack motivation or are unable to give the necessary commitment and time that the work entails. An even greater commitment is needed from some governors, notably the chair. Every governor has to be ready to serve on committees, as well as attending governing body meetings and participating in governor training and development.

The governing body can create opportunities to encourage parents and others to offer themselves for election or appointment. However, the role of governors must be positively presented. Too often people who might otherwise be interested undervalue themselves and their potential contribution. They may mistakenly suppose that schools only want people with skills in financial or personnel management. What is needed are people who understand that education is important and that schools need their time, commitment and experience. Governors who can represent the range of interests in the local community are especially valuable even though they need not be parents of pupils in the school or indeed, parents. Refer to information for prospective governors on our website.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/governor-skills-audit/>

<sup>2</sup> [www.governors.cymru](http://www.governors.cymru)

## ii) Continuous training and development for governors

For many people, becoming a governor is an unusual even daunting experience. The governing body should establish a procedure for the induction of new governors that builds upon any induction arrangements and training offered by the LA, or the diocese authority (the area over which a bishop has jurisdiction). Every new governor should be encouraged to attend the induction sessions. Governing bodies should ensure that their new governors receive an information pack containing:

- the Handbook for school governors in Wales
- School Governors Guide to the Law
- the school prospectus;
- the admissions policy;
- a copy of the last annual report;
- the headteacher's most recent termly report;
- the latest Estyn inspection report;
- school policy statements;
- the current staff list;
- a list of governors, with pen portraits;
- the timetable for the next year's governors meetings;
- terms of reference for all committees;
- briefing notes for governors from the LA;
- a map of the school;
- a policy statement about visits to school;
- school procedures;
- the current programme of LA training events for governors.

It helps to assign an experienced colleague to each new governor to whom they can turn to for help and advice. The chair is best placed to choose governors with the skills suited to performing the role of 'mentor' and the time to devote willingly to this extra task. Refer to the role of the Mentor governor.<sup>3</sup>

Most governors gain a great deal from making an early formal visit to the school, provided they observe the protocols involved. A first-hand impression of the school gives governors a context and background to the papers and discussions at meetings and provides a secure basis for greater participation in decision-making.

Every new governor will soon appreciate that government policies and regulations affecting schools, many of which are the direct responsibility of the governing body, are constantly changing. Every governor, therefore, must seek to update their knowledge and their skills at regular intervals. Participating in training events will contribute to the effectiveness of every governor and help make serving as a governor more personally rewarding.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/link-governors/>

### **iii) Sharing the workload**

It is not practicable for the governing body to carry out all their tasks in the course of a meeting. Consequently some of the work must be delegated to committees. Nevertheless, the governing body retains corporate responsibility for everything that is done on its behalf. Some matters cannot lawfully be delegated (refer to section 7). The great virtue of committees is that, apart from sharing out the workload, they give more people a chance to participate at a detailed level in smaller and less formal groups.

Establishing an effective committee structure is, however, not without its difficulties. Problems can arise when too much power is vested in one committee: for example if finance, policy and curriculum are grouped together. The governing body should review annually its committees and their terms of reference and membership. This is to ensure that the work of each committee remains relevant and effective, and to give members an opportunity to change roles from time to time. For further information on committees and model terms of reference, refer to our guide.<sup>4</sup>

Governing bodies may appoint individual governors to take an interest in a particular aspect of the curriculum, for example for literacy or numeracy. In primary schools it is common to link a governor with a particular class so that they get to know the children and their teacher well. Refer to our model link governor report templates as well as roles of different link governors.<sup>5</sup>

An important aspect for the future success of the governing body is to develop skills by encouraging governors to take on positions of responsibility, for example, as chairs of committees.

### **iv) Corporate responsibilities**

Individual governors must never forget their corporate responsibility. Once made, decisions of a governing body are binding upon all its individual members, including those who might have disagreed with the majority supporting a decision.

Governors should not under any circumstances dissociate themselves publicly from properly made decisions of the governing body. Neither should governors discuss confidential matters outside the meetings. Every governor must be loyal to majority decisions and in cases where particular governors strongly disagree with the majority of their colleagues, they can request that their dissent is recorded in the minutes of a meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/model-governing-body-committee-structure/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/link-governors/>

## 2. THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The chair of the governing body (elected annually) plays a key pivotal role in the effectiveness of the governing body. The chair leads the governing body but does not have any power to act on the governing body's behalf without instructions, except in certain cases of urgency. The role of the chair is primarily:

- to ensure that meetings are conducted efficiently following the correct governing body procedures;
- to consider and approve the agenda for each meeting and to ensure that it is manageable;
- to maintain communication with the headteacher and governors between governing body and committee meetings;
- to act as a spokesperson on behalf of the governing body where necessary;
- to ensure that information and documents received are shared with the governing body.

From 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013, chairs of governors will need to complete mandatory chair training. The training for chairs of governors focuses on leadership and maintaining effective relationships with key partners i.e. headteachers, clerks to governing bodies and the local authority as well as providing chairs of governors with the necessary skills to run an efficient and effective governing body and to work with and provide challenge to headteachers to raise standards. Guidance and further information is available.<sup>6</sup>

Please refer to our guide on The Role of the Chair for further information.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. WHAT TO EXPECT AT A GOVERNORS MEETING

As mentioned earlier in Part 1, governing bodies are required to hold one full governing body meeting per term. This, however, is a minimum requirement and you will find that governors attend far more meetings than this usually – ranging from committees, working groups to the meeting with parents (if petitioned). The first governing body meeting of the academic year is usually when the chair and vice-chair are elected, governors are appointed to committees and terms of reference are agreed. It is always useful at this time to agree meeting dates for the year in advance.

For a governing body to be effective it must handle its business efficiently. You can expect:

1. to receive a written notice of the date, time and location of a meeting at least five clear working days before the date of the meeting;
2. the notice of the meeting should be accompanied by an agenda which lists the matters to be discussed at the meeting together with supporting documentation;
3. that some of the business discussed by the governors will be about important but routine matters, for example, about repairs to the school building.

The rest of the section explains in more detail the kinds of things that you can expect at a meeting of the governing body.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/fundingschools/school-governance/mandatory-governor-and-clerk-training/?lang=en>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/governor-guide-role-chair/>

## 4. AGENDA AND MINUTES

The chairperson, headteacher and the clerk to the governing body will prepare a list of the items of business to be discussed at each meeting. Members of the governing body can ask the chairperson to place an item on the agenda, provided adequate notice is given. If three or more governors want to discuss an issue, they should inform the clerk in writing, who must arrange a meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable.

What agenda items might you expect to find on the agenda for a governing body meeting?

### Agenda (typical items)

1. Apologies for absence
2. Welcome to new governors (if applicable)
3. Minutes of the last meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Headteacher's report
6. School Development Plan (SDP) / School Self Evaluation Report (SSR)
7. Committee reports
8. Governor training & development
9. Correspondence

Exclusion of press and public – confidential items

10. Pupil exclusions
11. Staffing matters
12. Any other business **(if agreed to be taken)**
13. Date of next meeting

So that you know what to expect, the paragraphs which follow outline some important parts to remember about each agenda.

#### 1. Apologies for absence

The official record of each meeting, (the minutes), records the names of all governors present at the meeting. The clerk will pass around an attendance book or list which each governor signs to show that they have attended. Where a governor has sent an apology, the minutes of the governing body meeting should record the governing bodies consent to the absence. If a governor has failed to attend governing body meetings without the consent of the governing body, for 6 months, he or she can be disqualified.

It is very difficult for a governing body to be effective unless its meetings are well attended. On the other hand, everyone accepts that there are occasions when you are unable, due to family, business or other commitments or because of illness, to attend. It is a good idea to warn the clerk to the governors, or the chairperson that you will be unable to attend a meeting. This is not only to be courteous to the chairperson but if several members of the governing body are unable to attend a particular meeting, the number of governors who do attend might be too few for the meeting to be able to take any decisions at all. The minimum number of governors who must be present is known as the 'quorum'. The quorum for a meeting is one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the governing body excluding any vacancy.

## **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes are the official record of the main matters discussed during a meeting and of any decisions taken. The minutes are taken by the clerk and it is very important that the clerk's written record of a meeting corresponds with the governors' recollection of what took place. Sometimes, there may be an error in an item which you would bring to the attention of the chairperson so that it may be corrected in the next set of minutes. In order to establish whether the minutes are a true record of the last meeting, there will be a proposer and a seconder to confirm this and the chairperson will sign or initial each page of the minutes. The governing body must provide a copy of the draft or signed minutes of a particular meeting where requested by the LA and must make them available for inspection at the school to anyone who requests to see them.

## **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

The chairperson will normally read page numbers, pausing briefly between each one, and, if there is an item you need to query or ask for further information you should do so at this stage.

## **4. Headteacher's report**

This report will normally contain information about progress on the school's development with an emphasis on planning and evaluation. It will refer to any matters which, at a previous meeting, the governing body specifically asked the headteacher to report upon.

It will also report on matters relating to health and safety, visitors to school, pupil achievements and awards etc.

## **5. School Development Plan (SDP) / School Self-Evaluation Report (SSR) (refer to Part 3 (6))**

Feedback will be presented by the headteacher on the SDP and the SSR. Progress made to date will be discussed and evaluated. Curriculum co-ordinators may be invited to give an update on their particular subject area etc. (Additional information noted in Part 3, Sections 6 and 7).

## **6. Committee reports**

Much of the work of the governing body is dealt with by giving specific tasks to small committees or working parties. However, their findings must be reported to the governing body. Ideally these reports should contain a brief statement of the conclusions reached, the reasons for those conclusions and a concise summary of the main points which were discussed.

## **7. Governor training & development**

This item will usually report on any governor training & development programmes that are available through your LA or other provider. There will also be some feedback from other governors about recent courses they have attended.

## **8. Correspondence**

You should receive a brief report on any correspondence received by the school or the chairperson since the last meeting of the governors. There may be letters from your LA, the Welsh Government or other bodies or persons.

There may be decisions or action to be taken, but some correspondence may simply give information to the school or its governors. Whereas the governing body may note this information, no immediate decisions or action may be necessary, for example Circulars published by the Welsh Government

From time to time there will be changes in the legislation that may affect you as a school governor. Details of these and other specific guidelines are usually distributed by the Welsh Government to the LAs to be copied to you.

### **Exclusion of press and public - Items deemed to be confidential**

Meetings of the governing body of a school are considered to be 'public' meetings, insofar as the agenda, the approved minutes and any other document considered at a meeting must be made available at the school to anyone who wishes to inspect them. However, the governing body may decide that certain information is confidential, for example, the minutes relating to a staffing matter. It is for the governing body to decide whether members of the public or the press may attend their meetings. However, when the governing body is considering matters which are of a confidential nature, at this point in the meeting, members of the public and press will be required to leave.

Minutes are usually in two parts and the confidential items are in the second part. When the confidential part of the agenda is reached all non-governors, apart from the clerk and the headteacher (if not a governor) should be asked to leave the meeting (as determined by the governing body). It is important however, to note that even the confidential part of the minutes must be made available if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, although information will have to be blanked out to meet requirements in the Data Protection Act.

## **9. Pupil exclusions**

You will receive a regular report on the number of exclusions, reasons for which pupils were excluded and results of any appeals. You will find that individual pupils are never identified by name in the records of the meeting.

## **10. Staffing matters**

Any matters relating to the staff of the school may be reported to you by the headteacher or chair of governors. If you have an 'interest' in any matter raised, you must declare it and withdraw from the meeting.

## **11. Any other business (if agreed to be taken)**

There are different approaches regarding Any Other Business. It allows urgent matters, which could not be included in the formal agenda circulated to all governors in good time for the meeting, to be considered (if agreed). It is good practice for you to ask the chairperson before the meeting if you wish to raise an issue under Any Other Business. **If it is a serious matter, it would be unfair to expect governors to consider it without prior notice, and the chairperson may decide not to allow the issue to be discussed at that time.** In this case, you should ask the chairperson or the clerk for it to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. If an urgent matter arises, the chairperson has powers to call an emergency meeting of the governing body in certain circumstances.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

The chairperson will invite the meeting to agree a mutually convenient date for the next meeting of the governing body. However, many governing bodies now decide the date, time and place of its meetings, in advance, for the whole year. In this case you will simply be reminded of the date previously agreed. You will also be reminded of the date of your next meeting in the copy of the minutes, which you will receive from the clerk.

## **SAMPLE AGENDA AND MINUTES**

The following are examples of agendas and minutes at both Primary and Secondary level. Some governing bodies may adopt a different format.

### **AGENDA – WELSHPORT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**

1. Apologies for absence and approval of absences
2. Welcome to new governors  
D. Morgan - parent governor / A. Richards – community governor
3. To confirm and sign the minutes held on ...
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. To receive the headteacher's report
6. School Improvement Plan
7. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum Committee
8. To receive reports on training attended by governors
9. Date of next meeting
10. Exclusion of the Press and Public  
(i) To receive the report of the Appointments Committee held on ...

## THE GOVERNING BODY OF WELSHPORT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting held on ... at the school.

Present: R. Evans (Chairperson), L. Jones, M Wyatt, F. Thomas, R. Pritchard, D. Jones, B. Price, and G. Jones, I. Davies, D. Morgan, C. Lloyd, J. Smith, F. Smith, A. Richards, D. Reeves (Headteacher)

1. Apologies  
Apologies were received and accepted from Mrs. A. Perry and Mr. A. Williams.
2. Minutes  
The minutes of the meeting held on ... were confirmed and signed by the chairperson.
3. Matters arising
- 3.1 Discussion took place regarding off-site facilities:
  - a) Concern was expressed by the governors of the poor facilities at the sports field used by the school in contrast with the facilities available at the recreation ground.  
The Premises/Health & Safety committee agreed to undertake a risk assessment and to seek advice from the LA.
  - b) Concern was expressed that the school budget had to pay for use of swimming facilities at Welshport Leisure Centre unlike other schools who had free access.

#### 4. The headteacher's report

A report was circulated to governors in respect of the budgetary situation. It was agreed that a minimum surplus should be carried forward to the next financial year to meet any unforeseen circumstances.

A full programme of sports results was outlined. Governors noted the achievements of the rugby team and extended their congratulations to the pupils concerned. In terms of staffing, 2 vacant posts have been advertised. The staffing committee would be involved in the short-listing and interviewing panels. Paid leave of absence was granted to Mr. AW to attend an International Conference on Child Protection Procedures in March.

#### 5. School Improvement Plan

An extract of the school improvement plan was presented to governors detailing the main targets for the spring term.

Discussion ensued and the financial implications were explained by the headteacher. Governors also agreed there should be greater effort on developing links between the school and the community. The headteacher explained that this would be a priority issue in the future and explained how this would be implemented.

#### 6. Report of the Curriculum Committee held on ...

The minutes of the curriculum committee were considered and agreed by the governing body.

7. Training of governors

Details of the training received by governors was given by the link governor for training. It was agreed that the clerk should write to the Director of Education and Governor Support Officer to thank them for the quality of training provided.

8. Any other business

It was agreed that governors having items for the agenda should notify the clerk who would agree the agenda with the chairperson.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting was arranged for ... at 5.00 p.m. at the school.

**AGENDA – SHIREPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

1. Apologies for absence

(The governors are asked if they wish to consent to the absence of any member from this meeting)

2. Welcome to new governors

P. Evans – additional community governor

3. To confirm and sign the minutes held on ...

4. Matters arising from the minutes

5. To receive the Headteacher's Report (copy attached)

6. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee

7. To consider a report from the LA on Community Focused Schools

8. To receive reports on training attended by governors

9. To receive the report of the Appointments Committee held on ...

10. Any other business

11. Date of next meeting

12. Items deemed to be confidential

## THE GOVERNING BODY OF SHIREPORT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the meeting held on ... at the school.

Present: G. Thomas (Chairperson) Councillor L. Williams, R. Lloyd, C. Williams, D.Morgan, K. Jones, I. Lewis, P. Evans, M. Peterson (Headteacher)

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from June Davies and was accepted by the governing body.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on .... were confirmed and signed by the chairperson, subject to the inclusion of the following paragraph under item 6 (iii) paragraph 2. Governors also expressed their concern over the possibility of a public house being built adjacent to the school grounds, and await further progress in this matter.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

4. Headteacher's Report

(i) Staffing

The headteacher notified us that the school clerk had submitted her resignation. This meant that the school will be short staffed and there will be a need to provide temporary cover until a permanent appointment could be made. Accordingly we advised the headteacher to advertise the post as soon as possible.

(ii) Community links

We were pleased to hear that the community policeman had visited the school and that arrangements have been made for children to visit Police Headquarters in Welshport.

We also requested that the clerk write a letter of thanks to Johnsons Footwear factory for their kind donation of £300 to the school.

(iii) Additional Educational Needs

We were informed of the tremendous support given by the LA inclusion service in identifying the special needs of two pupils and drawing up individual education plans in order to meet those needs.

(iv) Visitors

We were delighted to hear that the finance officer from the LA visited the school to give advice to finance committee on budgetary issues. This was very helpful.

6. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee

The chair of the committee outlined the discussion that took place at their last meeting. Expenditure was in line with the budget.

7. To consider a report from the LA on Community Focused Schools

A briefing note was circulated to governors on community focused schools. Members asked a series of questions relating to resources and staffing etc.

8. To receive reports on training attended by governors

Mrs P Evans had attended induction training at the Local Authority. Mrs Evans talked through the content of the training session and felt that it helped her to prepare for her first meeting this evening.

9. To receive the report of the Appointments Committee held on ...

It was reported that XXXX had been appointed as the new Foundation Phase leader and will commence at the school on XXXX.

10. Any other business

There was no other business

11. Date of next meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting will take place on ... at 6.00 pm at the school.

12. Items deemed to be confidential

None.

## 5. CONFIDENTIALITY

As a governor, from time to time you will be involved in discussions where very personal and sensitive information is exchanged. At other times, when the governing body is making decision about the finances of the school, perhaps commercially sensitive information is discussed. Because of the sensitivities involved, these kinds of discussions are regarded as confidential and any members of the public or representatives of the press who may be present at the meeting will be asked to leave.

On other occasions, perhaps a parent or other member of the community may give you information which is relevant to your work as a governor on the understanding that you will repeat it to no-one else, i.e. the information is given to you '**in confidence**'. It is essential to your personal reputation and credibility that you do not abuse the rule of confidentiality, unless it is about a child protection issue. This applies when information is given to you in confidence whether you receive the information in the playground or the street, or during the meeting of the governing body.

In a meeting you may be privileged to receive information about parents, pupils, members of staff or even the headteacher. The information is given to you only because it is necessary for you to do your work as a governor. For example, when considering pupils with additional educational needs, the pupil concerned will not be identified by name in order to maintain confidentiality. You must never repeat information received in confidence in a governors' meeting to others in the community (including friends and members of your family). Equally, information given to you confidentially outside the meeting must not be brought into discussion during the meeting.

If you break this rule of confidentiality, your personal reputation in the community, your standing as a governor, the status of your governing body and of governors generally, are all likely to be seriously damaged. You may even be suspended from the governing body for a period of up to six months, or even removed from the governing body. Elected governors cannot be removed but they can be suspended.

The only circumstances when a breach of confidentiality is justified arises when a governor of a school receives information in confidence outside a meeting, which suggests that a pupil is at risk of physical, sexual or other abuse of some kind. Child protection matters **cannot** be kept confidential and must be reported to the statutory authority i.e. the police or social services. However, if a problem of this kind arises, you would be wise to seek the advice of your chairperson or headteacher as soon as possible before breaching the confidence.

## 6. COMMITTEES

A committee or working party is a good place to exchange ideas and do the more detailed work of the governing body. It is also a way of splitting up the work of the governing body so that the load is shared. You may be asked to be a member of one of these groups.

### ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE:

The constitution, membership and reporting procedures of each committee must be determined by the governing body. The membership can also include non-governors. The decision as to whether non-governors can vote at committee meetings is taken by the governing body. It is a statutory requirement however, that the disciplinary/dismissal committee must include a non-governor member with voting rights where allegations of child protection are being considered. The powers delegated to each committee or working group are determined by the governing body. Recommendations and decisions which are made by committees and working groups must be received by the governing body in the form of a formal report.

Governing bodies must have the following statutory committees:

- Staff disciplinary and dismissal committee;
- Staff disciplinary and dismissal appeals committee;
- Pupil discipline and exclusions committee;
- Admissions committee (only where the governing body is the admissions authority for that school), e.g. Foundation and Voluntary-Aided Schools.
- Headteacher and deputy head selection panel.

Governing bodies must have procedures and membership in place for the following:

- Headteacher performance management appraisers and appeals appraiser(s);
- Teacher performance management appeals;
- Pay review and pay review appeals;
- Complaints;
- Staff grievance and staff grievance appeals; and
- Headteacher capability panel and headteacher capability appeals panel.

Other committees can be established to discuss the detail of other matters such as:

- Finance;
- Curriculum;
- Premises, health and safety; and
- Staffing.

For a model committee structure and model terms of reference refer to our guide.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/model-governing-body-committee-structure/>

## 7. WHAT CAN BE DELEGATED

The governing body may if it so wishes delegate some of its functions to a committee, any governor or the headteacher: The following **cannot** be delegated to anyone:

- Decisions about the governing body's constitution, membership and instrument of government;
- Election or removal of the chair or vice-chair;
- Removal of governors;
- Appointment and removal of the clerk;
- Suspension of governors;
- Setting up of committees;
- Delegation of functions.

Some matters cannot be delegated to an individual, but can be delegated to a committee:

- Changing of category of school;
- Altering or discontinuing a maintained school;
- Approving the annual budget plan;
- Approving the school discipline policies;
- Admission arrangements;
- Attendance targets;
- Headteacher and deputy headteacher appointment panels.

The following must be delegated to a committee:

- Staff disciplinary/dismissal issues;
- Pupil discipline;
- Admissions (where the governing body is the admissions authority);

Any other matters may be delegated to a committee or an individual. Where matters have been delegated they must be reported back to the governing body which is collectively responsible for all delegated matters.

### Terms of reference

To ensure that the committees are "fit for purpose", efficient and contribute effectively to the work of the governing body, each should have agreed terms of reference. Terms of reference include two sets of information:

1. Statements giving the rules by which the committee is bound, including details of its composition; about the number of members necessary to constitute a quorum so that decisions may be made and the frequency of meetings;
2. The duties and tasks to be undertaken by the committee, and an indication of the limits of its powers.

A chair should be appointed to each committee either by the governing body or if the governing body agrees, the committee itself can elect one.

For a model committee structure and model terms of reference refer to the Governor Guide<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/model-governing-body-committee-structure/>

## 8. COLLABORATION AND FEDERATION

Collaboration enables school governing bodies to develop joint working arrangements. For example, two or more governing bodies may arrange for certain functions to be carried out jointly and to delegate these functions to a joint committee.

Collaboration can also occur between one or more governing bodies and with one or more further education governing bodies.

### Overview

1. Means working with another or several schools in partnership. You have a shared interest and/or a common goal.
2. Headteachers and school staff should be encouraged to build networks with staff elsewhere to get new ideas and to share and learn from best practice elsewhere.
3. Governing bodies may collaborate informally with other schools or colleges.
4. Governing bodies may establish a joint committee of governors with other schools and/or with a FE college (refer to the collaboration regulations\*).
5. A joint committee lasts for one year but the governing bodies that set it up may decide to renew it for another year as many times as they wish.
6. The committee may make decisions on matters that are delegated to it by the governing bodies.
7. Committee meetings are minuted by a clerk chosen by the committee and the minutes must be reported to the governing bodies.

For further information, please refer to:

- Governor Guide to Collaboration<sup>10</sup>
- The Collaboration Between Education Bodies (Wales) Regulations 2012<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/governor-guide-collaboration/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2012/2655/contents/made>

## 9. SURVIVE YOUR FIRST GOVERNORS MEETING (FOR NEW GOVERNORS)

1. Remember – everybody was a new governor once.
2. At your first meeting you will need to get to know your governor colleagues, some of whom will, like you, be new governors. Sometimes arrangements are made for a new group of governors to meet socially and introduce themselves prior to the governing body meeting. You might even be allocated a 'mentor' governor to support you through the induction process. Even if you do not meet your colleagues until the meeting, the chairperson will, no doubt, welcome you and there may be an opportunity for each governor to say something briefly about themselves. This part of the meeting should be very informal so don't worry about it in advance. Try to concentrate on putting names to the other faces around the table, and make a note of who is sitting where if that is helpful. If you are feeling uncertain and apprehensive, remember that it is likely that the others are probably feeling the same ... and we all need a settling-in period whilst we get to 'know the ropes'.
3. You may wish to acclimatise yourself before making a contribution to the meeting, after all, it is not a competition to see who can speak first or the longest. Take your time!
4. If you feel you have a contribution to make, you have just as much right as any other governor to speak. No governor is any more or less powerful than another – it's just that some are more experienced than others. Remember to speak through the chairperson, that is, you give your comments to the chairperson even though you are speaking to a governor colleague.
5. You may be asked whether you are willing to serve on a committee or working party to examine one particular matter about the life of the school. You can be asked at your very first meeting! You need to think very carefully about how comfortable you are about the focus of the particular committee or working party which you might be invited to join. There is a good case for becoming part of a group which is concentrating upon a matter that is already familiar to you and with which you feel comfortable. If you are confident, however, don't forget that throwing yourself into a committee or working party is a very good way of learning very quickly about a subject which is very new to you. You need to think about which approach will be best for you ... and resist being pressured into something with which you are unhappy.
6. Don't worry if you feel you did not contribute fully at your first meeting! There will be plenty of other opportunities both to get to know your governor colleagues and to make your contribution to meetings.
7. Attend mandatory induction training for new governors – it is an excellent way to learn about your new role and responsibilities.

For more tips, see our guide<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/top-tips-governors/>

## 10. EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS

In order for governing body meetings to be effective, you might find the following useful:

AS A GOVERNOR YOU SHOULD EXPECT:	AS A GOVERNOR YOU SHOULD:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a clear agenda and relevant documents and these to reach you before the meeting (5 days);</li> <li>• a clear understanding of the purpose(s) of the meeting;</li> <li>• people to be punctual;</li> <li>• a chair who is sympathetic, 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, keeps discussion to the point;</li> <li>• people to tolerate a variety of views and opinions;</li> <li>• your contribution to be heard;</li> <li>• others to contribute to the discussion;</li> <li>• the decision-making process to be clear and fair;</li> <li>• members to work together and to want discussions to be fruitful;</li> <li>• members to be ready to take collective responsibility for the minuted record of views expressed and decisions reached.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have read the agenda, minutes and other papers and noted the items you wish to say something about;</li> <li>• have the papers and notes at the meeting;</li> <li>• be punctual;</li> <li>• make relevant contributions;</li> <li>• listen to and consider what others say;</li> <li>• accept your share of the collective responsibility.</li> </ul>

# 11. ARE THERE EVENTS OR RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNORS WHICH REQUIRE ATTENTION ANNUALLY?

Yes, certain issues arise every year which require particular action by the governing body.

The first governing body meeting of the school year, usually held in the Autumn Term, at which the governing body:

- i) Elects the officers of the governing body :-
  - Chairperson;
  - Vice-chair.
  
- ii) Appoints:
  - Link governors;
  - Special Educational Needs governor;
  - Child Protection governor;
  - Co-ordinating link governors for curriculum development, governor training etc.
  
- iii) Confirms the establishment or maintenance of committees of the governing body.

Consideration must be given to:-

- Terms of reference of committees;
- Who is to serve upon committees;
- Arrangements for committees to report their findings to the governing body;
- What arrangements will be made for determining the dates upon which the governing body will meet during the year; and
- Every year, secondary schools will need to review their examination results. All schools will also need to review teacher assessments for National Curriculum subjects in order to set targets.

Governors must consider the admissions policy for the school. In the case of maintained schools, this will involve an annual consultation exercise undertaken by the LA concerning its policies for the admission of pupils to schools. However, although voluntary aided and foundation schools are responsible for their own admissions policy, they too will need to review their own admissions policies and arrangements before a new intake of pupils. They also have a duty to consult their LA in which they are situated about these arrangements.

## **OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE GOVERNING BODY MUST CONSIDER EVERY YEAR ARE:**

- Annual Report to Parents;
- Review of the School Development;
- Consideration and approval of next years' budget;
- Review of destination of leavers and projected admissions;
- Review of the attendance of pupils and staff;
- Review of school policies;
- Review of the work of governors;
- Performance management of headteacher and pay review.

It is good practice to establish a checklist of tasks for the governing body at the first meeting of the academic year. This provides a clear focus for discussion at future meetings. An example is provided which can be personalised to suit your governing body.

ACTION	WHO	WHEN (Insert meeting date)
<b>TERMLY MATTERS</b>		
Identify and organise training for governors and clerks		
Review progress with headteacher's objectives *		
Arrange governors' visits to the school		
Governing body meetings *		
Committee meetings		
Receive reports from committees		
Receive headteacher's termly report (before governing body meeting)		
Link governor reports		
Action planning following inspection (where applicable)		
Monitor the budget *		
Monitor the School Development Plan		
Monitor School Self-Evaluation Report		

\* Asterisked items are those which the governing body must consider during the year.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN (Insert meeting date)</b>
<b>AT ANY TIME IN THE YEAR</b>		
Complete asset management plan		
Arrange self-review and link the resulting action plan with self-evaluation process of school		
Monitor membership of governing body and arrange for any elections / appointments		
Induction of new governors		
Preparation for inspection		
Review child protection policy *		
Consider and report on the effectiveness of the school's work on behalf of children with Special Educational Needs *		
Appoint clerk if necessary		
Review the delegation of functions		
Review existing policies and amend as necessary <sup>13</sup>		
Receive teacher / governor report		

\* Asterisked items are those which the governing body must consider during the year.

<sup>13</sup> Please note the following requirements for the review of certain policies:

- **ADMISSIONS POLICY (Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools) – to be reviewed annually**
- **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – to be reviewed annually**
- **PAY POLICY – to be reviewed annually**
- **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – to be reviewed annually**
- **SCHOOL PROSPECTUS – to be reviewed annually**
- **TARGET-SETTING FOR SCHOOLS – to be reviewed annually**
- **GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS – to be produced annually**
- **REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTERESTS OF HEADTEACHER AND GOVERNORS – to be reviewed annually**
- **EQUALITY POLICY – equality objectives to be drawn up every four years**
- **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN – to be reviewed every three years**

ACTION	WHO	WHEN (Insert meeting date)
<b>AUTUMN TERM</b>		
Elect chair and vice-chair at first meeting *		
Appoint committees / working parties and review membership and terms of reference *		
Review link governors, e.g. child protection, SEN etc.		
Set dates of meetings for the year		
Set objectives for the governing body for the year		
Approve School Development Plan		
Review performance management policy *		
Review and consult on school's admission policy for the next school year for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools		
Draft / issue Annual Report to Parents * <i>It is recommended that the Annual Report to Parents is produced and issued during the Autumn term</i>		
Draw up freedom of information guidelines		
Set pupil performance targets		
Receive challenge adviser's annual note of visit *		
December – respond to annual consultation from LA on school's admission policy		
Review and agree school pay policy *		
Update register of business interests *		
Review school aims and objectives		

\* Asterisked items are those which the governing body must consider during the year.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>WHEN (Insert meeting date)</b>
<b>SPRING TERM</b>		
Agree curriculum plans for the year		
Consider and agree Service Level Agreements		
Agree budget and staffing structure		
Agree school prospectus *		
Publish proposals and school's admission arrangements for the following autumn if required		
Receive challenge adviser's note of visit (if not received in autumn term)		
Consider progress against performance objectives		
Consider resource implications		
Conduct annual pay review of all qualified teachers *		

<b>SUMMER TERM</b>		
Review the governing body's performance / procedures		
Review attendance of pupils / staff / governors		
Review pupil exclusions for the year		
Draft and set school budget for new year *		
Plan the annual work of the governing body in the context of the School Development Plan		

\* Asterisked items are those which the governing body must consider during the year.  
The remaining items are recommended as good practice. *(Sourced by an LA)*

## 12. THE GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

It is a statutory obligation for governors to provide an annual report for parents.

Governing bodies must produce a full annual report although it is not necessary to distribute the full report to all parents. Schools may, if they wish, distribute a summary report containing the required information as noted in the circular guidance listed below:

Governors' Annual Reports are subject to:

- The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Circular 15/01 "Governors' Annual Reports – guidance for governing bodies"
- "Regulations about reporting school and pupil information - concise guidance" (which replaces some sections in circular 15/01)

For further information, refer to our resource on annual reports.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.governors.cymru/publications/2018/08/29/governors-annual-report-parents/>