



Governing Body

Standing Orders/Terms of Reference as at September 2016

Meetings

The governing body is required to meet at least three times in a School year. This is normally termly, but can be more frequent if necessary.

A full governing body meeting can be requested by any three governors giving notice to the clerk which summarises the business to be conducted: this would only be done in exceptional circumstances.

The relationship between the chair and clerk is vital in ensuring that governors carry out their statutory responsibilities and that governing body meetings are an ongoing part of school improvement. The Chair has responsibility for finalising the agenda and prioritising agenda items. This should be done in consultation with the headteacher and the clerk. Governors will include a time for prayer in meetings.

Full governing body meetings

Seven days written notice by letter, or by e-mail, of a meeting is required. All relevant agenda and related documents should be circulated by post or email seven clear days prior to that meeting. In emergencies a meeting can be called by the chair at shorter notice, but not if the meeting is to consider the removal of the chair or vice chair, the suspension of a governor or a proposal to close the school. There are a number of statutory items that will appear on the agenda of the three statutory meetings.

The meeting may have two parts:

1. This will be most of the business. The minutes are made public.
2. This will be confidential business, for example staff or pupil discipline. The minutes are not made public and the information is confidential to governors.

Every governor has the right to attend a full governing body meeting. There will be times when individual governors will have to withdraw from items in which they have an interest. The governing body may invite observers and give them the right to contribute, but they cannot be given the right to vote. Members of the senior leadership team will be appointed as associate members as this is good practice, supporting their continuing professional development and assisting the flow of information.

The governing body may also invite other people to speak on particular topics at their meetings. This requires the permission of the full governing body and it is important to remember that individual governors cannot invite speakers.

Quorum

A governing body meeting must be quorate in order to take decisions. The quorum is

half the number of governors in post, rounded up to a whole number. Observers and associate members cannot be included. If a meeting becomes inquorate part way it may continue with business at the level of general discussion only and cannot take decisions

Role of the chair at governing body meetings

- To liaise with the clerk and headteacher prior to the meeting in setting the agenda.
- To ensure that the meeting includes a time of prayer.
- To ensure appropriate time is given to each item on the agenda.
- To ensure that everyone has opportunity to contribute and speak freely and that no one person dominates the meeting.
- To make clear when a proposal is being tabled and to ensure that the exact wording is understood by all present and is recorded by the clerk.
- To ensure that, when voting, all present are clear on what they are voting for and what the results will entail.
- To ensure that the conduct of the meeting is in accordance with the mission statement for the school and Diocesan policies.
- To ensure that individual governors work within their code of conduct
- To sum up the main points of the meeting.

Role of the clerk

Governing body meetings must be clerked. The governing body appoints the clerk and has the power to dismiss him or her. The clerk is accountable to the governing body. The clerk must not be a governor, though in the absence of the clerk a governor may act as clerk for that meeting only.

The role of **the clerk** is:

- To liaise with the chair and headteacher in setting the agenda.
- To convene the meeting, to attend it and to take the minutes.
- To maintain a register of membership of the governing body and report vacancies.
- To maintain a register of attendance at each meeting.
- To prepare supporting papers and ensure that they are received with the agenda by all members at least seven days before a meeting.
- To be familiar with relevant legislation and regulations.
- To give and receive notices in accordance with relevant Regulations.
- To ensure procedural correctness at meetings.
- To oversee the election of the chair and vice chair.
- To ensure that minutes are circulated and published.

The clerk to the governing body of St Anthony's will have an agreed job description or alternatively, the school, acting on behalf of the governing body, will enter into a service contract for this service.

Minutes

It is a statutory requirement for all governing body meetings to be minuted. The minutes of the previous meeting should be circulated by the clerk after consultation with the chair.

Minutes are not a verbatim account of the meeting but should present a general report of the areas discussed and decisions made. They should not record

contributions from individual governors. Once minutes have been agreed and signed, a copy should be made available for public information. Minutes are filed by the headteacher and stored in her office.

Any items which are confidential under Part 2 of the business of the meeting must not be published or discussed by any member of the governing body outside the meeting.

Committees

The full governing body may delegate responsibility for a particular area to a committee. The governing body determines the membership and terms of reference for each committee and reviews them at least annually. A committee must have a chair, either appointed by the governing body or elected by the committee and a clerk.

It is recommended that committees with delegated functions are established for:

- Admissions.
- Pupil discipline, including discipline policies and exclusions.
- Staff discipline, including appeals. Although the law allows governing bodies to delegate dismissal to headteachers, the CES model staff discipline procedures advise that this function is maintained by the governing body. It is the policy of this governing body to adhere to the Human Resources model policies provided by the Catholic Education Service. Three governors will be needed and a further three for an appeal if required.

Committees with delegated functions are clerked by the clerk to the governing body with the exception of the admissions committee which is clerked by a governor. Where the clerk is unavailable, the meeting may be clerked by a governor but not the headteacher. The clerk for each committee has similar responsibilities to the clerk to the governing body. Members of committees must receive seven days notice of meetings and the agenda and supporting papers must be provided. In exceptional circumstances the chair can determine a shorter period. The quorum is three governors.

Minutes for each committee meeting will be presented to the next meeting of the gbx by the chair. These minutes are also available to the public and they should present a general record of the area covered and decisions made. There may be confidential matters which should be treated as the Part 2 items of a full governing body meeting. It is the practice of this governing body to copy minutes of all meetings to all members of the governing body at the meeting immediately following the relevant committee.

Actions between meetings

Interim/urgent decisions may be made by the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the appropriate Committee and an appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team

References:

Archdiocese of Southwark: Handbook for Governors of Voluntary Aided Catholic Schools September 2006

Governance handbook November 2015

School

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013