

Standing Orders of the Governing Board of FST Primary Schools Federation 2023/24



Love, Learn and Grow Together

At Foston CE and Terrington CE (VA) Schools, our commitment is to exploring sustainability, affirming diversity, embracing community, and inspiring creativity. Our core Fruit of the Spirit values of love, joy, patience, and self-control are rooted in the words of St Paul (Galatians 5 v 22-23). These Christian values are fostered in the pupils and staff, building an ethos where all can flourish.

At Stillington Community Primary School our commitment to exploring sustainability, affirming diversity, embracing community, and inspiring creativity is rooted in the core values of love, joy, patience, and self-control. These core values are fostered in the pupils and staff, building an ethos where all can flourish.

Agreed by the Governing Board: 2 October 2023

Next Review: September 2024

Standing Orders are a set of rules that guide how the governing board will be run and managed effectively. Whilst not legally required, they can give clarification to internal processes and procedures and therefore school boards are recommended to agree and adopt a framework and review this annually as part of their regular self-evaluation process.

These Standing Orders have been prepared in accordance with:

- The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 (updated 2014)
- The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools 2017
- The Governance Handbook 2020.

1. Meetings of the governing board

The governing board shall meet 6 times each school year.

(Note: governing bodies are legally required to meet at least 3 times per school year)

2. Chair and Vice-Chair – Term of Office

The chair and vice-chair shall have a term of office of 1 year

The term shall begin at the first governing body meeting of the autumn term at which the chair and vicechair are normally elected and shall end at the first meeting following the first anniversary of their election.

In the event of the chair and/or vice-chair ceasing to occupy their post(s) part way through their respective term(s) of office, then their successor(s) shall serve out the remainder of their predecessor's term.

If the chair is absent from a meeting, the vice-chair will act as chair for all purposes.

If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent from a meeting, the governors must elect a member to be their acting chair at the start of the meeting for the period of the meeting itself.

When the office of chair becomes vacant, the governing body must elect a new chair at the next meeting. The vice chair will take on the role of interim chair until a new chair is elected. If there is no vice chair in role, a governor must be identified to take on the role of interim chair, from that meeting until a new chair is elected.

The board limits the maximum length in the role of chair or vice chair to 6 years.

3. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The election of the chair and vice-chair takes place at the first meeting of the governing board held in the autumn term.

The clerk shall take the chair for the item dealing with the election of the chair and, in the event of a failure to elect a chair, for the item dealing with the election of the vice-chair.

If the governing body fail to elect a chair or a vice-chair, the governing body shall elect a chair for the meeting and for the period until the next meeting. The appointment of chair will be the first agenda item at the next meeting.

In the event of the governing body failing to elect a chair for the meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned and the clerk, acting in consultation with the immediate past chair and the head teacher, shall convene a further meeting of the board within 28 days of the adjournment.

Anyone who takes on the role of chair must be a governor, not an associate member and should not be a school employee.

4. Annual calendar of meetings and business

At the last meeting of the summer term the governing board shall approve a calendar of governing body and committee meetings and of planned business for the ensuing year and the clerk shall, within 14 days, of the meeting provide a copy of the calendar to all members of the governing body.

5. Notice of meetings and agenda

Every member of the governing board shall receive the following, 7 days in advance of a meeting:

- written notice of the meeting;
- a copy of the agenda for the meeting;
- a copy of any reports or papers to be considered at the meeting.

This standing order shall not apply where the chair of the governing board so determines on the ground that there are matters demanding urgent consideration. In that case the written notice of the meeting shall state that fact and the agenda, reports and other papers to be considered at the meeting are received within such shorter period, as the chair shall direct.

The governing board agree, notice can be sent by email and papers can be accessed via the dedicated Governor SharePoint. Governors MUST have secure school email addresses for governing board business and all aspects of confidentiality should be discussed regularly.

6. Agenda Items

With the agreement of the chair of the governing board or of the relevant committee, any member of the governing body shall be entitled to include, on the agenda for any governing body or committee meeting, an item(s) on any particular issue provided that written notice thereof is given, as appropriate, to the chair of the governing body, or of the relevant committee and to the clerk at least 14 days prior to the meeting taking place.

7. Quorum

The quorum for a meeting of the governing board shall be not less than 50% of the number of governors in post at the time of the meeting (not including vacancies) or such other number as may be determined from time to time by regulations issued by the Department for Education.

The quorum for a meeting of any committee of the governing body shall be at least three governors who are members of that committee;

Associate members shall not be included in the calculation for quorum purposes.

If a meeting is inquorate, it cannot go ahead as a formal board meeting. Governors can still continue with the meeting for discussion only but no decisions can be made. There is an expectation that this meeting would still be minuted.

8. Voting

The board should agree how they wish votes to be taken. If a vote is particularly sensitive in nature, governors sometimes may ask for votes to be taken in private and given to the clerk.

The decision and process MUST be agreed by the board before a vote is taken with regard to how the vote will proceed:

- verbal agreement

- show of hands
- secret ballot
- electronic ballot (for a remote secret ballot – the person must be present at the meeting)

The board have not chosen to have a system in place which requires each vote to be proposed and seconded. This is not a requirement and is for the board to decide.

Decisions are made by a majority vote. If more governors vote in favour than vote against, then the vote has passed. It does not have to be unanimous. If a vote is tied, the person who is chairing the meeting has a casting vote.

The right to vote is removed if a governor has a conflict of interest.

Associate members do not have voting rights.

Only those governors at the meeting and present in the room/remote room at the time of the vote shall be entitled to vote.

9. Virtual Meetings / Hybrid Meetings

The board have agreed that it is acceptable for some meetings to take place virtually.

The board have agreed that it is acceptable, in exceptional circumstances, for a hybrid meeting to take place - where a face-to-face meeting is attended virtually by one or more governors.

For all meetings, governors must adhere to the agreed code of conduct.

Governors may attend meetings via telephone or video link. Governors attending meetings virtually:

- have the right to vote
- must ensure that they cannot be overheard
- are expected to attend the full meeting

Remote meetings must only be recorded with prior agreement from every attendee and with clear rationale as to why it is being recorded.

10. Confidential Matters

At the start of any meeting, or discussion, consideration shall be given as to whether the matter includes confidential information and the governing body or committee shall determine whether the public or any other person, not being a member of the governing body, should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the matter.

Any matter being deemed to be confidential shall be excluded from the minutes of the meeting to be made available for public inspection. They will be kept as a separate confidential minute and stored securely.

This standing order is additional to the requirement for governors to withdraw from a meeting and take no part in the consideration or voting on any item in which they have a declarable interest.

11. Minutes of Meetings

The draft minutes of all governing board and committee meetings shall be approved by the chair of the meeting within 14 days of the meeting having taken place. Thereafter the approved draft governing board minutes shall be circulated to all members of the governing board within 21 days of the meeting having taken place. The minutes of committee meetings shall be circulated with the agenda for the next succeeding governing body meeting.

All non-confidential minutes shall be made available for public inspection only after they have been submitted for approval to the next succeeding meeting of the governing body or committee, as appropriate.

12. Record of Attendance

Every governor attending a meeting of the governing board or of any of its committees of which they are a member shall sign their name on the attendance sheet provided by the clerk for that purpose.

The clerk will record attendance and whether it was in person or virtual.

The board MUST share their annual attendance records for the last academic year on the school website.

13. Apologies for non-attendance at meetings of the governing body

Apologies, together with the reason(s) for non-attendance shall be submitted to the clerk or to the chair not later than the commencement of the meeting. The governing board shall then determine whether such absence(s) should be treated as a 'consented' or 'non-consented' absence and recorded as such in the minutes of the meeting. The failure to submit an apology shall be deemed to be a 'non-consented' absence and recorded as such in the minutes of the meeting.

14. Disqualification for non-attendance

Any governor, with the exception of the head teacher, who fails to attend any meeting of the governing board for a consecutive period of 6 months without the approval of the governing board, and such approval being recorded in the minutes, shall be automatically disqualified from serving as a governor. The period of 6 months shall begin from the date of the first meeting missed by the governor. Foundation (but not ex-officio foundation) governors, parent governors, staff governors, co-opted governors, partnership governors or sponsor governors and associate governors so disqualified shall not be eligible for nomination, election or reappointment as a governor of any category for a period of 12 months immediately following his/her disqualification.

15. Records of the governing body

The clerk to the governing body shall be responsible for maintaining and keeping up to date the records of the governing body which for the purpose of this standing order shall comprise the following:

- the minutes of the meetings of the governing board and its committees;
- the record of attendance;
- the register of business and other interests;
- the record of hospitality/gifts;
- copies of self-declaration forms to confirm that governors are not disqualified for any of the criteria listed;
- any such other records as may be determined from time to time by formal resolution;
- records of governor monitoring visits to school;
- the signed and approved code of conduct and standing orders.

The signed minutes of the governing board shall be kept in a secure place provided at the school (and copies securely on the school's electronic system) and shall be available for inspection by the public, members of the governing board, parents of pupils at the school and the Local Authority. Confidential items and confidential minutes shall not be made available for public inspection.

16. Register of business interests and financial interests

Every governor shall complete the register of business and financial interests within one month of their election/appointment as a governor. Entries in the register shall be updated as and when necessary and, in any event, annually. In the event of any governor having no registerable business interests then a NIL return shall be recorded for that governor(s). Details will be shared on the school website.

17. Eligibility to be a Governor

Every governor shall complete the self-declaration form to indicate that they are eligible to be a governor at a maintained school and are a “fit and proper” person to be a governor.

Every governor shall also complete an application for an enhanced check to the Disclosure and Barring Service within 28 days of their appointment. Refusal to do so disqualifies the refusing governor. Governors’ DBS records should be held within the school’s single central record along with all staff and other volunteers.

Governors will be required to complete a further DBS application in line with NYCC recommendations.

Governors must also be subject to a Section 128 check on their appointment.

18. Conduct

The governing body shall annually adopt a code of conduct, which all governors MUST agree and adhere to.

All members of the governing body shall abide by the Nolan Principles on public life as follows:

Selflessness - holders of public office should take decisions 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 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.

Governors accept that if they fail to live up to these principles, they can be removed from office (with the exception of the Headteacher).

19. Training and CPD

All governors agree to complete training and CPD sessions. This may include but is not limited to: Induction training for new governors, safeguarding training, PREVENT, and training to support the fulfilment of their duties (pupil data/ finance/ audit) or roles (e.g. chair’s training).

All governors must also read, the current and any future version of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Where involved in recruitment processes, at least one member of the board will have completed safer recruitment training.

20. Expectations

Governors should be aware that in addition to attendance at meetings, they should be willing support the school with a range of monitoring activities and to attend events.

21. Declarations of interest

If any member of the governing body has any interest, whether pecuniary or otherwise, in any item on the agenda for any meeting at which they are present, they shall declare such interest prior to the consideration of that item. A decision should be made if the governor withdraws and takes no part of the discussion and subsequent vote, or if they remain to support the discussion but withdraw before the vote takes place.

22. Urgent action by the chair/vice-chair of the governing body

Where it is not reasonably practical to hold a meeting of the governing body (or of the relevant committee that has the delegated authority to deal with any matter) or where the relevant 7 days' notice of the meeting cannot be given and there will be a delay that would be seriously harmful to the school or to any pupil or member of staff if the matter is not dealt with, then the chair (or in their absence the vice-chair) shall have authority to take such action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances to deal with the matter. Such action must be reported to the next available meeting of the governing body or committee.

23. Financial and other guidance

The governing body and any committee(s) established by it shall, at all times, abide by the North Yorkshire County Council Financial Standing Orders and any directions that may be issued by the local authority.

The governing body shall also have regard to and take account of any advice or guidance that may be issued by the local authority, such as the School Finance Manual (chapter 17 – Governors).

24. Review of standing orders

The governing body will review the standing orders annually. Any proposed changes must be an agenda item, discussed accordingly and minuted.

25. Interpretation of standing orders

The ruling of the chair as to the application of any of these standing orders, or as to any proceedings of the governing body, shall be final.

26. Associate members

Any reference in these standing orders to a governor shall, unless otherwise stated, include associate members.

27. Personal Data

Governors agree that their personal details may be used to complete the required declarations to the DfE, on GIAS (Get Information about Schools), the LA database, the Diocese database (where applicable) and on the school website.