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| Policy title: | Governor Policy |
| Function: | For information and guidance about Blue Coat School governance. This document forms part of the portfolio of policies designed to inform governors and staff. |
| Status: | Approved |
| Statutory guidance: | The Governance handbook (March 2019) |
| Audience: | Staff, Senior leadership team, Governors |
| Ownership: | Governing body |
| Last reviewed: | March 2019 |
| Reviewed by: | Full governing body |
| Next review: | Every year – March 2020 |

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Aims and objectives

- 1 To ensure there is clarity about the roles and responsibilities of a governor.
- 2 To ensure that individual and collective governors operate in accordance within a set of agreed common principles.
- 3 To ensure that new governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence.
- 4 To ensure that governors have access to appropriate training opportunities to assist them in their role.

Roles and responsibilities

- 5 Governors will ensure that they:
 - determine, monitor and keep school policies, plans and procedures under review
 - scrutinise and challenge in support of the Headteacher's responsibility for the implementation of policy and management of the School
 - do not act individually, except when the Governing Body has given delegated authority to do so
 - act fairly, with transparency and without prejudice
 - contribute effectively to all meetings through thorough preparation including the reading of all papers
 - undertake their duties to the highest standard in line with relevant legislation and guidance
 - visit the school regularly to maintain an up to date knowledge of the workings of the school.
- 6 The Headteacher and senior leadership team will:
 - provide relevant and timely information to governors
 - engage with governors to ensure there are regular, robust examinations of the impact of the school's work
 - support the work of governors
 - provide information, advice and guidance to allow them to undertake their duties to the highest standards
 - provide regular opportunities for governors to visit school.
- 7 School staff will:
 - carry out their duties in line with policies and practices approved by governors
 - engage with governors when they attend school.

Procedures and practices

Core functions

- 8 The governing body will have due regard to the advice and guidance set out in the DFE Governance Handbook (March 2019).
- 9 School leaders and governors recognise and value some fundamental characteristics of a highly-functioning governing body and in particular that:
 - governors govern rather than manage
 - governors understand school leaders roles
 - governors know the school, its performance, its students, its staff and its parents
 - governors are able to challenge leaders.
- 10 Governors will undertake effective governance by:
 - establishing a clear understanding of its core functions
 - seeking to recruit and develop talented governors
 - establishing appropriate structures
 - adhering to agreed ways of working.
- 11 In line with the DFE Governors handbook (March 2019), governors will:
 - ensure effective governance through a clear purpose
 - operate as strategic leaders
 - secure high quality accountability
 - recruit, develop and support individual governors to meet expected competancies
 - ensure it has effective structures
 - ensure governors and school leaders fulfil statutory requirements
 - evaluate its effectiveness.

Induction

- 12 New governors will:
 - be invited by the Headteacher to visit the School
 - have the opportunity to tour the School and meet staff and students
 - be welcomed to the Governing Body by the chair of governors
 - have the opportunity to review previous minutes prior to attendance at Governing Body meetings.
- 13 New governors will receive a Governor Induction Pack which includes:
 - the arrangements for governor induction
 - the role of a Blue Coat School governor
 - governor contact details
 - governing body committee structures, membership and meetings schedule
 - guidance for safer working practices for governors
 - a calendar of the school term
 - the school prospectus
 - the school's staffing structures
 - the school's Improvement Plan
 - current information about student performance

- the school's three year financial forecast & plan
- the school's most recent OFSTED inspection report.

Training

- 14 It is important that all governors regularly receive relevant advice, guidance and training to ensure that they are able to undertake their role in the most effective and efficient manner.
- 15 Training opportunities for governors may arise from a variety of sources including:
- training courses provided by the local authority
 - training courses provided by other organisations
 - other training opportunities provided by individuals or organisations who support the school
- 16 The process for accessing external training is outlined below:
- Governors will complete a request for training form to request access to the training and return this to the Chair of Governors who will decide whether to approve requests before forwarding the request to the school's personnel officer.
 - Where approved the school's personnel officer will make arrangements for places to be reserved for training courses and will in turn confirm to governors that reservations have been made.
 - Upon completion of courses, Governors will be asked to complete the evaluation section of the training form and return this to the school's personnel officer.
- 17 The process for accessing other training opportunities is outlined below:
- Senior leaders will inform lead governors of additional training opportunities that may be of benefit to them or other governors
 - Lead governors will share this information with other governors to establish the extent of the training need
 - Senior leaders will facilitate the opportunity in line with governor need.
- 18 School leaders will retain, summarise and share with governors a record of governor requests for training and the impact that training has had on governance.

Code of conduct

- 19 Governors will be committed to:
- ensuring they devote the necessary time and energy to effectively govern the school
 - working effectively as a team
 - actively engaging in the work of the Governing Body, attending scheduled meetings and accepting shared responsibility
 - getting to know the School well and responding to opportunities to get involved in School activities
 - working effectively with the Headteacher, staff, parents, other relevant agencies and the community
 - reviewing individual and collective needs for governor training and development.
- 20 Governors will ensure that they:
- encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility

for all decisions made by the Governing Body

- only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when specifically authorised to do so
- follow the procedures established by the Governing Body when responding to criticism or complaints affecting the School
- undertake visits to school within the framework established by the Governing Body, in agreement with the Headteacher and staff
- always be mindful of the responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the School when undertaking governor duties.

21 Governors will uphold confidentiality in matters relating to school following:

- meetings and visits to School as governors
- matters concerning individual staff or students
- any potentially contentious issues affecting the School arising outside the Governing Body.

Visits to school

22 Governors at The Blue Coat School will visit the School on a regular basis. Governor visits will be graded according to type:

- Level 1: Introduction to the school. All new governors will:
 - Be invited by the Headteacher to visit the school
 - Have the opportunity to tour the school and meet staff and students
 - Receive an informal briefing on the school from the headteacher
 - Have an opportunity to ask the headteachers questions about the school.
- Level 2: Getting to know the school. Governors will be encouraged to attend a minimum of 2 calendar events each year. These may include:
 - Open evening
 - Progress evenings
 - Choices evenings
 - Celebration of achievement events
 - School exhibitions
 - Entrance exam
 - School productions
 - Sports events
 - Induction evenings
 - School events
 - Assemblies.
- Level 3: Understanding the school. The governing body will identify which aspects of the school they want to focus on most. Individual governors will work within this focus to identify opportunities for focussed visits to school. Governors will use these focussed visits to explore and understand the school in some detail so that they enhance their knowledge and confidence to help the governing body evaluate the school's performance better.
 - Such visits may include:
 - School meetings
 - Staff briefings
 - Discussions with senior/middle leaders
 - Observing leaders undertake their work
 - Scrutinising school information
 - Talking to staff and students.

23 Governors will always ensure that during visits to school they focus on observing the work of the school in line with the governor protocols for visits to school (Annex A).

- 24 When visiting the School, governors will:
- agree in advance a mutually convenient time and duration for the visit with the Headteacher or other members of staff where agreed with the Headteacher
 - ensure that visits have a clear focus as informed by school improvement priorities, recent governors meetings and other information about the school
 - report to reception
 - sign the visitor book
 - wear an appropriate identification badge.
- 25 Governors will feed back their observations and outcomes from their visits to the Headteacher and Full Governing Body by:
- completing governors' record of visit forms (Annex B)
 - submitting the forms for the attention of the Headteacher and Chair of Governors
- 26 The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will keep a record of governors' visits to school. (Annex C)

Monitoring, review and evaluation

- 27 The governing body will ensure that this policy's procedures and practices are monitored, reviewed and evaluated through the Governing Body meetings
- 28 The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will jointly review:
- notes of governor visits to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the work of governors so that they may jointly report to the Governing Body
 - records of governor training and the impact that training has had so that they may jointly report to the Governing body.
- 29 The governing body will undertake an annual review of its work informed by individual governor evaluations.

Annex A: Governor protocols for visits to school

| Do | Do not |
|---|---|
| Challenge information provided by the school | Instruct the school to provide information in a specific format |
| Ask challenging questions about leaders processes and practices | Instruct leaders to undertake practices and processes in a specific |
| Make judgements about the effectiveness of leaders' approaches | Make judgements about the effectiveness of a leader |
| Observe leaders in action across a range of duties | Interrupt, interfere with or impede leaders whilst they are undertaking |
| Challenge the effectiveness of leadership roles and structures | Instruct how leadership should be structured |
| Positively engage with school information, students, staff and | Share or infer criticism of any aspect of school life during engagement |
| Observe teaching to gain insight | Observe teaching to make judgements |
| Agree and plan focussed visits in consultation with the HT/DHT/DOR | Observe the school's work without agreement or focussed planning |
| Be courteous, considerate, respectful and understanding | Undermine any staff with actions, words or implication |
| Positively engage with school information, students, staff and | Share or infer criticism of any aspect of school life during engagement |
| Join leaders in visits to lessons | Visit lessons alone |
| Get to know different parts of the school with leaders | Travel the school alone |
| Confidentially record your own observation and share with other | Disclose your observations beyond the governing body |
| Adhere to safeguarding protocols | Become involved in safeguarding matter |
| Discreetly inform the HT/DHT/DOR if you are concerned about something | Inform any other members of staff about your concerns |
| <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> Best practice Worst practice </div> | |

Annex B: Lead Governors' record of visit:

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| Governor : | | Portfolio lead for : | |
| Date : | | Time: | |
| Activity : | | Level: | 1/ 2/ 3 |
| Purpose of activity: <i>(Reason for visit)</i> | | | |
| Involving: | | | |
| As a result of: <i>(Last MRE meeting / discussion/ event etc)</i> | CoG school visit: Ad hoc 'sitting in' on BCS leader meeting to discuss ICT Strategy (overview of consultation 2017-18). | | |
| Governor notes from discussion / 'seeing the school in action' / receipt of data | | | |
| SIP Priority: Use of Resources 2a: | | | |
| | | | |
| School evidence of monitoring / review / evaluation | | | |
| Summary of issues explored | | | |
| Current progress achieved by school: | | | |
| Actions for ongoing school progress <i>(for discussion at next meeting)</i> | | | |
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The purpose(s) of your meeting with your SLT counterpart are to:

1. Scrutinise the School's work in relation to **statutory requirements** applicable to your lead function.
2. **Focus on the priorities** you have selected from the **School Improvement Plan** to monitor, review and evaluate school evidence of progress (when applicable) during the academic year, providing appropriate & supportive challenge.
3. Record & report as necessary to the GB on the School's work to improve provision in your lead function.

The following key questions may assist the effectiveness of your meeting:

- What provision, processes, practices, systems and policies have you discussed
 - To what extent are you satisfied that provision meets statutory requirements and is well led
 - Tell me about your system to monitor & evaluate in this area
 - What does tell you
 - What are you doing about it
 - What appropriate challenge & evaluation did you provide to the senior leader responsible for that area
- Your completed record of your meeting should be shared with your lead colleague, copied to them and then forwarded to the Chair of Governors, Headteacher, SLT counterpart, Clerk to the Governing Body**

