



# **The William Ransom** **Primary School**

*At William Ransom, we are committed to providing our children with a safe and nurturing environment that will enable all children to reach their potential, academically, socially, physically and emotionally. Our vision is that every child becomes a confident, self-motivated, resilient and independent learner with a lifelong zest for learning.*

## **The Governing Body's** **Code of Conduct**

Updated December 2023

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## General

- The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum.
- Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
- The Governing Body will contribute most effectively by focusing on its three roles:
  - To provide a strategic view of where the school is heading
  - To be a critical friend by providing support and advice to the school
  - To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides
- All Governors have equal status.
- Although Governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual Governors have power only when it is designated specifically to them by the whole Governing Body.

## Commitment

- Being a Governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the Governing Body of the school.
- All Governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the Governing Body and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on Committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full Governing Body and Committees is essential (as specified in DfE School Governance regulations)
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities.

## Priorities

- Once appointed or elected, all Governors must operate in the best interest of pupils, not as representatives to lobby on behalf of their constituency. Their task is to govern the school. This means focusing on the core functions of providing strategic leadership, holding the Headteacher to account and making sure the school's money is well spent. This is a demanding task for which all Governors need to have, or develop, relevant and appropriate skills.
- Meaningful and effective engagement with parents, staff and the wider community is vital. Governors should, if possible, seek to assist the school to build relationships with business and other employers in order to enhance the education and raise the aspirations of pupils.

## Confidentiality

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Whilst Governors are entitled to disclose the decisions made by the Governing Body, unless it was agreed as a confidential item by the Governing Body, Governors are **not** entitled to identify the views expressed by the individual named Governors.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the Governing Body.

## Conduct

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when they have been specifically asked to do so.
- All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the Governing Body and agreed with the Headteacher- **see Visits' section.**
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, Governors must refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this.
- Any pecuniary interest that a Governor may have in connection with the Governing Body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interest.
- Where an interest is declared, the Governor may be asked to leave the meeting while the item is under discussion. All Governors will be asked to declare any interests at the start of full Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings.
- Maintained schools are able to suspend someone from the Governing Body for a fixed period of time up to six months at a time, for example for acting in a way that is contrary to the Body's ethos and for bringing or being likely to bring the School, the Governing Body or their role into disrepute.

## Communication

In order to keep our school successful, we must communicate effectively with each other and ensure that communications are clear, professional, timely and appropriate. There will be a contact list circulated at the start of each academic year.

Governors are responsible for reading Committee papers and keeping themselves up to date with current issues as matters discussed and decisions made at Committee level are generally not re-visited in detail at full Governing Body meetings.

Governors who wish to raise a particular issue or a query should first raise it with the Chair of the relevant Committee, or if more appropriate, with the Chair/Vice-Chair of Governors. Any query raised by a parent should be first referred to the Chair or

Vice-Chair. Email is the preferred form of communication for general matters and Committee papers. For clarity: any recipient in the 'to' box should respond, even if only to acknowledge receipt of the email. Recipients in the 'cc' box are not required to respond, however should be aware of contents

When replying to emails, please consider carefully before 'replying to all' [especially where staff or sensitive matters are involved]. Sometimes it may be simpler and faster to pick up the phone!

### The composition of the Governing Body

All Governors (except the Headteacher) serve a term of office of 4 years after which they may be re-appointed or re-elected unless they are a Parent whose children have now left the school.

**The Chair** is elected annually by nomination and has overall responsibility for managing the activities of the Governing Body. He or she meets regularly with the Headteacher and the Vice Chair of Governors to keep abreast of activities and issues in the school. The Chair will also serve on one or more of the Committees.

**The Vice Chair** is also elected annually by nomination. This role is to support the Chair, and to deputise for the Chair when necessary.

**Parent Governors** are elected by the parent body of the school and applicants need the endorsement of two other parents on initial application.

Parent Governors play a vital role on the Governing Body, holding the unique position of having a parental viewpoint of the school. Through their children, they have a first-hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum, and how the school is perceived from the parents' point of view. This enables Parent Governors to bring a different perspective to the strategic management of the school.

Parent Governors should have a good rapport with the parental body which elected them, but they are **not** their spokespersons, **nor** must they champion individual pupil or parent issues.

It is vital that Parent Governors **do not** personally become involved in individual or group concerns. Apart from the possibility of this jeopardising appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, no Governor has the authority to act individually on behalf of the school. **Parent Governors are representative parents and not representative of parents.**

Parent Governors **must** maintain a strategic approach to school governance.

When approached by parents, Parent Governors should listen impartially to concerns raised and guide parents regarding appropriate lines of action and procedures. They should present a balanced view of issues, representing different sections of the community.

These Governors may hold a position on the Governing Body as long as their child is a member of the school and until the end of their 4-year term. They have full voting rights and will be members of one or more of the Committees.

Parents who are an elected member of the LA or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in a twelve-month period, cannot be a Parent Governor.

**Co-opted Governors** are members of the community who are appointed to the Governing Body by the Governing Body because they have skills and experience relevant to Governors' strategic leadership role.

**Local Authority Governors** are appointed to the Governing Body with the support of the Local Authority.

**Staff Governors** are elected by the school staff, for a period of four years. They will cease to hold office should they leave the school.

To be effective in their role, ALL Governors should attend relevant in-service training.

The current Instrument of Government for William Ransom School, from the 1st September 2015, allows the Governing Body to be made up of:

- Headteacher
- Co-opted Governors (x7)
- Local Authority Governors (x1)
- Parent Governors (x5)
- Staff Governors (x1)
  
- Associate Members (non-voting on full GB) (x2)
- Clerk to the Governors (1)

## **Elections**

Some positions on the Governing Body may be filled through election rather than appointment. In the case of elected parents, this helps to ensure that the Governing Body stays accessible and connected to the community they serve and that there is always a diverse range of perspectives around the table to support robust decision making.

All maintained schools have powers to suspend someone who acts in a way that is contrary to the Governing Body's ethos and has brought or is likely to bring the organisation, the Governing Body or their role into disrepute.

Since 1 September 2017, maintained school Governing Bodies have had the power to remove elected parent and staff governors in the same way as they can remove co-opted governors – that is, by majority decision of the Governing Body.

## **Committees**

All Governors are required to sit on at least one of 3 Committees. These Committees are **Finance**, **Premises** and **Learning and Teaching**.

## ➤ **Personnel Committee**

**Personnel** is the fourth Committee however, Governors who are current parents at the school do not normally sit on this Committee, with the exception of when they:

- Hold the position of Chair of Governors or Vice Chair of Governors as part of the Governing Body's commitment to succession planning.
- Are invited to attend meetings as they hold particular skills/expertise i.e. in HR. They will only be present for Part 1 of the meeting when **no** sensitive staff matters are discussed. They will be asked to leave the meeting prior to the commencement of Part 2 of the agenda.
- If a member of the Personnel Committee is related to a member of staff, they must declare it at the start of every meeting, and this is documented in the minutes. They may also be asked to leave the meeting if a sensitive staff matter is to be discussed. The minutes will be reflected accordingly and split into two parts.

It is up to the preference of each Governor as to which Committee they serve on, but usually their preference will be based on their skills, expertise and experience. The Committee structure will be reviewed annually.

Committees will meet once per term, and at other times where appropriate and necessary. Each meeting normally lasts up to an hour and half depending on the business in hand. The agenda for these meetings will be agreed by the Chair of Committee and the Headteacher and circulated before the meeting together with any relevant papers.

### **Additional responsibilities**

**Newsletter** – Governors are expected to write and produce the Governors' newsletter for the start of the spring term. The workload is shared between Governors.

**Governors' Annual Report** - This is produced by the Chair, Vice Chair and Chairs of Committee. All Governors will be requested to read and amend before publication. Sometimes, Governors will be asked to produce an item to go into the report but plenty of warning will be given.

### **Training and skills audit**

The Governing Body will carry out skills audits to determine where there are gaps in skills and knowledge and training will be offered to fill those gaps in order to contribute to effective governance. All new Governors must complete a skills matrix when they first join.

Governor training and development is important as it benefits the school and individual Governors and can help to develop effective teamwork. All Governors must attend Safeguarding training. It is expected that new Governors will complete this within 6 months of joining the Governing Body.

A Governors' induction course is run by HfL Education, and it is expected new Governors will attend this within 6 months of joining the Governing Body.

It is therefore expected that whatever training or development activity is needed, Governors will attend. If a Governor fails persistently to do this, then they will be in breach of the code of conduct and may bring the Governing Body into disrepute – and as such provide grounds for the Governing Body to consider suspension.

### Governor meetings

Committee meetings are usually held in the staffroom or the Headteacher's office and full GB meetings are usually held within school. Remote meetings take place in exceptional circumstances.

There are 6 full Governors' meetings a year and these will always start at 7.30pm and are usually no longer than 2 hrs. All Governors are expected to attend these meetings and be punctual. However, there will always be occasions when attendance is not possible. If this is the case, the Governor should send their apologies to the Chair of Governors as soon as possible. Attendance, absence and accepted apologies are minuted.

### Conflicts of interest

To make sure our Governing Body takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all Governors including Associate Members
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter.

### Attendance

It is important that all Governors regularly attend full Governing Body meetings and Committee meetings.

A person can be disqualified from being a Governor of the school if they have failed to attend the meetings of the Governing Body for a continuous period of **six months**, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the Governing Body. This does not apply to the Headteacher.

### Agenda and supporting documentation for full Governor Meetings

The agenda for these meetings is decided by the Headteacher and the Chair in advance and agreed agendas will always be circulated to all Governors ahead of the meeting. This agenda will also contain any papers pertinent to the meeting so that Governors have an opportunity to read them prior to the agenda item being raised. Any Governor may ask to have an agenda item raised and should put their request to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher at least 2 weeks before the meeting.

Best endeavours will be made to ensure that for all meetings, agendas and relevant supporting documentation are circulated at least 7 days prior to the respective

meeting date. Members are expected to have fully read all papers prior to a meeting and should they require clarification on anything in the interim, are encouraged to contact the respective Chair.

### Minutes

Following the meeting, the Minuting secretary will agree the Minutes with the Chair. The minutes will then be made available for all Governors on GovernorHub. Occasionally, Governors may be asked to take minutes in Committee meetings and type them up using the minutes' proforma. These will then be emailed to the Chair of Committee and Chair of Governors for adding to GovernorHub.

### GovernorHub

GovernorHub is an online tool where all Governing Body documents are stored and accessed securely. Our Clerk will help new Governors set up their GovernorHub account. You will need to use your own email address and password to log in. All Governance training sessions and access to online training modules run by 'Modern Governor' can be accessed through GovernorHub.

### Visits to school/trips

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least **one** visit each academic year during school time and Governors will often monitor an area of the School Development Plan. These visits **must** be arranged with the Headteacher prior to any visit, giving plenty of notice.

After the visit, Governors are asked to complete a 'Visits Form' and email/send a copy to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. These are kept centrally on GovernorHub. Further information can be found in the 'Visits' Procedure'.

### Signing in and ID Lanyards

Whenever a Governor visits the school and/or attends a Governor meeting, they must sign in using the tablet in front of the school office. This is proof of Governor attendance and shows how often we visit.

Governors must wear a visitor's badge when in school during the day adhering to the school's policy. Governor lanyards are also available and can be worn in addition to the visitor's badge, so staff and pupils know when a Governor is visiting. Badges should also be worn at the summer and winter fetes. \*

\* Governors are expected to assist and run the Governors' stall at the Summer and Winter Fetes. These are shared out as 1hr slots, and a booking sheet will be made available on GovernorHub nearer the time.

## **Safeguarding and Information Security**

We will follow the school's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, processing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

### **➤ Personal data breaches**

We will inform the school's data protection officer (DPO) immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

### **➤ Safeguarding**

This Code of Conduct links to the school's Safeguarding policy and the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). We also follow Safer Recruitment guidelines.

### **➤ DBS and other checks**

In line with school governance regulations, all Governors must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. An enhanced DBS check will look for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings.

Section 128 check will also be carried out. If someone has a section 128 direction issued against them, then they are banned from being involved in the management and governance of schools and can't be a Governor.

If a Governor misses the application deadline for any reason, the school will contact the local authority (LA) and they will decide on the next steps.

## **Administration**

At times, the school office will require completion of forms/documents etc and Governors are responsible for ensuring they are completed and returned in a timely manner. You will need to provide the names and details of two referees for the office to seek references.

## **Governor Allowance Policy**

DfE advice issued in 2014 states School Governors provide a voluntary service and cannot be paid for their role as a Governor. But they can receive out of pocket expenses. This may include reasonable expenses to cover travel costs or childcare costs incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as Governor. Payments can only be paid for expenditure necessarily incurred to enable the person to perform any duty as a Governor. This does not include payments to cover loss of earnings for attending meetings. Travel expenses must be at a rate not exceeding the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) approved mileage rates which are changed annually and are on HMRC website. Other expenses should be paid on provision of a receipt and be limited to the amount shown on the receipt.

Allowances and expenses necessarily incurred for which a claim may be made comprise of the following:

- Childcare or babysitting expenses
- Care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative
- Governors with a special need
- Governors whose first language is not English
- Telephone charges, photocopying costs and stationery
- Travel and subsistence

For full details, please refer to the **Governor Allowance Policy** or please ask the Chair/Vice-Chair of Governors for more information.

## Educational Acronyms

Education, like many other environments, has a great number of acronyms in common usage. This can be really difficult for a new Governor. Do not despair, everyone feels the same way. Please have the confidence to ask what they mean if you don't understand.

Here are a few of the more common ones and their meanings, this is not a definitive list so please ask. There is no need to try and memorise all of these acronyms, just use the guide if and when they occur.

**AfL:** Assessment for Learning

**APP:** Assessing Pupils' progress

**ASP:** Analyse School Performance

**Assessment:** Ways of judging how well pupils are progressing

**Attainment:** What pupils accomplish

**BAME:** Black and/or Minority Ethnic

**CAF:** Common Assessment Framework

**CAT:** Cognitive Ability Test

**Catchment area:** A defined geographical area from which a school takes its pupils

**CLA:** Child Looked After

**CP:** Child Protection

**CPD:** Continuing Professional Development

**DBS:** Disclosure and Barring Service

**Curriculum:** The National Curriculum sets out the subjects taught the knowledge, skills and understanding required in each subject and standards or attainment targets in each subject.

**CYPS:** Children and Young People's Services

**DfE:** Department for Education: the government department responsible for education.

**Differentiation:** The way in which the school's curriculum and teaching methods are adapted to meet the needs of children.

**EAL:** English as an additional language

**E.B.D.:** Emotional and behavioural difficulties.

[ECT: Early Career Teacher, a teacher in the first two years of teaching after qualification](#)

**ESFA:** Education and Skills Funding Agency

**EYFS:** Early Years Foundation Stage

**Equal Opportunities:** Chance for everyone to participate in school life/curriculum

**Evaluation:** How well did it work?

**E.W.O.:** Education Welfare Officer ~ a person employed by the LA to make sure that children are getting the education they need. They deal mainly with school attendance.

**Exclusion:** Exclusion means that a child may not attend lessons or go on to the school premises for a set period of time, or permanently in the case of permanent exclusion.

**FGB:** Full Governing Body

**FFT:** Fischer Family Trust. The Fischer Family Trust based in South Wales, provides all local authorities in England and Wales with data analysis. The system provides estimates of what a child might be expected to achieve at later key stages, based on their past performance and the average achievements of children judged by the trust to have similar characteristics.

**FFT Aspire:** Education Data Analysis Tool

**Foundation stage:** The Foundation Stage is Nursery and Reception

**FSM:** free school meals

**HLTA:** High Level Teaching assistant

**HfL:** Herts for Learning

**HCC:** Herts County Council

**I.C.T/I.T:** Information and Communication Technology ~ refers to the whole area of computers.

**Inclusion:** A process by which schools, local education authorities and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include pupils

**INSET:** In-Service Education and Training. INSET days are set aside to allow teachers to update their skills and knowledge in order to raise pupil achievement. All schools in England have five days every year when they are closed to pupils to allow for staff training. They are an important part of staff training and development, ensuring that staff stay up to date with latest developments and so education in our school remains 'cutting edge'

**ITT:** Initial Teaching Training

**KS1:** Key Stage 1

**KS2:** Key Stage 2

**What are Key Stage 1 and 2 (KS1 and KS2)?** Key Stage 1 is Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 2 Years 3, 4, 5 and 6

**LA:** Local Authority e.g. Hertfordshire/Herts For Learning. A body responsible for providing education for pupils of school age in its area. It also has responsibility for early years, the youth service and adult education

**MAT:** Multi Academy Trust

**MDSA:** Mid-day meal supervisory assistants

**MFL:** Modern Foreign Language

**MLD:** moderate learning difficulty

**National Curriculum (NC):** The national curriculum outlines what all children should be taught in each Key Stage

**NFER:** National Federation for Educational Research

**Non-teaching or Support staff:** Members of school staff employed by the governors to provide services in school other than teaching, such as cleaners, administrators

**NOR:** number on roll

**Ofsted:** Office for Standards in Education. The body which inspects state-funded schools. Ofsted inspectors produce education reports to help improve schools

**PAN:** Published Admission Number

**PIB:** Prior Inspection Briefing

**PMR:** Performance Management Review

**PPG:** Pupil Premium Grant

**PPA time:** This is planning, preparation and assessment time; all teachers are entitled to PPA time

**PRU:** Pupil Referral unit

**PTR:** pupil teacher ratio

**PSHE:** personal, social and health education

**QTS:** Qualified Teacher Status

**SAT:** Single Academy Trust

**SATs:** Statutory Assessment Tasks. These are national tasks / tests which are used to assess all children at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6). The SAT results give a 'snapshot' of children's attainment; in other words how they achieved in particular tasks or tests taken on a specific day / week

**SDP:** School Development Plan. An annual plan formed by the Head and staff to indicate target, direction and priority for the next academic year. At William Ransom, we use The School Plan for Development and Evaluation (SPDE)

**SEF:** School Self Evaluation

**SEND:** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

**SENDCo:** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator

**SFVS:** Schools Financial Value Standard. The financial accounting standard and efficiency processes to which school finances must adhere and be accountable

**SIP:** School Improvement Plan

**SLD:** Severe Learning Difficulties

**SLT:** Senior Leadership Team

**SOW:** Scheme of Work

**SPaG:** Spelling Punctuation and Grammar tested with the SATs

**SRE:** Sex and Relationships Education

**TA:** Teacher Assessment: This is the teachers' judgement about what the pupil is achieving based on the National Curriculum. This judgement will be made based on evidence gathered over a period of time and from a range of pieces of work, together with test results. It is usually a more reliable judgement of a child's attainment than a test result alone

**TA/LSA:** This is a learning support assistant who supports learning in the classroom. Sometimes they will support individual children, at other times they may work with a group or with the whole class

**TLR:** Teaching and Learning Responsibility. An extra financial reward for teachers undertaking specific extra responsibilities

**School profile:** Document provided by LA which provides data comparing KS1 & KS2 results with local results

## SEN Acronyms

**CAF:** Common Assessment Framework: this is a form that professionals complete to begin to look at what needs or support a child/young person may have. It helps to co-ordinate services so that you do not have to tell different professionals the same thing

**Code of Practice:** A guide to schools and Local Authorities (LA.s) about the help they can give to children with special educational needs

**EHCP:** Education, Health and Care Plan. Introduced in September 2014, the Education, Health & Care Plan or **EHCP** is a document which sets out the education, health and social care needs a child or young person has and the support that is necessary to cater for those needs. Replaced Statements.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP):** an individual education plan is designed to help children who are experiencing difficulties in school to improve their skills and knowledge at their own pace

**SEND:** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

**SENCO:** Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, a SENCO is a teacher who is responsible for co-ordinating the special educational needs support in schools

**Transition Plan:** a transition plan is a document that records what has been said at the transitional annual review and if any action is to be taken and by whom

**ADD:** Attention Deficit Disorder

**ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

**BESD:** Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

**Learning Difficulty:** If a child has a learning difficulty, s/he finds it much harder to learn than most children of the same age. This usually includes Dyslexia, Asperger's and ADHD.

**Sp.L.D.:** A child has a Specific Learning Difficulty if s/he has a problem with one or more areas of the curriculum, usually reading, writing, spelling and/or number work

**Statement:** A document that sets out a child's needs and all the extra help (provision) s/he should get

