

**Governor Support Service**

# **Intro to Governance**

**Ron Fowler and Sandra D'Souza**



**Autumn 2020**

# Etiquette



It is good to see colleagues but you can turn your **camera** off if you wish.



We will all remain on mute unless we have a question we would like to ask.



If we wish to ask a question we will either use the raise hand function and/or use the chat. Please also use the chat facility to make any useful comments

# Course outline




**Part 1 of the course will consider:  
The key roles and responsibilities of governors, and,  
Accountability of the governing board**



**Part 2 of the course will consider:  
Knowing about your school**

# Governor Introduction

- How long have you been a school governor?
- Have you attended a governing board meeting?


  
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**Welcome to the Governor Support Service**
  
 The Governor Support Service is an independent advice offering governor training, advice, guidance and support to all Hertfordshire Schools, with over 20 years combined experience working with local authorities in Governor Support roles, we are able to offer advice and expertise, advice, support and training to school governors and clerks.

**Our services**
  
**Advice & Guidance**
  
 We provide governing bodies and advice with information, support, and advice to proactively govern and enhance governing governance. Schools can access our full range of services by purchasing a service level agreement with us for 2019/2020, or by contacting the team on 01895 717321. Please contact us for further information.

**Keeping Children Safe in Education**
  
 Revised Children Safe in Education revised guidance was published on 9 September 2019.

**Revised policy list**
  
 DfE revised policy list, Maintained and Assisted, Sep 2019

**Recent course handouts**
  
 Download the handouts

**Follow us on Twitter**
  
 Keep up to date with the latest education news.

**Our Courses**
  
 The Governor Support Service provides a programme of training and development sessions each term that governors, headteachers, senior leadership teams, associate members and clerks can access to help them carry out their duties effectively. We run a varied range of training courses and briefing sessions covering subjects such as Safeguarding, Excellence, the Curriculum and self-reflection in addition to regular termly briefing sessions for clerks and chairs and an induction programme for those who are new or returning to school governance including all categories of governors, senior leaders, clerks and associate members. Details of all our training courses can be accessed by clicking here and selecting the Governor Support Courses tab on the left-hand menu. New users to the course booking service will need to complete the registration process via the "register" tab on the top menu bar) to create a personal account where their bookings can then be viewed and amended as necessary. If you need any support with using this service please contact us on 01895 717321 or by email at [office@governorsupport.org](mailto:office@governorsupport.org)

**Volunteer as a governor**
  
 Schools we work with often have vacancies for school governor volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, why not find out more? Apply through GSS directly by completing the form below or click on the link below to volunteer through a charity we work with - Governors for Schools.

<https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/volunteers/apply/>
  
<https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/volunteers/>

Contact the Governor Support Service:
   
 Name: 
  
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 School: 
  
 I understand by ticking this box I am accepting the Website Terms and Conditions of Use and the Privacy Policy

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Home Model Documents

**Model Documents**
  
**NGA Effective Governance Documents**
  
 NGA-Model-Code-of-Conduct-2018
   
 Delegation Planner
   
 Being-Strategic-A-guide-for-governing-boards2018
   
 NGA-The-Right-People-Around-the-Table2018\_1
   
 NGA-Delegation-of-functions-Final (1)
   
 Role Description for Governors
   
 What school governors and leaders should expect from each other
   
 Framework for School Governance
   
 Committee Terms of Reference
   
 Policy Clock
   
 20 Key Questions for Governing boards to Ask
   
 GB Skills Audit and Skills Matrix
   
 Knowing-your-school-briefing-school-visits-final
   
 Knowing-your-school-Engaging-parents-Final-June-2016
   
 Reviewing-governor-contribution
   
 Pupil-premium-guidance\_final
   
 Succession Breeds Success
   
 Clerks-and-GDPR
   
 Accessing Minutes – NGA
   
 Naming Names in Minutes

# Governance Bulletin

Spring 2019




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# Clerks' Briefing

Autumn 2019

Strong teamwork between the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and the clerk is crucial to efficient working.
   
Good Learning from the Best 2013

The role of the clerk is pivotal in ensuring that statutory duties are met, meetings are well organised and governors receive the information they need in good time. Consequently, governors come to meetings well prepared and with pertinent questions ready so that they are able to provide constructive challenge.
   
Head Learning from the Best 2013


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**GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE**
  
**gss**
  
 Summer 2019

## Hot Topics


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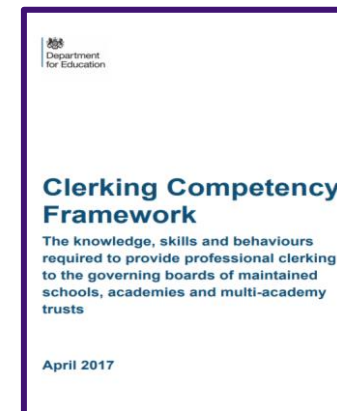
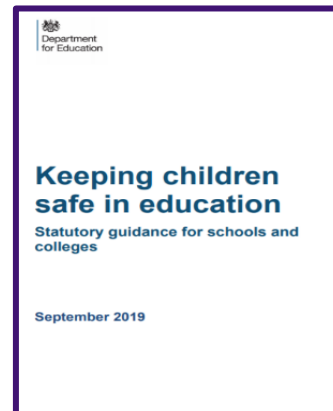
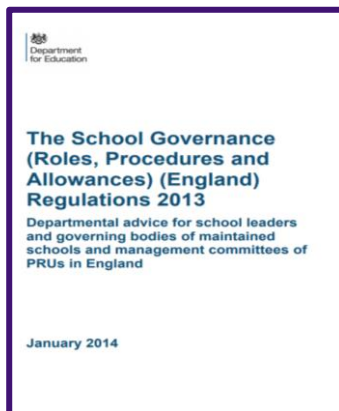
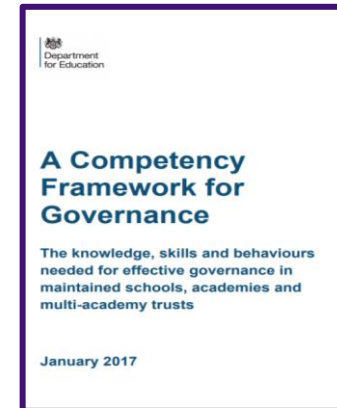
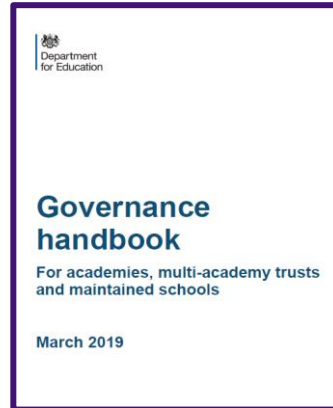
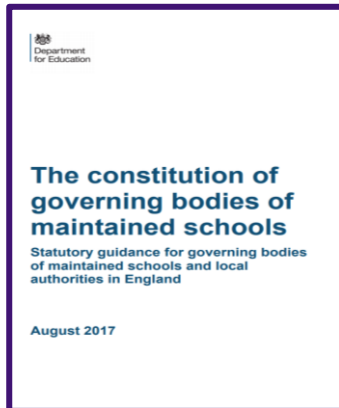
# Key Roles and Responsibilities

- Governance principles and competencies
- Expectations of the governor role
- Core functions of the governing board
- The governing board
- Strategic and operational roles
- The Headteacher
- The Chair of Governors
- The Clerk to Governors
- Meetings and effective practice

(DfE – [‘Governance Handbook’](#), March 2019)

# Governance principles and legal duties

## Maintained Schools



# Competency Framework for Governance

(DfE)

- 16 competencies underpinned by a foundation of important principles and personal attributes.
- Grouped under the headings of the six features of effective governance, which are set out in the DfE Governance Handbook:

1. **strategic leadership**
2. **accountability**
3. **people**
4. **structures**
5. **compliance**
6. **evaluation.**

All those involved in governance should be:

- ✓ Committed
- ✓ Confident
- ✓ Curious
- ✓ Challenging
- ✓ Collaborative
- ✓ Critical
- ✓ Creative





# Core strategic functions

- GBs should operate as **non-executive boards**.
- All boards, no matter what type of schools or how many schools they govern, have three core strategic functions.

## 1

### Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

- Ensuring school's vision and ethos are strongly reflected throughout the school and in its delivery of education functions
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Meeting all statutory duties

## 2

### Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils

- Using data to provide challenge and hold leaders to account for teaching, achievement, behaviour and safety
- Strengthening school leadership, inc GB skills
- Performance managing HT
- Contributing to school self-evaluation and evaluating GB's impact.

## 3

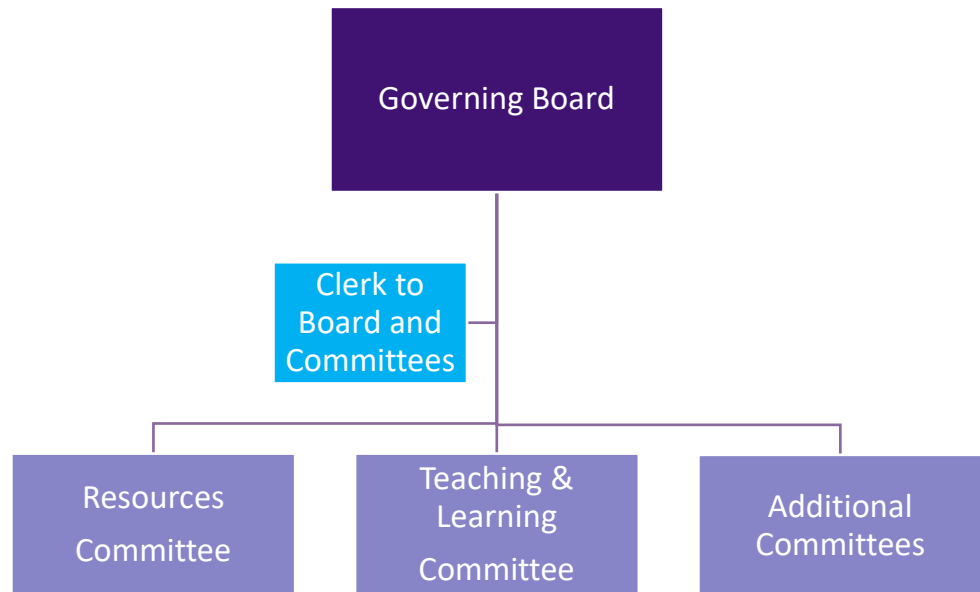
### Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

- Ensuring solvency
- Effective and lawful personnel practices
- Effective and lawful financial management
- Effective use of pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning

# Maintained School Governing Board

Maintained schools are part of the local authority (LA) school system.

- In practice, the LA's involvement in running a school is limited and governors exercise most oversight, although the board must comply with the LA's financial regulations.
- Community, voluntary, and foundation are all types of maintained schools.
- Depending on the type of school, the governing board may also be the legal employer and admissions authority, and own or manage the land.



# The GB as a corporate board

- The governing board (GB) is a **corporate board**.
- GB is legally responsible for the conduct of the school.
- Authority rests with the **whole governing board**.
- **Collective responsibility** should be taken for the decisions and outcomes.
- Confidentiality - incl. how individual governors vote is confidential.
- The chair can act in an emergency, but must report to the whole governing board at the earliest opportunity.
- Provided governors act honestly, reasonably and in good faith any liability will fall on the governing board even if it has exceeded its powers, rather than on individual members.

# Strategic vs operational roles

- **It is vital that governors understand that their role is strategic rather than operational.**
- Governors set the school's strategic framework and ensure that it meets all of its statutory duties.
- Governors should not be drawn into direct involvement in operational matters and the detail of the day-to-day management of the school, which are the responsibility of the headteacher and senior leaders.
- It is essential to have skilled governors, but equally important to emphasise that the skills required are those to create robust accountability, not to do the school's job for it.
- For example, a governor with financial expertise should use their skills to scrutinise the school's accounts, not to help prepare them. The school employs a finance officer for operational financial matters.

## **The Headteacher**

... is accountable to the governing board for the performance of all his or her responsibilities.

## **The Chair of Governors**

As 'first among equals', the chair is elected to lead the governing board as a team.

## **The Clerk to the Governing Body**

Appointed by and accountable to the governing board.



# Effective practice

Make a difference as a governor by ...

- Attending meetings regularly and prepare by reading the meeting documentation in advance.
- Participating in meetings, contributing to discussions and listening to and suggesting new ideas and thinking.
- Asking questions.
- Seeking further information to support decision making.
- Visiting the school with a clear focus.
- Attending training and school events.
- Celebrating achievement.
- Supporting the school to do better, especially during difficult circumstances.
- Seeking help with any challenges.
- Taking an active role as a governor, don't just leave it to others.
- Knowing the story of your school and its vision for the future.

# Elements of effective governance

- The right people round the table
- Understanding role and responsibilities
- Good chairing
- Professional clerking
- Good relationships based on trust
- Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community
- DfE Statutory Policies and Duties
- Committed to asking challenging questions
- Confident to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people

Adapted from the National Governors' Association (NGA)

# Question to Governors

- If you have attended a Governing Board meeting already – what has been your experience of your first meeting/s?



The background features a complex digital aesthetic. It includes a grid of small, glowing blue and green dots, some of which form larger, faint patterns. There are also several out-of-focus, circular light spots in shades of orange, yellow, and blue, creating a bokeh effect. The overall color palette is dominated by cool blues and greens, with warm orange and yellow accents.

# Accountability

# Accountability

- Core strategic functions
- What does accountability mean?
- Accountability in the context of governance
- Accountability through reporting
- Accountability in practice
- Accountability and performance management
- Accountability through inspection

# Accountability

*Governing boards have **corporate accountability**.*

- In strategic leadership, accountability is the acknowledgment and responsibility for actions, decisions and policies, including the governance and implementation, and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resulting consequences.

*The governing board:*

- is required by law to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement
- has the right to discuss, question and refine proposals
- should respect the professional roles of the headteacher and other staff
- must be prepared to account for the school's overall performance and to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest
- is ultimately responsible for the use of public money in providing a quality education for pupils.

# Schools financial value standard (SFVS)

- In the view of the governing board itself and of senior staff, does the governing board have adequate financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money?
- Does the governing board have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?
- Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing board and the school staff in the financial field?
- Does the governing board receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least six times a year?
- Are business interests of governing board members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?
- Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?
- Is there a clear link between the schools budgeting & its plan for raising standards & attainment?
- Does the school benchmark its income & expenditure annually against similar schools & investigate where any category appears to be out of line?
- Is the governing board sure there are no outstanding matters from audit reports, or from previous consideration of weaknesses by the board?
- Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan,inc an up to date asset register & adequate insurance?

**SFVS document for 2019/2020**

**SFVS Check List**

## Accountability through reporting

- School Development Plan (SDP)
- Headteacher's report
- Board and committee minutes
- Pupil Premium reports
- PE and sports funding reports
- Schools' Financial Value Standard (SFVS) (maintained schools only)
- Link governor reports
- Audit reports (H&S/safeguarding)
- School website
- Ofsted inspection reports
- Feedback from parent and staff surveys
- Annual Governance Statement  
(Report GB membership, pecuniary interests, meeting attendance, committee structure. Details to be published on school website)

# Accountability through inspection

- Accountable to the public for the performance of the school which is funded by public money.
- Inspection provides an independent external evaluation of a school's effectiveness.
- Contributes to school improvement by, for example, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, promoting a culture of rigorous self-evaluation and providing clear recommendations for future action.
- All maintained schools and academies are subject to inspection by Ofsted.
- [Inspection Framework and Handbooks](#)
- Section 5 Inspection (under the Education Act 2005)
- Section 8 Inspection (under the Education Act 2005)

# Final Thoughts ...

- Governors need to remember that they are developing a professional relationship with the school and to be a true friend of the school you must be willing to identify both the strengths and weaknesses, support in finding solutions and move forward together.
- A governing board that makes the effort to understand and truly values the views of the whole school community will take everyone on the journey with them.

**“As a governing board if we do not hold ourselves to account in our own role and understand our duties and expectations to the pupils in our care, how can we challenge and hold others to account? It is important that we lead by example.”** *Governor at a Hillingdon school*

***Who knows .... a future prime minister could be a pupil currently at your school!***



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