



Earl Sterndale CofE Primary School

The Full Governing Body

Terms of Reference

This document outlines the key roles, responsibilities and structure of the Governing Body at Earl Sterndale CE Primary School. It is not meant to be exhaustive in its content, rather giving a summary of all the main topics.

Purpose

According to the Dept. of Education there are three key responsibilities of the Governing Body:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

These functions came into force in September 2019 and in the criteria Ofsted inspectors use to judge the effectiveness of governance in both maintained schools and academies.

According to the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook there are 14 key responsibilities of a governing body and inspectors should consider whether governors:

- carry out their statutory duties, such as Safeguarding, and understand the boundaries of their role as Governors;
- ensure that they and the school promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles; and support and help, through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community, to prepare children and young people positively for life in modern Britain;
- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, including long-term planning (for example, succession);
- contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching, and reviewing the impact of their own work;

- understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, particularly their understanding and use of the school data dashboard;
- assure themselves of the rigour of the assessment process;
- are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subjects and year groups;
- provide challenge and hold the head teacher and other leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety, including by using the data dashboard, other progress data, examination outcomes and test results; or whether they hinder school improvement by failing to tackle key concerns or developing their own skills;
- use the Pupil Premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics;
- ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively;
- are providing support for an effective head teacher;
- monitor performance management systems and understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression, including the performance management of the head teacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management;
- engage with key stakeholders;
- are transparent and accountable, including in terms of recruitment of staff, governance structures, attendance at meetings, and contact with parents and carers.

Membership

The Governing Body of Earl Sterndale Primary School consists of up to 17 Governors as follows:

- As many Co-opted Governors as is appropriate, but Co-opted Governors who are Staff must make up no more than one third of the Full Governing Body;
- 2 Foundation Governors;
- 1 LA Appointed Governor;
- Up to 6 Parent Governors;
- 1 Staff Governor plus the Headteacher;
- Chair and Vice-Chair

There is also a Clerk to the Governors and the head teacher will attend all Governor meetings.

Terms of Office

Member Appointed Governors hold their post for a four-year term.

Governor eligibility, forthcoming post ending dates, current vacancies & other current details will be reviewed at each FGB.

The appointment to the post of Clerk is agreed annually at the first FGB of the Autumn Term.

Members Details

The Governing Body maintains the following records about its members:

- Personal contact details
- Committee membership
- Link Governor appointments
- Governors Pecuniary/Business Interest declarations
- Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks

Confirmation of Eligibility / Business Interests Declarations

These are reviewed at each GB meeting and updated annually, or more frequently if necessary.

Chair, Vice Chair

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to appoint a Chair & Vice-Chair at the first meeting of the FGB after such a post becomes vacant. We have agreed that their term of office is three years, reviewed and reconfirmed by the Full Governing Body annually. These posts cannot be held by employees of the school.

The Governing Body is also empowered to remove the incumbent Chair and Vice-Chair during the term of office should the Governing Body consider this action appropriate.

Clerk to the Governing Body

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to:

- Appoint a Clerk to the Governing Body at the start of the Autumn Term, or re-affirm the appointment of the existing Clerk.
- Remove the incumbent Clerk during the term of office should the Governing Body consider this action appropriate, and appoint a replacement Clerk to cover the end of the outgoing Clerk's current term.
- Appoint a replacement Clerk at the next full meeting of the Governing Body if the Clerk resigns during the one year term. This Clerk will hold the post until the end of the existing term of office.

The post of Clerk cannot be held by any of the existing Governors including the head teacher. In the absence of the Clerk, a meeting may be clerked by one of the attending Governors, but not the head teacher.

Meetings

Legality: A full meeting of the GB is only legal when it has been formally convened by the Clerk to the Governing Body at least 7 days prior to the meeting taking place.

Attendees: All Governors are expected to attend GB meetings. Other invites to GB meetings are issued at the discretion of Chair of Governors.

Apologies: Apologies must be made in advance; Governor apologies will be considered at the GB meeting and accepted if agreed by the majority of attending Governors.

Quorum: A GB meeting is able to proceed when at least 50% of Governors in post are present.

Chairing the meeting: The Chair of the GB will always chair GB meetings. In the unplanned absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will officiate at the meeting, and have the authority to delegate the task to another Governor, if necessary.

Decisions: The GB will generally make decisions by consensus. Where voting is applied to the decision-making process, unless otherwise decided by the GB beforehand, the outcome of any vote will be determined by a majority of greater than 50%. In the event of a tied vote the Chair of the meeting has a deciding second vote or the right of veto.

Pecuniary / Business Interest: The "*Standing Order for the Declaration of Pecuniary / Business Interests*" applies.

Confidentiality: All items discussed at GB meetings are confidential to the Governors until the minutes of the meeting are approved, unless otherwise clearly stated in the meeting.

Electronic Attendance: Any Governor will be able to participate in meetings of the Governors by telephone or video conference provided that the governor participates in the whole agenda item discussion and not just the vote; and if after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for the person to participate by telephone or video conference the meeting will still proceed with its business provided it is quorate.

Frequency

As a minimum, the Governing Body meets as follows, exceeding its legal obligations to meet 3 times a year.

Using the Circle Model of Governance (adopted in November 2025), the Full Governing Body will aim to meet every half-term:

Autumn Term Meeting 1. Takes place at start of the academic year, so that the year's planning can be agreed. Chair and Vice Chair are elected.

Subsequent meetings will then ideally take place during Autumn Term 2, Spring Term 1, Spring Term 2, Summer Term 1 & Summer Term 2.

Agenda

The agenda is prepared by the Chair in partnership with the HT and Clerk and will incorporate all matters arising from the previous meeting. Any items submitted by other governors for consideration must be sent to the Chair and Clerk a week prior to the FGB meeting to ensure inclusion in the agenda.

Minutes

Minutes are taken at the meetings by the Clerk. The draft is checked by chair and head teacher, and minutes issued to Governors within two weeks of meeting. Minutes are approved at the following meeting, and then published on the website.

At each FGB meeting there is a facility for a Part 2 meeting. The type of things in part 2 include – confidential items where student or staff names might be revealed; additionally time-sensitive items, which are confidential at the moment, but might be public in future. Part 2 minutes are not published on the website.

Statutory Responsibilities

Statutory responsibilities of the Governing Body are as follows:

- SEN;
- Teachers pay;
- Admissions;
- School statement of behaviour;
- Staff discipline, capability and grievance;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding;
- Supporting pupils with medical needs.

Delegation of Responsibilities

The Governing body may delegate any of its functions (with the exception to those listed below) to:

- Any governor other than a governor who is the head teacher;
- The head teacher, where the function being delegated does not directly concern the head teacher.

Where the governing body has delegated functions, this does not prevent the Governing Body from exercising those functions.

The Governing Body must review annually the functions they have delegated.

The Governing Body may not delegate the following functions to an individual, although they can be delegated to a Working Group:

- Approval to the first formal budget plan of the financial year;
- Suspension of Governors;
- Permanent exclusion of pupils

Any individual with delegated responsibility must report to the governing body advising of all actions taken or decisions made relating to that delegated function.

Retained Responsibilities of the Governing Body

The following responsibilities remain the responsibility of the whole governing body:

- Review and document approval of all delegation arrangements annually;
- Review the committee structures annually;
- Review the purpose and delegated authority of Working Parties annually;
- Annually appoint the following Governor Responsibilities:
 - School Finance (monitoring pair) – will include Pay Committee as required;
 - SEND;
 - Data Protection / GDPR / Cyber / Website Compliance;
 - Safeguarding (including Attendance);
 - Pastoral (Mental Health & Wellbeing; Behaviour; Personal, Social & Emotional Development; Community Engagement);
 - Church (Religious Engagement / Christian Distinctiveness);
 - Pupil Premium & Sports Premium;
 - Health & Safety (including Premises);
 - Teaching & Learning (Attainment & Progress / Data; Curriculum Development);
 - EYFS;
 - Governor Training & Development.
- Set the strategic direction of the school, with staff;
- Set the school's vision, mission, values, ethos & priorities in line with strategy, with staff;
- Determine the standards of conduct for the entire school community;
- Contribute to, approve and review the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF);
- Review & approve the School Development Plan (SDP);
- Review & approve all statutory school policies. Non-statutory policies are delegated;
- Monitor admissions, admission appeals & pupil number trends;
- Monitor the Equality Policy to ensure that it is compliant with current legislation and fully implemented within the school.

The Governing Body also has responsibilities towards its own members:

- Provide induction for new governors;
- Ensure provision of CPD to governors by organizing support and training;
- Facilitate governors' visits to school;
- Undertake an annual Governance Self Evaluation;
- Advertise parent governor vacancies to parents & staff governor vacancies to staff;
- Appoint Community Governors as vacancies arise.

Undertaking

As a Governor at Earl Sterndale CE Primary School, I confirm I have read and understood the Governing Body Terms of Reference.

Signed by All Governors