

**ELMWOOD SCHOOL
GOVERNOR HANDBOOK**



WELCOME TO ELMWOOD SCHOOL

www.elmwood.walsall.sch.uk

A warm welcome to Elmwood School and as a governor, we hope that you find the role interesting and useful.

Elmwood School is a small secondary aged special school for pupils with social, mental and emotional health difficulties.

Governors are encouraged to be involved with school life and visit school as regularly as possible. Regular newsletters are sent to governors so that they are kept informed of what is going on in and out of school.








In addition to the contents within this handbook the Clerk will forward the following for further information:


- RAP (School Improvement Plan)/Ofsted Action Plan
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023 document
- Minutes of last full Governing Body Meeting
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Staff list
- School Policy list
- Current budget analysis – (the scheme for financing schools document is available and Governors are encouraged to read this to ensure that the school is compliant with the rules and regulations. The Council's financial and contract rules document is also available for Governors; both documents are available on the School Website Governors Page or can be provided electronically if preferred, please contact the Clerk to the Governors)
- Latest newsletter



KEY INFORMATION

The Governing Body consists of 9 Governors and 2 Associate Members. The Clerk to the Governing Body is Dawn Canham c/o Elmwood School.

NAME	PHOTO	TYPE OF GOVERNOR	POSITION	LINK GOVERNOR AREA
Mr Lee Cross		Staff	Headteacher	
Vacancy		Co-opted		
Mrs Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen		LA	Chair of Governors	Safeguarding
Ms Hannah Shepherd		Co-opted		
Vacancy		Co-opted		
Mr Leon Donaldson		Staff		
Miss Sarah Thornton		Parent		Pupil wellbeing
Vacancy		Parent		
Miss Lisa Jones		Parent		
Mrs Di Cadman		Associate Member		Elmwood Values
Vacancy		Associate Member		

Mrs D Canham			Clerk to the Governors	

A number of useful documents are available on the school's website (www.elmwood.sch.uk) such as Policies, most recent Ofsted report and latest newsletter (copies of newsletters are sent directly to Governors).



INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

A copy of the instrument is available on the Governor page of the school website. The Instrument was dated 8.10.13 and consists of 9 Governors.



COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The DfE have produced a competency framework for governance these include:

Strategic leadership

Accountability

People

Structures

Compliance

Evaluation

The guidance identifies the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance.



CODE OF CONDUCT

We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individual board members, we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school.

3. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
5. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
6. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
7. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
8. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
9. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
10. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
11. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
12. We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
13. We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/communities.

2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
4. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the [register of business interests](#).
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
5. We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, 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.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.



GOVERNOR TRAINING

Governor Training is available via Walsall Council, Governor Support and Development Team. A list of available courses is available by calling 01922 686416 or email:

govsupport@walsall.gov.uk. The Governing Body is also a member of the Walsall Governors' Association which has training videos for new governors on their website, walsallgovernors.com (log in details will be forwarded to you) and currently have access to the National Governors' Association (again log in information will be provided by the Clerk). The Chair of Governors also has to Perspective which contains useful documents relating to the school such as the SEF and RAP documents.



COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Annually (usually the Autumn Term) Governors discuss and may be appointed to any relevant sub committees. These are normally agreed in conjunction with completed skills audit proformas so that governors with the relevant skills are utilised effectively.



GOVERNOR EXPENSES

Elmwood School: Governing Body

Governors' out-of pocket expenses claim form

Governing bodies are allowed to pay expenses necessary for the performance of members' duties as governors. These may, for example, include:

- Travel and subsistence payments
- Child care and similar expenses
- Telephone charges, photocopying and stationery

Loss of earnings expenses cannot be paid. All expenses paid to governors will be reported at termly meetings.

Name of Governor: _____

Address: _____

Date of governors' meeting _____

Meeting attended _____

EXPENDITURE INCURRED

1. Travelling Expenses (If Public transport please supply receipt. If claim is for car mileage this will be paid at the current rate).

Journey from _____ Journey to _____ Single or Return? ____

Total miles _____ claimed

Public transport claim (Please state amount and attach receipt) £ _____

2. Child care expenses (Please state hours x hourly rate and attach receipt)

Hours _____ X Hourly Rate _____ = £ _____

3. Other Expenses (Please specify and attach receipts)

_____ £ _____

4. Total claim _____ £ _____

I certify that the above expenses were actually and necessarily incurred by me in undertaking my duties as a governor of Elmwood School

Signed _____ Date _____

Authorised _____ (Headteacher) Date _____

_____ (Chair) Date _____



DATES OF MEETINGS



ELMWOOD SCHOOL

SUGGESTED DATES FOR GOVERNOR MEETINGS – 2024-25

EB = electronic board meeting so no physical attendance required. Papers are shared via email.

Autumn Term	Thursday 26th September 2024 (review of last academic year and Safeguarding Policy sign off) Thursday 14th November 2024
Spring Term	Thursday 9 th January 2025 (EB) Thursday 27th February 2025
Summer Term	Thursday 3 rd April 2025 (EB) Thursday 22nd May 2025

SITES AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE MEETINGS – 3.00 pm

Autumn Term	Thursday 10 th October 2024
Spring Term	Thursday 30 th January 2025
Summer Term	Thursday 8 th May 2025

FINANCE AND PAY COMMITTEE MEETINGS – 4.00 pm

Autumn Term	Thursday 10 th October 2024
Spring Term	Thursday 30 th January 2025
Summer Term	Thursday 8 th May 2025

HEAD'S APPRAISAL MEETING (4.00 pm)

Autumn Term	Tuesday 24 th September 2024
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CURRICULUM AND POLICIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS – 4.00 pm

Autumn Term	Thursday 7 th November 2024
Spring Term	Thursday 13 th March 2025
Summer Term	Thursday 3 rd July 2025



GOVERNOR DECLARATION FORM

When joining the Governing Body and on an annual basis, governors complete a Governor's Declaration Form which is forwarded to the Local Authority in addition to the Clerk maintaining a central record. New governors need to complete and return the form within this handbook – please refer to Appendix B.



REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTEREST FORM

All governors (and staff) complete the above form annually disclosing any business interests as well as any other relevant interests they may have and a central record is held by the Clerk to the Governors. New governors joining the team need to complete and return the form within this handbook – please refer to Appendix C.



ETHNIC ORIGIN MONITORING FORM

It is necessary for all governors to complete and return an Ethnic Origin Monitoring Form under the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act. Please refer to Appendix D.



School or setting Elmwood

Name of governor _____ **Date** _____

Governors are asked to indicate their level of experience in the following areas. No single governor is expected to have all of these, but they should appear across the governing body and can be considered as essential for the governing body as a whole.

Governors, trustees and academy committee members of single schools

Knowledge, experience, skills and behaviours

Enter a score (1 to 4) below

1 = strong disagreement
4 = strong agreement

1	2	3	4
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1. Strategic leadership

I have governing experience in a school or in a different sector

I am/have been chair of a board or committee

I have experience and expertise in developing a strategy

I know what the school's strategic priorities are

I can identify key risks and evaluate their potential impact

2. Accountability

I am aware of how the school is funded and what the funding is spent on

I can interpret budget monitoring reports and ask relevant questions

I understand how the school's curriculum meets the needs of all pupils

I understand how my governing board engages with stakeholders – pupils, parents, staff and the wider community – and how this informs decisions

I feel confident being part of the panel that conducts headteacher appraisal

3. People

I know how to build the knowledge I need to be effective in my governance role

I can build positive, collaborative relationships with members of my board

4. Structures

I understand the strategic nature of the board's role and what governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other.

I know what the governing board's core functions are

I understand how the board delegates its work

5. Compliance

I feel confident being part of a panel to make decisions (such as on pupil exclusions or complaints)

I know how the board meets its legal and compliance responsibilities

I feel able to speak up if I am concerned about non-compliance and unethical behaviour.

I can identify when independent, expert advice may be required

6. Equality, diversion and inclusion

I know and empathise with the community served by the school

I understand the legal responsibilities of governing boards in relation to equalities.

I have influenced an organisation's culture of equality and diversity (through communication, appropriate challenge, awareness raising or developing policies and practices).

I have knowledge, experience or training that will help me to promote diversity and inclusion.

I can recognise and challenge behaviour, attitudes, policy and practice which go against the inclusive culture we want for our school.

I understand how to use relevant data and insight to identify and resolve issues relating to inequality.

Is there any support or training you would like to engage in to help you promote equality and diversity in your school?

7. Self Evaluation

What are the areas you feel you need to prioritise to develop your governance knowledge and skills?

Are there any additional areas of the board's responsibilities which you would like to contribute to in the future?

OPTIONAL:

Do you have any further comments on your development needs and or your continuing contribution to the governing board?

Existing governors/trustees only

What contribution do you feel you have made to the governing board over the past year?

Please give brief details of courses you have undertaken in the past year - include governor/trustee training, work based training/development and/or any other development/training activities.

Are there any additional areas of the governing board's responsibilities to which you would like to contribute in the future?



ELMWOOD SCHOOL

GOVERNOR COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

STAFF DISMISSAL (QUORUM 3)	STAFF DISMISSAL APPEAL COMMITTEE (QUORUM 3)
Hannah Shepherd – Co-opted Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen – LA Vacancy – Co-opted	Vacancy, Co-opted Vacancy – Associate Member Di Cadman – Associate Member
Clerk – Dawn Canham	Clerk – Dawn Canham

FINANCE AND PAY (QUORUM 3)	FINANCE AND PAY APPEALS COMMITTEE (QUORUM 3)
Vacancy – Co-opted Hannah Shepherd – Co-opted Lee Cross – Staff	Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen – LA Sarah Thornton – Parent Vacancy – Associate Member
Clerk – Dawn Canham	Clerk – Dawn Canham

PUPIL SUPPORT (QUORUM 3)	SITES AND BUILDINGS COMMITTEE (QUORUM 3)
Vacancy – Co-opted Hannah Shepherd – Co-opted Di Cadman – Associate Member Vacancy - Co-opted Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen - LA	Leon Donaldson – Staff (Chair) Lee Cross – Staff Vacancy – Co-opted Di Cadman – Associate Member Sarah Thornton - Parent
Clerk – Dawn Canham	Clerk – Dawn Canham

COMPLAINTS PANEL (QUORUM 3)	CURRICULUM AND POLICIES (QUORUM 3)
Hannah Shepherd – Co-opted Vacancy – Co-opted Leon Donaldson – Staff Di Cadman – Associate Member	Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen – LA (Chair) Hannah Shepherd – Co-opted Leon Donaldson – Staff Lee Cross – Staff Lisa Jones - Parent
Clerk – Dawn Canham	Clerk – Dawn Canham

APPRAISAL COMMITTEE (QUORUM 2)	APPRAISAL REVIEW OFFICER (APPEALS)
Sallyann Tuckwell-Allen – LA Hannah Shepherd– Co-opted Vacancy – Co-opted	Vacancy – Co-opted or LA
Clerk – Dawn Canham	Clerk – Dawn Canham

SCRUTINY PANEL WORKING PARTY	
Sallyann Tuckwell Allen Leon Donaldson Sarah Thornton	



Name
Address
Tel:
(Home)
(Work)
(Email)
School: ELMWOOD SCHOOL, KING GEORGE CRESCENT, RUSHALL, WALSALL, WS4 1EG

I declare that I am not disqualified from serving as a school governor and that:

- **I am** aged 18 or over at the date of this election or appointment;
- **I do not** already hold a governorship of the same school;
- **I have not** (a) had my estate sequestrated (temporarily repossessed) and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
(b) "I have not been subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order."
- **I am not** subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429 (2) of the Insolvency Act 1986;
- **I have not** been removed from the office of a charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement or, under section 7 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990, from being concerned in the management or control of anybody;
- **I am not** included in the list (List 99) of teachers or workers prohibited or restricted from working with children or young people;
- **I am not** disqualified from working with children;
- **I am not** disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State;
- **I have not** been sentenced to 3 months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the 5 years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- **I have not** received a prison sentence of 2½ years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- **I have not**, at any time, received a prison sentence of 5 years or more;
- **I have not** been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the 5 years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- **I have not** refused to an application being made to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate.

Signature _____

Date _____



Declaration of Business and Other Interests

APPENDIX C

Governor name: **Position:**

Declaring a conflict of interest is a legal requirement for board members of both maintained schools and academies.

Any governor, board member, trustee, associate member, head teacher or principal (whether or not that person is a governor) or any person appointed as the clerk to the governing body or to the committee must declare any relevant business and pecuniary interests. These interests are anything that might sway your decision making, or affect your ability to act in an impartial way solely to the benefit of the school rather than yourself personally. The school is required to publish a register of business interests on the website.

Governors are reminded that completion of this form does not remove the requirement upon you to disclose orally any interest at any specific meeting and to withdraw. If you make a declaration you must leave the meeting. If there is a matter to be voted upon, then only the members of the governing board should vote.

Please fill in the form below and return it to Dawn Canham, Clerk to the Governors

Relevant business interests (name of organisation and nature of interest)	Links to other educational establishments (name of school and nature of link)	Personal relationships (name of staff member/governor and nature of relationship)	Date interest registered

Declarations should include any links with individuals, businesses, charities, contractors, or other organisations from whom the school may purchase services. It should also include interests of other persons such as parent, spouse, co-habitee, or business partners where influence could be exerted by that person over a governor or member of staff. If in doubt seek advice or record it for the sake of transparency.

To the best of my knowledge the information above is correct. I understand that I must withdraw from any meeting during the discussion where I have a conflict of interest. I agree to review and update this declaration annually or as and when changes occur.

Signed:

Date:



We would be grateful if you could take a minute to complete this form. Information about the ethnic origin of governors is required to enable us to fulfil our responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).

Name

SchoolELMWOOD SCHOOL.....

I would describe my ethnic origin as... (Please tick box)

<p>White</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Irish</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other white</p>	<p>Black or Black British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Black African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other Black</p>
<p>Asian or Asian British</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian</p>	<p>Mixed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other Mixed</p>
	<p>Chinese or Other Ethnic Group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other Ethnic Group</p>

The categories used are the census categories.

Form Completed by ... Date