



# INDUCTION CHECKLIST FOR NEW GOVERNORS & ALLOWANCES

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## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new Governors become familiar with:-

- Elmwood School and its community
- Procedures relating to the governance of Elmwood School
- The general roles and responsibilities of a school governor

## Legislation and guidance

**The Governance Handbook (section 4.7.1, paragraph 63) says that boards in maintained schools with a delegated budget can choose whether or not to pay allowances to board members. Where they choose to do so, it must be in accordance with a policy or scheme. The legislation on governors' allowances is set out in the the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, part 6.**

## The school, its community and governance

In order to become familiar with the school, pupils, staff, governors and the specific operations of the Governing Body at Elmwood, new Governors will have the following support:-

A welcome letter which will include:-

- Letter of welcome from the Clerk to the Governors
- School prospectus
- Governor Handbook
- Latest Newsletter
- Most recent Ofsted Inspection Report
- RAP (Raising Achievement Plan)
- Minutes of last Governing Body Meeting
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Staffing List
- List of School Policies
- 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. A copy of the regulations is available on the School Website, Governors, sub page Governor documents and information.

New governors are invited to visit the School and meet staff and pupils as well as have a tour around the building and its facilities.

## General Roles and Responsibilities of a School Governor

For all Governors, especially those who have not acted as a School governor before, the following support is available:-

Walsall Governor Support  
Walsall Governors Association  
National Governors' Association

Governors are also able to access the Governor Training programme run by Walsall Governor Support. Course details are contained in the Walsall Governor Newsletter circulated termly.

'An Introduction to being a Governor' is an induction course for new Governors and is really useful as it explains in detail the roles and responsibilities of a School Governor.

Another useful source of information is the website – [www.governornet.co.uk](http://www.governornet.co.uk) which contains lots of valuable information, including a jargon buster section where you can make sense of some of the terminology used.

#### MEETINGS:

Termly meetings of the full Governing Body are held as well as an additional electronic termly meeting in order that governors have an awareness of the current budget situation. In addition, Governors are assigned to particular committees dependent on areas of expertise ascertained from a skills audit. Paperwork is sent by the Clerk to the Governors a week in advance of any meeting.

#### LINK GOVERNOR AREAS:

Governors are encouraged to become a link governor for a specific area such as an aspect of the curriculum, attendance etc. This helps to both forge links with the School as well as offer support/challenge.

#### GOVERNOR EXPENSES:

Governors of Elmwood School will be entitled to claim the actual costs, which they incur as follows:

- Governors will be able to claim allowances providing the allowances are incurred in carrying out their duties, as a Governor or representative of Elmwood School, and are agreed by the Chair of Governors that they are justified before any reimbursable costs are incurred.
- Governors will be able to claim for the following, on a case-by-case basis and with the prior approval of the Governing Body:
- Childcare or babysitting allowances (excluding payments to a current/former spouse or partner);
- Cost of care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative (excluding payments to a current/former spouse or partner);

- The extra costs they incur in performing their duties either because they have special needs or because English is not their first language;
- The cost of travel relating only to travel to meetings/training courses at a rate of 45 pence per mile (as at September 2012) which does not exceed the specified rates for school personnel;
- Travel and subsistence costs, payable at the current rates specified by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, associated with attending national meetings or training events, unless these costs can be claimed from the LA or any other source;
- Telephone charges, photocopying, stationery, postage etc
- Any other justifiable allowances.
- Travel expenses where a governor uses their own vehicle must not exceed the HM Revenue and customs (HMRC) approved mileage rates.

Claims will be paid in arrears on a case-by-case basis. Reimbursable costs should be agreed in principle by the Chair of Governors/Headteacher **before** they are incurred.

The Governing Body at Elmwood School acknowledges that:

- Governors may not be paid attendance allowance;
- Governors may not be reimbursed for loss of earnings.

Governors wishing to make claims under these arrangements, once prior approval has been sought, should complete a claims form (see appendix), attaching receipts where possible, and return it to the School when they will be submitted for approval by the Chair of Governors and Head Teacher. In the case of the Chair of Governors making a claim, this will be approved by the Head Teacher and Clerk to the Governors.

Claims will be subject to independent audit and may be investigated by the Chair of Governors (or Chair of Finance in respect of the Chair of Governors) if they appear excessive or inconsistent.

(copy of claim form is attached as an appendix).

<p><b>CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNING BODY AT ELMWOOD SCHOOL</b></p>
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**The governing board has the following strategic functions:**

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher (where delegated)
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the headteacher (where delegated)
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and 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 executive leaders.
- 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 that 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 governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully 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 executive leaders
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

### **Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor member involves 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/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- 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.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools).

#### **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, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account 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 executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust, 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 or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## **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/trust'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.

## **Ceasing to be a governor**

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office

## **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.

## **The seven principles of public life**

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

**Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty** – Holders of public office should be truthful

**Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix - Governor claim form

### Elmwood School

Name:

Address:

Claim period:

I claim the total sum of £\_\_\_\_\_ for governor expenses as detailed below. I have attached relevant receipts to support my claim.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSE TYPE	£
Childcare	
Care arrangements for dependent relatives	
Support for a special need or English as a second language	
Travel or subsistence	
Telephone charges, photocopying, postage or stationery	
Other (please specify)	
<b>Total expenses claimed</b>	

This form should be submitted to the Clerk to the Governors, c/o Elmwood School, along with any relevant receipts.

The form should be submitted within 14 days of the expenses being incurred.