



LOCATION : SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 4

STANDING ORDERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF ABBAY COURT SCHOOL

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1 These Standing Orders should be used in the conjunction with the general advice contained in the Governors' Handbook issued by the Department of Education, the Headteacher's Contract and Conditions of Employment and, where appropriate, the policies of the Local Authority.

2. CONVENING AND PLANNING MEETINGS, AND THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- 2.1 At its first meeting in each academic year, the Governing Body elects a Chair and Vice Chair, who may not be an employee of the school. There is no longer a minimum or maximum length of term of office for the Chair and Vice Chair, however the date that the term will finish must be determined by the governing body before the election.
- 2.2 The Chair will conduct all meetings of the whole Governing Body except where, in his or her absence, the chair will be taken by the Vice Chair.
- 2.3 If both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent from a meeting or have resigned, the Governing Body will elect from its number a Chair for that meeting.
- 2.4 If both the Chair and the Vice Chair resign, the Governing Body will elect their successors at the next meeting.

3. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

- 3.1 The Governing Body will meet as a whole no less than once a term.
- 3.2 The Governing Body will plan its meetings, including those of committees, on an annual basis, at the last meeting of the academic year.

4. TIMING OF MEETINGS

- 4.1 Meetings will start at times which are acceptable to the full Governing Body and will be limited to 2 hours duration.
- 4.2 Where business has not been completed within the time stated in paragraph 4.1 above those present at a meeting may resolve to extend the meeting for a given time in order to deal with specified business.

5. **QUORUM**

- 5.1 For meetings of the full Governing Body the quorum will be 50% of those in post.
- 5.2 The quorum for a committee/working party will be that determined by the Governing Body when the committee/working party is established.
- 5.3 A meeting cannot be held if it is inquorate and, therefore, decisions may not be made.
- 5.4 If during the course of a meeting it becomes inquorate it will be discontinued.
- 5.5 A meeting may be discontinued at any time by resolution of the Governing Body.
- 5.6 When a meeting is discontinued or is inquorate any items remaining on the agenda will/may be placed on the agenda of a subsequent meeting.

6. **CONVENING MEETINGS**

- 6.1 Additional emergency meetings may be called by the Chair of Governors. Should Governors wish to call any meeting a requisition signed by 3 Governing Body Members must be sent to the clerk.

7. **NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

- 7.1 Written notice of meetings and the agenda will be sent to members at their registered addresses, the Headteacher, if not a governor, so that they may be received seven clear days before the meeting, while those for an extraordinary meeting called by the Chair or by requisition written notice may be sent within a shorter time.
- 7.2 Non-receipt of notice of a meeting will not invalidate the meeting.

8. **AGENDA**

- 8.1 Agenda will be organised by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and the Headteacher together.
- 8.2 Items may be placed on the agenda by individual, or groups of, governors by writing to the Clerk.
- 8.3 Papers which inform Agenda items will usually be sent to governors with the Agenda.

9. **ATTENDANCE**

- 9.1 A record will be kept of all persons attending a meeting of the Governing Body or any of its committees.
- 9.2.1 The time of departure of any member leaving before the end of a meeting will be recorded in the minutes.
- 9.3 Apologies for non-attendance of meetings should be sent to the Clerk, or school office, prior to the meeting, and the reasons for absence will be noted separately to the minutes. Governors to approve reasons for non-attendance and identify possible consequences.

10. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

- 10.1 The minutes of meetings will be drawn up on consecutively numbered loose leaf pages, each page initialled by the person signing them as a true record.
- 10.2 A dissenting view will be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting, if that is the wish of one or more members present.
- 10.3 Copies of the draft minutes checked for accuracy by the Chair and the Headteacher, will be sent to all members of the Governing Body within 21 days of the meeting.
- 10.4 The Minutes of the meeting will be considered for approval or amendment at the next meeting.
- 10.5 Action will be taken on the basis of decisions and need not await the approval of the Minutes at the next meeting.
- 10.6 Those matters which must by law remain confidential or which the Governing Body decides shall be confidential will not be published in the Minutes of any meeting.
- 10.7 The Minutes of meetings will be available for public inspection once they have been checked by the Headteacher and approved by the Chair.
- 10.8 The approved Minutes, etc., will be available for public inspection at reasonable times by arrangement with the Clerk.
- 10.9 A copy of the approved minutes, including the confidential page, will be sent to Governor Services following each meeting.

11. **CORRESPONDENCE**

- 11.1 All incoming correspondence, excluding any concerning a complaint, is for the attention of the whole Governing Body. Significant items will be presented to each meeting of the Governing Body, including any upon which the Chair has already taken urgent action, so that the need for, and the nature of, action may be decided or confirmed.
- 11.2 The Chair, or in his absence, the Vice Chair, will write letters on behalf of the Governing Body.

12. **INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

- 12.1 The Headteacher has a statutory duty to keep the Governing Body fully informed, and will present a written report to the Governing Body, 3 times/year : Autumn, Spring and Summer.
- 12.2 The Director of Children's Services or his/her representative will be invited to attend meetings in order to inform and advise the Governing Body when considered appropriate by the full body.
- 12.3 Where important information required by the Governing Body is given orally, it will be recorded in the Minutes in appropriate detail.

12.4 Where information is required by the Governing Body but is not readily available, reasonable time will be given for its production.

12.5 Where expertise is needed but not available within the Governing Body, the Governing Body may consider co-opting an appropriate non-governor who may not vote on any issue except in matters relating to tenancies.

13. **DISCUSSION AND DEBATE**

13.1 The Chair will consult the Governing Body on matters raised where they appear to be not relevant to the agenda or for which due notice has not been given.

13.2 The Chair will ensure that all governors enjoy equality of opportunity to express their views.

13.3 Recommendations received from working parties will be recorded in the written Minutes.

13.4 The Governing Body will receive, but not debate, decisions which it has delegated to a committee or to an individual. Decisions will be recorded in the Minutes.

14. **DECISION MAKING**

14.1 Members of the Governing Body recognise that all decisions must be made by a full meeting of the Governing Body unless an individual or a committee has been delegated to deal with a specific issue.

15.2 Decisions will be made after full discussion and by a simple majority by a show of hands unless any one member, or more, require a secret ballot.

14.3 A decision of the Governing Body is binding upon all its members.

14.4 Voting on any question relating to Foundation will be by secret ballot.

14.5 Voting on a decision to ballot parents will be by secret ballot.

14.6 If there is a tied vote at the end of a discussion, the Chair may vote a second time to determine the issue.

14.7 Decisions of the Governing Body may only be amended or rescinded at a subsequent meeting of the Governing Body when the proposal to amend or rescind appears as a separate agenda item.

15. **URGENT ACTION**

15.1 The Chair, or in his or her absence, the Vice Chair, has authority to take urgent action between meetings provided that the following conditions exist:

15.1.1 delay in dealing with the matter would be seriously detrimental to a pupil, or potential pupil, or his or her parents, or to a member of staff or a potential member of staff; and

15.1.2 a meeting could not be called in sufficient time to deal with the matter without being seriously detrimental as described in 15.1.1.

15.2 If any urgent action is taken by the Chair between meetings the facts will be reported to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

16. **PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

16.1 Public statements will be made only by those delegated to make them.

17. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS OF THE GOVERNING BODY**

17.1 Those persons entitled to attend a meeting of the Governing Body are any of its members, the Headteacher whether or not member of the Governing Body and the clerk.

17.2 When the Headteacher is absent, his or her place will be taken by the Deputy Headteachers.

17.3 The Governing Body will decide who, other than a Governor, the Headteacher or the Clerk, will be admitted to a meeting.

17.4 The Governing Body will make a decision and write in response to those seeking permission to attend meetings.

17.5 The Governing Body will decide which of its meetings, if any, will be open to the public.

17.6 If a meeting is to be opened to parents/the public, reasonable notice will be given.

17.7 The Deputy Headteacher/s may be invited to attend meetings of the full body as part of his/her/their professional development. The Deputy Headteacher would not be entitled to vote but may be invited to contribute to discussion such as a Teacher Governor.

18. **PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST**

18.1 The Governing Body will maintain a register of the pecuniary interests of its members in the form of consecutively numbered loose leaf sheets, each sheet being a statement completed and signed by the relevant member.

18.2 Members will draw attention as appropriate to their declared pecuniary or personal interests.

18.3 A governor will be required to withdraw from a meeting, if he or she:

18.3.1 stands to gain financially from a matter under consideration.

18.3.2 has a personal interest in a matter under consideration; or

18.3.3 is a relative of a pupil, a parent or an employee being discussed.

18.4 Governors who have declared personal interest must be allowed to attend a meeting of a committee of the Governing Body to give evidence if they have made relevant accusations, or are witnesses in the case, when it is discussing:

- 18.4.1 disciplinary action against an employee or against a pupil; or
- 18.4.2 a matter arising from an alleged incident involving a pupil.

19. **COMPLAINTS AND STAFF DISCIPLINE**

- 19.1 The Governing Body has established procedures for dealing with general complaints (see Complaints Procedure) and will abide by the Local Authority's procedures for dealing with curriculum complaints.
- 19.2 The Governing Body has established procedures for dealing with staff disciplinary matters and staff grievances. (See also paragraph 18.2 and Abbey Court School Disciplinary/Grievance Procedures.)

20. **DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS**

- 20.1 The Governing Body stresses that no action may be taken by an individual governor unless authority to do so has been delegated formally by resolution of the full Governing Body.
- 20.2 The Governing Body will determine the extent to which it will delegate its functions to an individual or to a committee but will not delegate decision making on those matters forbidden by requirement to either an individual or to a committee.
- 20.3 The Governing Body will delegate its functions in relation to the dismissal of a member of staff to a committee but it will not delegate this to an individual.
- 20.4 The Governing Body will delegate its functions in relation to the exclusion of a pupil to a committee but it will not delegate it to an individual.

21. **COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

- 21.1 In order to ensure the most efficient use of time and resources, and in some cases to ensure absolute propriety, the Governing Body will, where it is proper and appropriate to do so:
 - 21.1.1 set up working parties to provide information and/or make recommendations to the whole Governing Body;
 - 21.1.2 delegate work to committees with the power to make decisions on behalf of the whole Governing Body.
 - 21.1.3 delegate work to individual members of the Governing Body and/or the Headteacher, if not a Governor.

22. **COMMITTEES**

- 22.1 Committees will have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Governing Body only where delegation is not forbidden by requirement.
- 22.2 When establishing committees the Governing Body, in addition to ensuring that at least three governors (not including the Headteacher) are appointed to each, will:
 - 22.2.1 determine the membership and the method of appointing the Chair of each committee;

- 22.2.2 establish and record terms of reference;
- 22.2.3 allow working parties and committees to determine their own timetables within given limits;
- 22.2.4 determine procedures for reporting back;
- 22.2.5 review the need for, and the membership of, committees annually.

- 22.3 The Governing Body may co-opt non-governors to committees but they may not vote on any matter except the use of premises out of school hours.
- 22.4 The Headteacher has the right to attend any meeting of the Governing Body or any of its committees subject to the statutory rules laid down in respect of exclusions, and staff disciplinary matters.
- 22.5.1 "First" Committees, their membership, Chairs and terms of reference will be reviewed at the first meeting in each academic year, to deal with:
Exclusions, staff (pay, dismissals, discipline and grievances).

Note: A First Committee is one which makes initial decisions which may be subject to appeal.

- 22.6 The Governing Body will also establish a committee to deal with appeals against any decision of a "first" committee except for exclusions.
- 22.7 The membership of the appeal committee will not include any member of the relevant "first" committee or a governor who had any previous involvement with the matter under appeal.
- 22.8 The Governing Body will ensure that the appeal committee will have no fewer members than the relevant "first" committee.

23. **WORKING PARTIES**

- 23.1 In establishing working parties the Governing Body, will:
 - 23.1.1 determine the membership, including that of non-members of the Governing Body, and the method of appointing the Chair of each working party;
 - 23.1.2 establish and record terms of reference;
 - 23.1.3 determine when working parties must meet OR allow working parties to determine their own timetables within given limits;
 - 23.1.4. determine procedures for reporting back.
- 23.2 The Headteacher has the right to attend any meeting of the Governing Body or any of its working parties.
- 23.3 If the Governing Body establishes working parties to make recommendations or provide information they will be discontinued when their work has been completed.
- 23.4 A working party will present either written recommendations or progress reports to the next meeting of the full body.

24. **REVIEW**

- 24.1 Amendments of these Standing Orders may be made only by the Governing Body at its first full meeting of any the academic year.

25. **DISTRIBUTION**

- 25.1 One copy of these Standing Orders will be presented to each member of the Governing Body, new governors when they join, the Headteacher, if not a governor, and the Clerk. One copy will be filed as part of the record of the meeting at which they are agreed or amended. Once agreed the Chair should sign and date the last page and initial those preceding.

26. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 26.1 Links to Terms of Reference can be found in the following policies:- Pay Policy (School Handbook, Section 2, Document 12), Disciplinary Policy (School Handbook, Section 2, Document 16) and Finance Policy (School Handbook, Section 1, Document 20)

K. JOY

Updated Autumn 1999

Updated Autumn 2002

Updated Autumn 2004

Updated Summer 2005

Updated Summer 2007

Reviewed and updated by Eileen James Summer 2009

Updated Summer 2011

Updated Summer 2013

Reviewed and updated by Keith Williams Autumn 2015 / Spring 2017

Reviewed and updated by Jean Kerr Autumn 2019

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Code of Conduct

Appendix 2: Instrument of Governance

Appendix 3: Associate Members Terms of Reference



GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT

Roles & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and its strategic role.
- We understand how the role of the board differs from and works with others including 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 governance 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/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will respect the role of the Headteacher and her responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing board.

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 arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (ie as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles of the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors.

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, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities' any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public life (see annex) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members 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 executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust, 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 discussion regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

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 accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school website.
- 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 board.

Ceasing to be a Governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

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 we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the Vice Chair, will investigate.

Name of Governor: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annex

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.

Integrity – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Instrument of Governance

**INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNANCE
FOUNDATION SCHOOL**



1. The name of the school is Abbey Court School
2. The school is a foundation school
3. The name of the governing body is "The governing body of Abbey Court School"
4. The governing body shall consist of:
 - 2 parent governors
 - 1 local authority governor
 - 1 staff governor
 - 1 headteacher
 - 2 partnership governors
 - 3 co-opted governors
5. The total number of governors – 20
6. This instrument of government comes into effect on 2.11.16
7. This instrument was made by order of Medway Council as the local authority on 19.09.16

A copy of this instrument must be supplied to every member of the governing body (and the headteacher if not a governor).

Signed : Chair of Governors K. Williams

(Print name) K. Williams

Signed : Medway Council
Manager Governor Services AM Robinson

(Print name) Anto M Robinson



GOVERNING BODY

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Abbey Court School Governing Body will appoint Associate Members when they have a need for additional skills or expertise. Any person wishing to become an Associate Member will identify their skills and experience to the Governing Body for their consideration at a full Governing Body Meeting.
2. The Governing Body will appoint an Associate Member by a majority vote when a term of office will be set for a minimum of one and not exceeding 4 years. (The length of the term of office will be dependent on the nature of the area/project the Associate Member is being appointed to assist with).
3. At the time of appointment it will be decided whether the Associate Member will attend some or all Governing Body meetings. (The Associate Member may, however, not vote). In all cases the Associate Member may be excluded from discussions about individual staff or pupils.
4. At the time of the appointment it will also be decided which committee meetings the Associate Member will be included in and whether he/she will be authorised to vote at these meetings.
5. The Chair of Governors will decide whether, in exceptional circumstances (such as a panel not being able to be convened) an Associate Member may be asked to sit on a panel relating to staff discipline, grievance or recruitment.
6. Associate Members will be required to sign the Governing Body Code of Conduct and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner.
7. Associate Members are not Governors but are part of the Governance arrangements of the school and, therefore, publication requirements such as terms of office, business record and attendance record applies to them.
8. Associate Members can be removed by majority vote by the Governing Body at any time.
9. Associate Members will be entitled to claim travel expenses.

K JOY
DECEMBER 2019