



Governor Handbook

This is to be used alongside the DfE maintained schools governance guide

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools>

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1. School Information

Brierley Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Beech Close
Brierley
Barnsley
S72 9EJ

Telephone 01226 711332

Website www.brierleyschool.com

Type of School: Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Age Range: 4 – 11

Pupil Admission Number 210

Head Teacher: Samantha Benson s.benson@brierleyschool.com

Assistant Head Teacher: Sharon Gough s.gough@brierleyschool.com

Chair of Governors: Fr Paul Cartwright

Vice-Chair of Governors: Andrew Kenyon

2. Head Teacher's Welcome

Firstly, may I welcome you and thank you for deciding to become a Governor at Brierley School. For me your decision to become a school Governor demonstrates your commitment and willingness to see our school improve, to address the challenges that face us and to guide and influence our future development.

If you have not been a Governor before you may be unsure as to what your role is and what responsibilities you have. That's why, as a school, we have developed this booklet to help you begin to understand what Brierley School is about and what being a school Governor means.

I would like to assure you that you are very welcome to call or email the chair, vice chair or myself with any questions you may have as we are all here to support you in this new role.

In this document you will see our Governing Body structure of which you have now become.

I hope you will be very happy and am sure you will make a valuable contribution to our wonderful school.

Thank you once again for becoming a Governor, you are very welcome.

With kind regards

Mrs Sam Benson

Headteacher

3. Your Role as Governor

The role of any Governing Body is to ensure the school conducts itself in a way that promotes high standards of educational achievement within school. As part of the Governing Body you will form part of a wider team and will always act on behalf of that team and not as an individual. Individual Governors have no direct power to act unless the whole Governing Body has agreed to delegate a particular decision making authority to the individual.

As a Governor you are not there to act as a sounding board for complaints or the day to day issues of parents or other persons who may wish to comment on the school. Your role is to ensure agreed policy and practice is followed and to monitor and comment on the school's ability to meet its policy objectives. No Governor should undertake any action on behalf of the Governing Body without the permission of the whole Governing Body. For day to day issues highlighted by pupils, parents or members of the public regarding the school, its management or activities, these should be directed by the person raising the issue, directly to school i.e. the Headteacher or staff.

The main aim of a Governing Body is to maintain and to improve the standards of education.

The responsibilities of a Governing Body are set out in the DFE Maintained Schools Governance Guide which can be found using the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools>

Code of Conduct

At Brierley we endorse and uphold the Code of Conduct as recommended by the National Governors' Association. Our roles, duties and expectations are intrinsic to this code of conduct.

The role encompasses both statutory and strategic responsibilities.

Statutory responsibilities include the following:

- Capability of staff
- Charging and remissions
- Sex education
- Special educational needs and disabilities
- Teacher appraisal
- Teachers' pay
- Data protection
- Admission arrangements
- Governor allowances
- Minutes and papers from meetings
- Equality information and objectives
- Register of pupils' admission to schools
- Register of pupils' attendance
- Child protection policy and procedures
- Early Years Foundations Stage (EYFS)

Statement of procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff
Accessibility plan
Central record of recruitment
Complaints procedure statement
Instrument of government
Premises management documents
School information published on website
Register of business interest (Head teacher and Governors)
Staff discipline, conduct and grievances (procedures for addressing)
Supporting pupils with a medical need

In order to maintain and to improve the standards of education in school these responsibilities are strategically embodied within:

Steering Role

Agreeing Policy
Setting Budgets
Agreeing Development Plans
Responding to inspections

Monitoring Role

Monitoring Plans
Monitoring Budgets
Monitoring Standards
Monitoring Achievement

Executive Role

Recruitment
Discipline

Communication Role

Gaining Feedback
Preparing Annual Reports
School Prospectus

Supporting Role

Supporting School Policy
Providing Skills and Advice
Being part of a Team
Critical Friend

How does the Governing Body work?

Schools in England have a number of specific objectives set out by UK parliament and in turn, Governing Bodies have a number of delegated duties given to them under the various Education Acts to monitor school activity in a key performance areas, these delegated activities can include:

- Promoting high standards
- Managing the school's finances
- Making sure that the curriculum for the school meets national and school specific requirements
- Introducing forward plans to help the whole school develop
- Maintaining a safe and healthy environment

Governing Bodies may achieve these objectives through a sub-committee structure (i.e. smaller groups of Governors that focus on each specific objective and issue and report back to the Full Governing Body).

At Brierley the sub-committees have reduced to manage Governor time more effectively. Current sub committees are as follows:

- Finance and Buildings (Meeting termly)
- Human Resources (Meeting as required)

As a member of the Governing Body, you may request to attend or become part of a sub-committee. However, before you do it is recommended, if your time permits, that you attend a sub-committee meeting and receive and read copies of the terms of reference.

You do not need any special skills to be a school Governor just enthusiasm, a desire to be actively involved in the life of the school, to find out about the school and its environment, willing to work as a team, listening to the ideas of others and contributing your own ideas and time to the benefit of school.

It is anticipated however that as an active, supportive and committed school Governor you will attend training courses to broaden your skills and expertise and increase your knowledge of Governorship. It is also expected that as a serving Governor you will attend those meetings of which you are a sub committee member.

As a new Governor, the Chair and Headteacher will have introduced themselves to you and explain the role of the Governing Body and the school. In the meantime and if you would like to find out more about school Governorship you can log on to www.Governor.net.co.uk or see the DFE 'Governor Handbook'

Types of Governor

The Governing Body may comprise of some or all of the following types of Governor

Parent

Staff

Teacher

Foundation

Head Teacher

Local Education Authority

Co-opted/Community

All school Governors are either elected, appointed or entitled to office. If you are unsure as to which type of Governor you are, you should check by asking the Chair to the Governors or the Headteacher.

Parent Governors - Should normally be elected and should realise they are a representative parent not a parent representative.

Teacher Governors - Again would normally be elected and may serve as long as they are employed by school.

Staff Governors - Are also elected but are from the non-teaching staff. Again both teacher and staff Governors should recognise they are a representative of the teaching or non-teaching staff not a teaching or non-teaching staff representative.

LA Governors - Are appointed by the local authority.

Foundation Governors - Are always appointed by the school's founding organisation, i.e.the church or voluntary organisation.

Co-opted/

Community Governors - Are always appointed by elected or appointed members of the Governing Body.

All of the above may serve a maximum term of 4 years in office (except the parish incumbent) but may be re-elected. The final type of Governor is the Headteacher and he or she will always have a choice, and may or may not decide to be part of the Governing Body.

The current Governing Body

Governor Name	Type of Governor
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Fr Paul Cartwright	Chair (Foundation Ex-Officio)
Fr Tom Bates-Bourne	Vice Chair Co-opted
Fr Ian Wildey	Co-opted
Sharon Gough	Staff
Deb Shorthouse	Parent
Andrew Kenyon	Parent
Sam Benson	Head Teacher
Debbie Shorthouse	Local Authority
Paul Bourne	Foundation
Paula Holroyd	Co-opted

Who can not be a Governor?

You cannot become a school Governor if you are;

- a Governor of more than two schools
- declared bankrupt and have a current order served upon you
- disqualified from being a company director
- disqualified from being a charity trustee
- a convicted criminal (there are specific limits affecting different convictions)
- under the age of 18

If you think any of these factors apply to you, you should declare this in writing to the Clerk to the Governors now. Failure to declare these items now and which come to light at a later point may result in formal action being taken against you.

The Role of the Head Teacher

Usually you should expect the Governing Body and the Head Teacher to have a strong supportive relationship and work in partnership with each other to meet the school's objectives – and at Brierley this is how things work.

As you may expect, the Head Teacher's role is to take responsibility for the internal management of the school and its operation – this is not a role of the Governing Body. The Governing Body is in place to ensure the school is conducted in a way that promotes high educational and social standards, and this is done by monitoring the activities of the school through Head Teacher reports and the sub-committee structure.

Where concerns exist these should be raised at meetings and, as appropriate, discussed with the Head Teacher so that she may consider and address the concerns raised.

It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure the high standards and agreed objectives are delivered through the management of school resources on a day to day basis.

Meetings

Generally as a school Governor there will be two types of meeting you can attend, these are, full meetings of the Governing Body (held at least once every term) and sub-committee meetings (held as required to achieve the objectives of the Governing Body).

You are required to attend at least one meeting of the Full Governing Body every 6 months. Failure to attend meetings may mean you could become disqualified and will not be entitled to stand as a Governor. Details of these meetings will be sent prior to each meeting, if you cannot attend you should contact the Chair or Clerk to the Governors with your apologies.

Sub-committee meetings will be notified to you as you become part of each group. Again you should endeavour to attend as many meetings as time permits and advise the meeting Chair or Clerk to the Governors of any non-attendance.

Meetings are a part of being a Governor as are the structure notes or minutes taken for each meeting. As a Governor you will be sent information detailing the activities of the school (via the Head Teacher) and various sub-committees and Full Governing Body meetings (via the Clerk to the Governors).

If you have not attended a meeting before do not worry. All Governor meetings are arranged to discuss specific issues or a range of issues around a specific subject – they are not there to embarrass anyone and will be run in a way that allows everyone to contribute and comment on the subject. It is expected that not every Governor will know and understand all of the terminology, rationales and protocols used, so it is important that you are comfortable in seeking clarification.

Each meeting will be structured with a Chairperson and with the Clerk (or some other nominated person taking notes). As a member of the meeting all you need to do is read any literature supplied before hand, ask questions and comment as you see appropriate around the discussion points.

During a meeting particular objectives may be discussed and you may agree to complete additional activities in support of the overall objective. You must remember that there is no obligation for you to do any specific activities and your role, as Governor, is in a monitoring capacity and is to ensure that the school is **maintaining and improving the standards of education**.

Meetings are not an opportunity for attendees to show how knowledgeable they are about a subject, also they are not in competition to see who can talk the loudest and are not an opportunity to be rude about other people and their ideas. Meetings are a vehicle where a group of people with a clear objective can get together, listen to each others views and ideas and agree clearly on what actions to take to achieve on objective.

The important thing for any meeting is to be clear on what you are trying to achieve when you go in and be clear on who is to do what and by when, when you come out.

The role of the Chair at any meeting is to ensure that all participants are clear on what the objective is and why they are going, what will be discussed (the agenda), ensure someone will take notes and finally to keep the discussion flowing with an aim to achieve targeted conclusions within the time limits set for the meeting.

Health & Safety at school

Most school related activity, including Governor meetings are held within school. Therefore, you need to be aware of the school safety policy detailed below:

General Policy Statement

It shall be the policy of Brierley School to establish and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- a. a safe working environment throughout all school sectors, in accordance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and other relevant legislation.
- b. safe working procedures among staff, pupils and other users of school
- c. effective training in first aid and other safety procedures.
- d. effective procedures for use in case of fire, accidental injury or other emergencies
- e. methods of evaluating regularly the effectiveness of the School Safety Policy.
- f. techniques for promoting health and safety as a general principle whenever possible.
- g. procedures for reporting accidents and monitoring the records in order to reduce the number of accidents.
- h. safety consciousness and responsible attitudes towards safety throughout school.
- i. equipment and systems of work that are safe.

- j. arrangements for protection against risk to the health and safety of the general public.
- k. sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all staff and pupils to carry out their work in a safe manner.
- l. procedures to identify hazards and risks and the means of controlling such risks.
- m. procedures to ensure relevant health and safety issues are embedded within course syllabi at all levels where appropriate.

Overall the objective is to identify all the hazards associated with the function of the school, its activities, facilities or location, eliminating or reducing the risks associated with known hazards so to prevent injury or ill effect.

Should you experience any item or issue that you feel represents as risk to health and safety and/or which is not currently adequately controlled, you must report the item to the Headteacher immediately so that appropriate action may be considered and taken as necessary.

Likewise should you personally experience any ill effects or risks to your own health and safety whilst undertaking activity on behalf of the school you should stop what you are doing immediately and report the issue as detailed above.

Pupils

Of course one of the primary reasons you probably want to become a Governor is to improve the standards within the school to benefit the pupils.

The pupils are split across seven years from foundation stage through to Year 6. At present we have 212 pupils in school with seven classroom bases (one form entry). The school is presently oversubscribed in some year groups; our admission limit for each cohort is 30.

Where does the school's money come from?

Our main source of funding is through the direct schools' grant. This is delegated to the school by the local authority and is shared out in relation to pupil numbers (the more pupils a school has the more funding it receives!).

Every aspect of school life has to be funded from this grant including teachers' salaries, rates, energy costs, national insurance contributions, etc.

From time to time there are other grants that schools may draw from. At present there is a Pupil Premium Grant and a separate Sports' Fund to provide additional support for vulnerable children and to strengthen Physical Education across the school.

To ensure that all of the funding delegated to school is used effectively, and to maintain the integrity of Governors, the school has a 'Register of Business' interests. For your information the declaration form (copy attached – appendix 1) is used to notify us of any business involvement that needs to be declared: This must be up-dated annually or sooner if your circumstances change.

We hope that this booklet will give you a brief insight into the role of the Governing Body and that you will find the work rewarding and enjoyable.

If there is anything that you need further clarification upon then please ask.

The Governing Body of Brierley CE (VC) Primary School welcomes you to the team and thanks you for giving up your valuable time to our cause.

Reviewed 2020

Appendix 1

BRIERLEY CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROFORMA REGISTER OF BUSINESS INTEREST

Name _____

Name of Business	Nature of Business	Nature of Interest	Date of Appointment or Acquisition	Date of Cessation of Interest	Date of Entry

I certify that I have declared all beneficial interests which I or any person closely connected with me have with business or the other organisations which may have dealings with the school.

Signed _____

Date _____

