

BEAUMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL
Governor Code of Conduct
and
Governor Visits



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Signed **Name** **Date**

Code of Conduct for Beaumont Community Primary School Governing Board

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the Headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the Headteacher
- Contribution to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board, we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of 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 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 government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of 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. 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 actively support and challenge the Headteacher.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involved 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.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development and will undertake relevant training regularly.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on 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 to the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

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 and the clerk to the governing board.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and always.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and consider 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 Headteacher, staff and parents, 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 and outside the school.
- We will always exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

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's 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.

Social Media

- Social Media Definition: social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, internet forums (message boards), blogs, Twitter, Facebook, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, and virtual game worlds.
- We will not engage in social media conversations that could bring the school into disrepute.

Websites & Blogs

The Following guidelines apply: -

- Governors must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or any third party that has disclosed information to the school.
- Governors should not link any personal websites, social networking sites etc. to the school's websites.
- Governors must not use the school website, internet systems, e-mail, addresses or intranet for their blog.
- Governors should not use the Headteacher's email for their personal correspondence.
- If a governor is asked to contribute to an official blog connected to the school, then special rules will apply and they will be told in detail how to operate and what to write.
- Beaumont Community Primary School will not tolerate criticisms through social media websites and blogs.

Social Networking Sites

The school respects a governor's right to a private life. However, the school must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected.

The school expects all governors to:

- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school.
- Take care not to allow their interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between members of staff and clients of the school.

Important Considerations

When writing a blog and placing information on social networking sites, governors should follow these guidelines:

Do not -

- include any information that breaches copyright and should link to other material rather than cutting and pasting it.
- include personal information about an individual without his/her consent, otherwise they risk breaching the Data Protection Act 1998, which is a criminal offence. A governor who makes a defamatory statement that is published on the internet may be legally liable for any damage to the reputation of the individual concerned.
- include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist or that could be interpreted as harassment or bullying.
- bring Beaumont Community Primary School into disrepute.
- comment on any posts made by others relating to the school.
- discuss or share matters relating to the school.
- It is not advisable to invite parents/carers to become your friends on social networking sites. There may be a conflict of interests and security and privacy issues, but where relationships are already established, governors should proceed with

caution, being fully aware of the social media guidelines.

- Governors should not accept friend requests from pupils under any circumstances.
- Governors should not share personal conversations.
- Governors should behave respectfully and should not engage in topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory such as politics or religion.

Cyber Bullying

Beaumont Community Primary School is committed to ensuring that all its staff and governors are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Cyber-bullying methods could include text messages, emails, phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to colleagues without their consent are also unacceptable. Staff, governors, parents, and carers who cyber-bully could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

Security and Identity Theft

Staff, governors, parents, and carers should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if they are part of a 'network'. Staff, governors and parents should ensure that their entries on any website will remain private.

Staff, governors, parents and carers must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identify theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth and for example, favorite football team which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

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 that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

GOVERNOR VISITS

Context

Individual governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school whenever they wish. However, they need to be able to visit from time to time to develop their understanding of the school. These visits enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibility for the conduct of the school. Governors should arrange their visits with the Headteacher, who has responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school.

The governing body should plan visits to cover a wide range of schoolwork and each visit should have a clear purpose. They do not replace professional inspection, or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Headteacher.

A Guide to the Law for School Governors (September 2008)

Purpose of the visit

Visits are undertaken to:

- Improve governing body knowledge of the school and the people that work in it.

- Assist the governing body in monitoring the implementation of the school development plan.
- Assist a governor to fulfil a specialist governor role such as inclusion.
- Assist the governing body in fulfilling its statutory duties.
- Assist the governing body in making informed decisions.

Governors should not pursue any personal agendas or arrive with inflexible preconceived ideas. Governors are not to make any judgements about pupils' work, behaviour, any teacher's classroom practice or issues relating to the day to day running of the school. Those are the responsibility of the Headteacher.

Planning the visit

Visits should be undertaken only as part of a strategic programme formally organised by the governing body or one of its committees and with the approval of the Headteacher.

The Headteacher should be kept informed of, and agree, the subsequent details of the planned visit.

If the visit is to involve any member of staff, then that member of staff must be fully involved in the planning through the appropriate member of the leadership group.

The governor(s) making the visit should make themselves fully acquainted with health and safety procedures, including fire safety, prior to making the visit.

During the visit

Governors will always report to reception upon arrival and follow the procedure for visitors in order to provide a good example for other visitors.

If visiting a classroom, the governor must arrive at the time planned to avoid disrupting the learning process and follow the agreed purpose of the visit. Governors must be aware that some teachers may feel nervous or stressed about having a visitor in the classroom. At the end of the visit thank everyone concerned including the children.

Governors should be aware of their behaviour and avoid any implication that they are inspecting, such as by using a clipboard.

Following the visit

After visiting the school, the governor(s) should:

- give some time and thought to reflection
- write a note of thanks to all staff visited
- complete a visit report outlining the purpose and results of the visit (the Headteacher will share the visit report with all appropriate staff involved once it has been submitted to Governor Hub) (see format on website)
- raise any concerns sensitively with the Headteacher
- consider what went well and what did not go so well with respect to your involvement in the visit
- consider what you would do differently in a future visit

Following completion of the agreed monitoring programme the governor should report back to the governing body or committee as appropriate.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Protocol for Visits

Appendix 2 Guidelines for visits

Appendix 3 Declaration

APPENDIX1

Protocol for visits

Governors visit their school to enhance their understanding of the school's work and to help fulfil their responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the school.

We have an agreed schedule of governors' visits to the school, reflecting the priorities in the school development plan and the specific interests and responsibilities of governors, and we keep a file of visit reports. Both can be found on Governor Hub/Governor visits.

	Always	Never
Before	<p>Agree the purpose visit</p> <p>Agree how much time (a timetable is a good idea)</p> <p>Agree when you will discuss the visit with the Headteacher</p> <p>Consider practicalities (dress, parking, time of arrival, who to report to, how to make notes, breaks and lunch)</p> <p>Find out how each teacher wants you to contribute (or not)</p>	<p>Turn up unannounced</p>
During	<p>Introduce yourself to staff and pupils.</p> <p>Note and praise the positive</p> <p>Ask questions to increase understanding</p> <p>Remain focused on the purpose of the visit</p>	<p>Walk in with a clipboard.</p> <p>Arrive with preconceived ideas</p> <p>Interrupt the teacher</p> <p>Make professional judgements about staff expertise (Governors are not inspectors)</p> <p>Pursue your own personal agenda/focus on the progress of your own child.</p> <p>Monopolise the children's or the staff's time</p>
After	<p>Thank the teacher and pupils</p> <p>Discuss visit with the teacher</p> <p>Write a thank you note to teacher and pupils</p> <p>Compile a report (use framework if appropriate)</p> <p>Raise any concerns sensitively with the Headteacher</p>	<p>Leave without a word.</p>

APPENDIX 2

Guidelines for Governor Visits and Reports

The aim of visits to the school is to better enable the governing body to carry out its role in:

- Providing a strategic direction for the work and improvement of the school;
- Supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of the school;
- Ensuring accountability for the standards achieved and the quality of education.

This means visits are more than collecting information; they need to provide answers for clearly defined questions or evidence for clearly identified research.

There is a danger of governors being overloaded with information that is not directly relevant to their role. It is important that visits and visit reports are focussed carefully and aid governors in their strategic, monitoring and accountability roles.

Preparing for a Visit

This is the most important part of a visit. You need to be very clear about what you are going to look at and for what purpose. Most of our visits will be for monitoring purposes, providing us with evidence so that we can decide whether the school is being effective and making progress.

- 1 Write down the aim of your visit. You should be able to summarise this in a sentence, if you can't it is probably too vague. Examples might include: to monitor the implementation of the school development plan; to assess the consistency of behaviour management; to evaluate the use of the literacy budget and its impact on improving standards. If you need help deciding the aim of your visit, discuss it with the Chair or Headteacher.
- 2 Ask yourself what the governing body need to know in order to decide whether the school is effective in the area you are visiting. It is often helpful to have two or three questions written down before your visit and to seek to answer them during your time in school. Some examples might be:
 - a. What evidence do I see of the strategies in the behaviour policy being implemented?
 - b. Do the displays in the corridors and classrooms reflect the diversity of the school?
 - c. What is being done to ensure that this aspect of the school improvement plan is implemented on time?
- 3 Read up for your visit. If you are focusing on a curriculum area, you need to read the relevant policy before you go: it may provide a good source of questions. Ask the office to send you a copy in advance of your visit if you cannot find what you need on Governor Hub or the school website.
- 4 Liaise with the Headteacher about the visit. You need to agree with her when you are coming in, for how long and with what purpose. Be prepared to arrange your visit at a time convenient to the school, we want to support the school not be an additional burden.

- 5 Decide whether your visit will consist mainly of an interview with staff or whether it will be observation. If you want to focus on discussions with one or more members of staff, send them your aim and questions in advance.

The Visit

- Be on time and don't stay longer than agreed.
- Sign in and out (in the office).
- Introduce yourself to staff and children. Wear a visitor badge if possible.
- Don't be too formal, you are not an Ofsted Inspector!
- Take opportunities to talk to children and adults, but don't interrupt lessons unless invited to do so.
- If possible make notes as you go round; if not make them as soon as possible after the visit.
- Don't lose sight of the purpose of your visit. Remember we are not concerned with individual staff or children.
- Thank the staff for their time.

Reporting Back to the Headteacher

You should feedback verbally to the Headteacher and other relevant staff, preferably at the end of your visit. Be aware that you may have misunderstood something and allow the staff to explain more clearly if necessary. Ensure that they do not feel misrepresented.

Reporting Back to the Governors

We have a standard form on which to report visits (copies on GovHub), please use this, adding further comments on the back if necessary. Your report should be short and should contain the answers to your questions or a summary of the evidence you have gathered. Remember that visits are designed to enable governors to carry out their functions more efficiently: it is important that your report contains relevant and constructive information.

Agree your written report with the Headteacher prior to sharing with the governors. If your visit has raised serious concerns, these must of course be shared with the Headteacher. It may also be helpful to share them with the Chair of Governors in advance of the meeting so that sufficient time can be allowed for them when planning the agenda.

A copy of your report should be filed on Governor Hub

Governor visit schedule and visit forms can be found here [GovernorHub](#)

APPENDIX 3

DECLARATION

I understand that by taking on the role of governor, I am part of a team, which includes both governors and senior leaders, who take a shared responsibility for the success of the school. We all work hard to drive improvements in the school, create and deliver on a compelling vision and strategy, and ultimately make sure pupils achieve their potential.

I know that I have an individual part to play and will be fully committed and engaged throughout my time as a governor.

I understand that I'm expected to attend a minimum of 3 full board meetings per year, at least 3 committee meetings per year, and to visit the school at least once per term to carry out monitoring duties (reporting on each of these visits in writing to the Board).

Governors are asked to confirm their agreement to abide by this policy by signing annually the confirmation section of their personal profile found here [GovernorHub](#).