

GWYNEDD GOVERNORS' HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. The Clerk To The Governors | 3 |
| 3. The Role Of The Chair..... | 4 |
| 4. Annual Responsibilities..... | 5 |
| 5. The Corporate Responsibilities Of The Governing Body | 10 |
| 6. Summary Of The Responsibilities And Remit Of Committees Of The Governing Body..... | 12 |
| 7. Personnel Issues | 19 |
| 8. How To Handle A Complaint..... | 20 |
| 9. Confidentiality | 23 |
| 10. Support And Training | 24 |
| 11. Gwynedd Primary Schools' Welsh Language Charter | 25 |
| 12. Training..... | 26 |
| 13. School Prospectus Content | 27 |
| 14. Content Of Governors' Annual Report To Parents..... | 29 |

1. INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been produced mainly to give guidance for Gwynedd school governors. It is hoped that you find the contents useful in helping you to accomplish your 'critical friend' role in supporting your schools to ensure the best possible conditions for children and staff.

The booklet is one aspect of the support provided for governors in Gwynedd.

This is a list of other sources of information that is available:

- An annual brochure listing training courses is provided for each individual governor.
- Governors' Guide to the Law is provided by the Welsh Government.
- Handbook for Governors of Schools in Wales, file that is provided by Governors Wales;
- The Gwynedd Governors' Association welcomes all governors to become members, termly meetings are held. The association is a body that represents governors in Gwynedd and offers the opportunity to consult on strategic and training issues.
- Governors Wales website <http://www.llywodraethwycymru.org.uk/>
- Gwynedd Governors' Website contains details of all support material that is available and also the opportunity to register for training.

2. THE CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS

Meetings of the governors will be attended by the clerk to the governing body. The role of the clerk and arrangements for appointment may vary from school to school. It remains the responsibility of the governing body to decide who should act as clerk and to appoint the clerk. The governing body will also need to appoint a clerk to the statutory committees. This can be the same person who is clerk to the governing body but may be someone else. Broadly, the clerk convenes the governing body meetings and keeps a record of the important matters discussed and decisions taken during the meeting (the record is called the “minutes”). The clerk also ensures that each governor receives proper notice of forthcoming meetings and makes sure that the work of the governing body is well organised, as well as maintaining a register of governors and reporting on any vacancies.

Further information is available in **The School Governors’ Guide to the Law and The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005**.

The clerking service may include additional services such as:-

- providing training details for governors;
- registering individual governors on courses;
- advising the governors concerning governing body policies and procedures;
- advising governors concerning their responsibilities under the law;
- providing information about a wide range of matters of importance to schools and their governors.

The clerk is **not** a governor of the school and is **not** eligible either to participate directly in debate or to vote. The costs of the clerk are met from the school’s budget.

A mandatory course will be held for clerks from September 2013 onwards, giving an introduction to what is required of their role as Clerk to the Governors.

The Authority offers a clerking service by means of a Service Level Agreement at a specific price to any school within the Authority. Any school experiencing difficulties in recruiting a clerk are welcome to contact the Education Office for further information, please contact the -

Governor Support Assistant, Education Office, Gwynedd Council, Caernarfon:
01286 679303.

3. THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The Chair of the governing body (elected annually) plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of the governing body. The Chair leads the governing body but does not have any power to act on the governing body's behalf without instructions, except in certain cases of urgency.

The role of the Chair is primarily:

- to ensure that meetings are conducted efficiently following the correct governing body procedures;
- to consider and approve the agenda for each meeting and to ensure that it is manageable;
- to maintain communication with the headteacher and governors between governing body and sub-committee meetings;
- to act as a spokesperson on behalf of the governing body where necessary;
- to ensure that information and documents received are shared with the governing body.
- There will be an initial course for chairpersons starting from the autumn 2013, giving an introduction to what is expected of their role as chairman/woman.

4. ANNUAL RESPONSIBILITIES REQUIRING ATTENTION FROM THE GOVERNORS

There are certain issues that arise every year which require particular action by the governing body. At the first governing body meeting of the school year, usually held in September, the governing body:

i) Elects the officers of the governing body, i.e.:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chair

ii) Appoints:

- Special Needs governor
- Child Safeguarding governor
- Equality governor
- Co-ordinating link governors for curriculum development, governor training, etc.
- Premises, Health and Safety governor

iii) Confirms the establishment or maintenance of committees of the governing body. Consideration must be given to:

- terms of reference of committees;
- who is to serve upon committees;
- arrangements for committees to report their findings to the governing body;
- what arrangements will be made for determining the dates upon which the governing body will meet during the year;
- every year, secondary schools will need to review their examination results;
- all schools will also need to review teacher assessments for National Curriculum subjects in order to set targets.

OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE GOVERNING BODY MUST CONSIDER EVERY YEAR ARE:

- annual report;
- review of the school development plan;
- consideration and approval of next years' budget;
- review of destination of leavers and projected admissions;
- review of the attendance of pupils and staff;
- review of school policies;
- review of the work of governors;
- performance management of headteacher and pay review.

It is good practice to establish a checklist of tasks for the governing body at the first meeting of the academic year. This provides a clear focus for discussion at future meetings. An example is provided which can be personalised to suit your governing body.

Governing Body Calendar

In the pages that follow items that require attention have been listed per term. Certain issues that arise every year require particular action by the governing body. At the first governing body meeting of the school year, usually held in September, the governors need to decide at what time during the school year particular items are dealt with.

Some issues may be delegated to sub-committees but it is very unlikely that the full governing body will not meet on more than one occasion per term.

GOVERNING BODY CALENDAR

| ACTION | WHO | WHEN Insert meeting date |
|---|-----|-----------------------------------|
| AUTUMN TERM | | |
| Elect Chair and Vice-Chair at first meeting* | | |
| Confirm Governor Membership and categories.* | | |
| Confirm Community Members to be co-opted.* | | |
| Appoint Committees/Working Parties and review membership and Terms of Reference* | | |
| Review Link Governors, e.g. Additional Needs, Child Protection, Premises Health & Safety | | |
| Set dates of meetings for the year | | |
| Set objectives for the governing body for the year | | |
| Approve School Development Plan | | |
| Review Performance Management policy | | |
| Review and consult on school's Admission Policy for the next school year for Voluntary Aided and Foundation Schools | | |
| Review school Charging Policy, e.g. school trips | | |
| Draw up Freedom of Information guidelines | | |
| Set Pupil Performance Targets | | |
| Receive link Adviser's annual note of visit* | | |
| December - Respond to School's Preliminary Budget from LEA– start Redundancy Procedure if required | | |
| Review and agree School Pay Policy* | | |
| Review School Objectives | | |
| TERMLY MATTERS | | |
| Identify and organise training for governors and clerks* | | |
| Review progress with Headteacher's objectives | | |
| Arrange governors' visits to the school | | |
| Curriculum area reports | | |
| Committee Meetings | | |
| Complete Special Educational Needs report* | | |
| Receive Headteacher's termly report (before governing body meeting) | | |
| Action planning following inspection (where applicable) | | |
| Governing Body meetings* | | |
| Monitor the Budget* | | |

| ACTION | WHO | WHEN Insert meeting date |
|---|-----|-----------------------------------|
| AT ANY TIME OF THE YEAR | | |
| Complete Asset Management Plan | | |
| Review School Self Evaluation process and link to the Post-Inspection Action Plan and the School Development Plan | | |
| Monitor membership of governing body and arrange for any elections/appointments* | | |
| Induction of new governors | | |
| Preparation for inspection | | |
| | | |
| Set dates for Annual Report and meeting with parents* | | |
| Draft/issue Annual Report and hold annual meeting with parents* | | |
| Appoint clerk if necessary | | |
| Review the delegation of functions | | |
| Review existing policies and amend as necessary | | |
| Receive teacher/governor report | | |
| SPRING TERM | | |
| Agree Curriculum plans for the year | | |
| Consider and agree Service Level Agreements | | |
| Review School Development Plan progress | | |
| Review Equality/Equal Opportunities policies | | |
| Agree and confirm the Budget* | | |
| Agree School Prospectus* | | |
| Receive Link Adviser's note of visit (if not received in Autumn Term) | | |
| Consider progress against Performance Objectives | | |
| Review Additional Learning Needs policy | | |
| Consider resource implications | | |
| Conduct Annual Pay review of all qualified teachers* | | |

| ACTION | WHO | WHEN Insert meeting date |
|--|-----|-----------------------------------|
| SUMMER TERM | | |
| Review Child Safeguarding Policy and present Annual Child Safeguarding Report to LA* | | |
| Review the Governing Body's performance/procedures | | |
| Review attendance of pupils/staff/governors | | |
| Review Pupil Exclusions for the year | | |
| Review School Development Plan progress | | |
| Draft and set school budget for new year | | |
| Plan the annual work of the Governing Body in the context of the School Development Plan | | |
| Receive reports from Link Governors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designated Child Protection Governors' Annual Reports - Additional Learning Needs Governors' Annual Reports - Governors' Annual Reports on Premises | | |

*** Asterisked items are those which the Governing Body must consider during the year. The remaining items are recommended as good practice.**

5. THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governors of schools have no powers to act as individuals unless very specific tasks have been delegated to them by their governing body. The functions of governing bodies are exercised corporately. That is, the decisions taken are those of the governing body as a whole, exercising collective responsibility. It follows that one of the most important tasks of a governing body is to build itself into an effective team. A team is a group of people working together with a common purpose. Each team member has unique qualities, experience, skills and special interests that must be integrated with those of other members.

Individual differences are a team's greatest asset since they help to allocate particular tasks amongst members of the team. A good team is one whose members are aware and supportive of each other. They share the work. They are eager to learn and develop. They know and abide by the rules that safeguard every individual's space. They accept responsibility for the quality of their work together.

A team may be considered effective if:-

- i) it capitalises upon its strengths and appoints new members when it needs a better range of skills and experience;
- ii) it gives priority to the continuous training and development of all its members;
- iii) it shares the workload and gives individuals opportunities to develop specialist roles;
- iv) responsibilities are corporately exercised;
- v) time is allocated to periodically review the team's effectiveness.

i) Capitalising on governing body strengths

The effectiveness of a governing body clearly depends on the qualities, skills and experience its members bring to the service of the school.

ii) Continuous Training and Development for governors

For many people, becoming a governor is an unusual, even daunting experience. The governing body should establish a procedure for the induction of new governors that builds upon any induction arrangements and training offered by the LA, or the diocese authority (the area over which a bishop has jurisdiction). The following mandatory courses will be available from the autumn 2012:

- every new governor should attend the induction sessions;
- every new chairperson should attend the chairperson training sessions;
- every clerk should attend the role of the clerk training sessions;
- a representative from every governing body should attend a course on understanding and analysing data.

iii) Sharing the workload

It is not practicable for the governing body to carry out all their tasks in the course of a meeting. Consequently some of the work must be delegated to sub-committees.

iv) Corporate responsibilities

Individual governors must never forget their corporate responsibility. Once made, decisions of a governing body are binding upon all its individual members, including those who might have disagreed with the majority supporting a decision.



6. SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND REMIT OF COMMITTEES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

The governing body must accept the recommendations and resolutions of the sub-committees in the form of reports/formal minutes. Governing bodies must possess the following statutory committees:

1 STAFF DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL COMMITTEE

Matters pertaining to discipline, dismissal, etc.

This Committee acts with delegated authority. In the instance of a Suspension (or removing Suspension) or Lesser Misconduct the Governing Body must delegate powers to an individual – the Headteacher or the Chair or Vice-Chair or nominated member, this must be minuted. Good practice would be to delegate powers when deciding the members of the Staff Discipline and Dismissal Committee.

(It is a statutory requirement that this committee must include **one** non-governor, entitled to vote, where matters of **child protection** are being considered.)

In rare cases where members of staff do not meet reasonable standards and expectations of professional conduct, disciplinary procedures may be implemented. In serious cases, these will be heard by the committee that may decide (if the case is proven) to administer a written warning, demotion or order dismissal.

The Headteacher is not a member of this committee*. A minimum of three is required for a quorum.

Members of this Committee are advised to take note of the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff - Assembly Guidance Circular January 2013

2 STAFF DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL APPEAL COMMITTEE

This Committee also acts with delegated authority.

Its sole remit is to hear appeals against decisions taken by the First Committee. However, the panel may hear appeals against decisions by the First Committee in relation to staffing matters for example if a decision was taken to discipline or dismiss a teacher or if the teacher wished to appeal against a decision of the committee in relation to his or her salary.

Please note that no governor may sit on both of the above committees as regulations make it clear that members of the appeal committee must not have taken part at any stage in the process against which the teacher is appealing.

The Headteacher is not a member of this committee*. A minimum of three is required for a quorum.

Members of this Committee are advised to take note of the Disciplinary and Dismissal Procedures for School Staff - Assembly Guidance Circular January 2013

3 PUPIL DISCIPLINE AND EXCLUSION COMMITTEE

This Committee also acts with delegated authority. The Committee's main responsibilities are to deal with all matters pertaining to the following:

The Committee is the formal discipline committee which is required by regulations to deal with matters of pupil exclusion. At least three members must be nominated for the committee. Primary and secondary schools should have either three or five members. The Headteacher is not a member of this committee*. A minimum of three is required for a quorum. Teacher governors can be one of the five nominated members of this committee.

The law requires that this committee must meet to consider long term temporary exclusions (more than 5 school days in any one term) and to confirm permanent exclusions. Parents are invited to make representations on behalf of the child and the committee must decide formally whether or not to confirm the decision of the Headteacher.

There is no formal appeal mechanism to the Governors on decisions relating to pupil exclusion, therefore the appeal committee has no role in issues of pupil discipline. Parents have the right if they choose to appeal to an independent appeal panel of the Gwynedd Education Department.

4 ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE (only when the governing body is the admissions authority for that school) namely: only Voluntary Aided Schools in Gwynedd, i.e. Beuno Sant, Our Lady's, Santes Helen schools.

***NOTE: Procedures must be in place to deal with the following statutory responsibilities:**

Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Appointments, Capability and Capability Appeals, Pay Review and Pay Review Appeals, Headteacher Performance Management Appraisers Panel and Appeals, Teachers Performance Management

and Appeals Panel. The Personnel and Staffing Sub-committee can take responsibility for the above statutory requirements. Please refer to the last page for a model sub-committee/panel structure.

THE GOVERNING BODY SHOULD ESTABLISH SUB-COMMITTEES FOR THE FOLLOWING :

***PERSONNEL AND STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE:**

This Committee also acts with delegated authority.

Dealing with applications for early retirement and making decisions on advice from the Headteacher about the staffing complement of the school. The internal organisation of the school including the deployment of staff and allocation of duties is a matter for the Headteacher under his statutory conditions of service.

This Committee deals with the appointment of staff. It will be the committee's responsibility to form a shortlisting and appointment panel (whose membership must be exactly the same) for any appointment made to the school. Appointment panels usually consist of a minimum of three governors (although a formal quorum is not required by law for appointments), the Headteacher and or Deputy Headteacher and, in secondary schools a line manager who will be responsible for the appointee. Members of the committee who cannot be available for both meetings should make arrangements through the chair for a colleague on the governing body to step in. There are regulations concerning appointments (for example concerning direct and indirect pecuniary interest and on staff not being able to participate in the appointment of their successors) about which the panel is briefed by the Headteacher at the start of each appointment process. The Headteacher, in consultation with the line manager for the post in secondary schools, will draw up a job description and candidate specification and make arrangements for advertisement. The appointment panel will decide on the candidates to be shortlisted according to the school's appointments policy and will conduct the interview and decide on which candidate to appoint.

***PAY REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE/PAY REVIEW APPEAL SUB-COMMITTEE**

This Committee also acts with delegated authority.

The committee's remit also covers staff salaries. It must meet to establish targets for the Headteacher and to determine the salary range for members of the senior management team in the event that the school moves into a different group based on its unit total. The committee will also hear any representations by members of staff who believe that their salary should be re-graded.

COMPLAINTS SUB-COMMITTEE

This Committee also acts with delegated authority. This Committee is not in fact a statutory one BUT Governing Bodies are required by law to consider formal complaints, therefore, it is recommended that this Committee be established.

Its responsibilities include considering formal complaints, usually as a result of dissatisfaction with a decision taken by the headteacher, or a direct complaint against the headteacher.

FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE:

This Committee also acts with delegated authority.

The Finance Committee is responsible for operating the school's finance policy, for determining the school's budget and for holding regular monitoring meetings. Many aspects of the day to day management of the school's budget are delegated to the Headteacher within the terms of the school's policy.

While this committee does have delegated authority, regulations require that the school budget has to be formally adopted by the full governing body at the start of each financial year.

PREMISES, HEALTH AND SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE:

This committee does not have delegated authority i.e. its decisions have to be formally ratified by the full governing body.

Sensible health and safety must play a key role in the management of a school.

It will be necessary to appoint a lead governor in health and safety from the Premises, Health and Safety Sub-committee, and the person appointed needs to possess an adequate understanding and knowledge of the field. It would be good practice for him/her to have received appropriate training on Health and Safety for governors.

It is imperative that the governing body ensures compliance with corporate Health and Safety procedures, guidance and guidelines, responding appropriately to any further requirements/guidance from the Council. Every school has a comprehensive risk register, with control measures put in place and implemented to reduce significant risks to health, safety and welfare as far as is practicable.

Through the school's management team, the governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school adheres to Gwynedd Council's arrangements for recording, investigating and reporting any accidents, near-misses, dangerous/violent incidents, notifiable diseases or significant occurrences. The school also has a procedure to follow when planning and leading trips and educational visits, and it is required that the specific arrangements be followed. This sub-committee has a role to monitor health and safety and to conduct a review of the school's health and safety arrangements and policies on an annual basis. The governing body should ensure that health and safety is integrated into the school's management.

The sub-committee's terms of reference involve dealing with matters linked to building work on the site including construction projects, and to monitor any project that Gwynedd Education Department undertakes. There is a particular responsibility to inspect premises annually, indicating any repairs, improvements or safety issues that need to be dealt with. Responsible guardianship of the school's buildings should be

ensured as well as an appropriate response in an emergency, and it should be ensured through communication with the Property Department that any building work organised by the school complies with the Council's stringent procedures.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- **Headteacher**

The Headteacher has the right by regulations to attend **any** meeting of any sub-committee particularly for the purpose of giving advice to the panel. As noted above, the Headteacher does not stand for election to the First Committee (nor indeed to the Appeal Committee) as where an adversarial hearing may be required, the Headteacher may be one of the parties presenting a case upon which the committee will have to decide*. However, the Headteacher is usually a member of the appointment panel but may on occasions delegate his role to the Deputy Headteacher or members of the senior management team.

The Headteacher in every school may exercise a choice either to be or not to be a member of the Governing Body. This decision does not affect his or her right to attend meetings of the Governing Body and its sub-committees.

- **Management Team**

It is also seen as good practice that in the larger primary and secondary schools other members of the senior management team have a standing invitation to attend meetings of the Governing Body although they naturally may not vote (unless of course they are elected as a teacher/governor).

- **Pupil Governors**

Regulations now require that in secondary schools two pupil Associate Governors attend meetings of the Governing Body. They will be nominated by the School Council. They may be asked to withdraw for certain confidential items, such as staffing matters affecting a named individual. They are not entitled to vote.

- **Ancillary Staff**

It is important that staff have full access to the Governing Body and are aware of its workings and decisions. To this end, ancillary staff and teacher governors are encouraged to report back to colleagues and unconfirmed minutes should be available upon request.

- **Minutes**

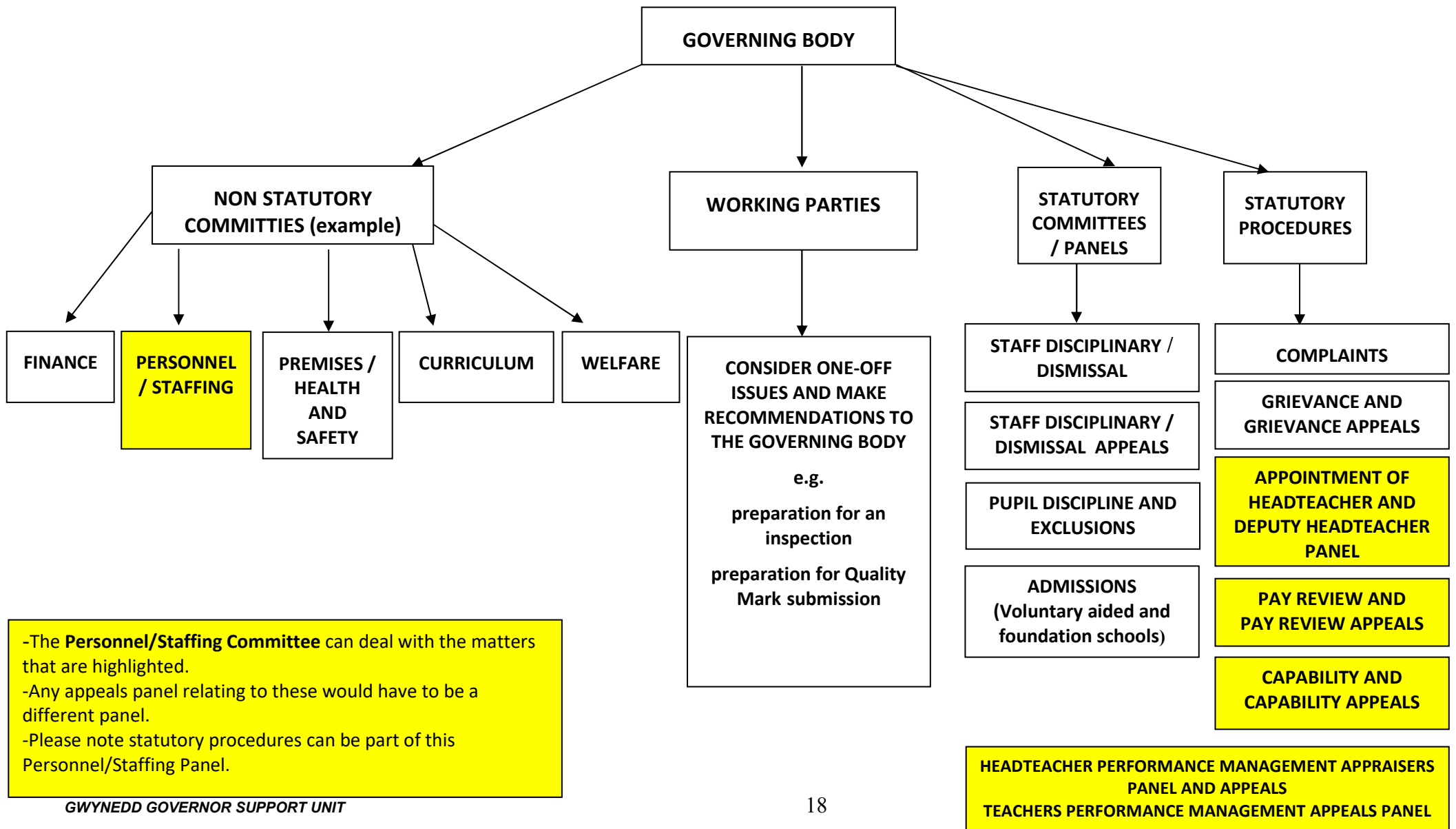
Minutes of meetings of the Governing Body and all committees are public documents and may be requested at any time by any person connected with the school. No item will be deemed to be confidential unless a formal decision of the Governors or one of its committees is

taken that it shall be treated as such and shall not therefore be included in any record of the minutes made available to the public. Committee reports dealing with named individuals will usually be deemed confidential.

DETAILED REMITS FOR VARIOUS SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS CAN BE SEEN BY FOLLOWING THIS LINK BELOW:

<http://www.governorswales.org.uk/publications/2013/04/23/model-governing-body-committee-structure/>

Model Governing Body Committee Structure



7. PERSONNEL ISSUES

Governors are responsible for a range of personnel matters relating to all levels of staffing in their school. Although the Local Authority (LA) may legally be the employer in some schools, and undertake the responsibility for paying the staff and deducting National Insurance contributions, Income Tax, etc., the governing body of each school discharges many of the responsibilities of an employer. The LA will, nevertheless, provide information, guidance and advice to governing bodies concerning particular personnel matters. Governors should remember that however valuable their LA's advice, the final responsibility for decisions affecting staffing rests firmly with the governing body of the school.

Children's education depends upon good teachers, working as a team. It follows that the decisions made by the governing body about the recruitment and selection of members of the team and the allocation of roles within the team are inevitably those which will have a direct effect upon the performance of the school. The staff of a school, both teaching and support, represent its most precious resource and every governor will share a concern that every member of staff works effectively and that their knowledge and skills are being updated and developed. Governors will be conscious that teaching staff with the support of non-teaching staff, need to work collectively so that the school can go about its day to day responsibilities for teaching and learning. The importance of the headteacher as the leader of the staff is difficult to over emphasise, as is the need for a good working relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governors and other governor colleagues. Perhaps most important of all is that both the governing body and the headteacher share the same vision of the nature and development of the school and the standards which it strives to achieve.

Personnel decisions will not only affect the efficiency and effectiveness of your school but also affect the roles and responsibilities of individual members of staff, their pay, self-esteem and future in the school and sometimes, their career prospects. Governors may feel uncomfortable when difficult and sometimes unpalatable decisions have to be made which will affect the immediate employment of one or more members of staff and, perhaps, their prospects for the future.

More positively, the governing body will wish to invest time and energy in ensuring that there is evidence of effective team work and team leadership. Although the performance of each staff member is important, in the context of a school, it is difficult to attribute particular achievements and outcomes to any one individual. On the other hand, weaknesses in the performance of individuals that are not rectified or strengths that are not recognised, acknowledged, and exploited for the good of the school, will seriously weaken any team's effectiveness.

The management of people, particularly their recruitment, selection, deployment, motivation, development, discipline and occasionally their dismissal, are matters that are complex and need to be handled with great care. **Further information on some of these areas is provided by the Education Office.**

8. HOW TO HANDLE A COMPLAINT

The majority of schools are happy places for staff and pupils for most of the time.

However, problems will arise from time to time and you can expect that these will be quickly, sensitively and effectively resolved by the class teacher or the headteacher.

However, all parents have a legitimate right to expect that the school provides for the particular needs of their child and that the child receives fair and equitable treatment whilst in the care of the school.

If, as sometimes happens, parents feel that an injustice is being done to their child or that they are dissatisfied in some way with their child's progress or the teaching which the school provides, they might bring their complaint to a governor of the school. If a parent or someone else brings a complaint to you, remember that there is a proper way of helping in this situation. You should:-

- remember that you cannot directly solve the problem since the day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher
- avoid giving the parent/person (or complainant) the impression that you can solve the problem as a result of being anxious to help. Never promise what you can't deliver;
- restrict yourself to explaining to the parent/person the relevant school policy or practice and then, only if you are certain as to what they are;
- refer the parent/person to the headteacher who must be given an opportunity to solve the problem, hopefully to the satisfaction of the complainant (in the majority of cases of complaints, this will be the result). This applies unless there is a situation where the complaint is about the headteacher.
- If the parent/person is not convinced that the problem has been satisfactorily resolved, you must remember that however much you wish to help, it is the headteacher's responsibility to manage the school. Equally, individual governors have no power when acting as individuals. Consequently, an unresolved complaint must be referred to the chairperson of the governing body who may decide to present the matter to a panel of governors for their consideration.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

A complaints procedure: ***“is a way of ensuring that anyone with an interest in a school can raise a concern, with the confidence that it will be considered properly and heard and, if upheld, that the matter will be addressed appropriately and without delay.”*** (Welsh Government circular no: 011/2012)

- In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act 2002, all governing bodies of maintained schools and nursery schools in Wales must have procedures in place for dealing with complaints from parents, staff, governors, pupils and members of the community, etc., relating to the school and its provision of facilities or services under Section 27 of the Act.
- Governing bodies are required to publish their complaint procedures, indicating how a copy can be obtained. A summary should be published in the school prospectus. Schools may also wish to refer to their complaint procedures in other material, e.g. the annual governors' report to parents, school newsletters, home-school agreement, school website, etc.
- Complaints and appeals relating to the Curriculum, Additional Learning Needs, child protection, religious worship, admissions, exclusions, staff grievance, staff disciplinary and staff capability will fall under other statutory procedures.
- The governing body should consult staff, parents and pupils on the draft complaint procedures, if amended, before implementation. Staff and pupils should have access to a copy of the complaints procedure.
- Governing bodies might wish to consider producing separate formats of the complaints procedures for pupils and adults, in order to provide suitable, appropriate and accessible information for all. Suggestions for pupil complaints leaflets can be found in the Welsh Government circular no: 011/2012.
- Governing bodies must have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Government in establishing and publishing procedures. Details are provided by contacting the Education Office.

Governing bodies should ensure that their complaint procedures contain the following:

- Principles underpinning the procedure;
- Roles and responsibilities of those involved;
- Procedures for dealing with complaints of various types;
- Timescales;
- Procedures for recording and monitoring complaints;
- Procedures for implementing any actions arising from resolution of complaints or from monitoring trends;
- How advocacy support can be accessed for pupils.

The 3 stage approach (i.e. first recipient, headteacher, governing body) to complaint resolution is usually recommended. There are however, situations where the 3 stage approach is not appropriate and will need to be adapted, e.g. complaints concerning the whole governing body, an individual governor, the chair, the headteacher, etc. This guidance is available in every school and at the Education Office. Governing bodies must have in place a complaints committee made up of at least 3 governors. A complaints appeals committee can also be set up if so wished by the governing body. Impartiality, transparency, fairness must be applied throughout the entire complaints process.

Governing bodies will need to monitor the key issues or trends arising from complaints made, to amend school procedures/policies if required. Advice and guidance on complaints can always be sought from the Education Office within the LA and from the Gwynedd Governors' helpline **01286 679303**. Gwynedd LA has also produced model complaints procedures to assist governing bodies that are available in every school.

This guidance can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website :
www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills or from the Governors Wales website at
www.governorswales.org.uk

N.B.

This is just a summary of some the main points that governors should be aware of when producing and implementing complaint procedures and should be read in conjunction with the above guidance and information produced by Gwynedd LA.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

As a governor, from time to time you will be involved in discussions where very personal and sensitive information is exchanged. At other times, when the governing body is making decision about the finances of the school, perhaps commercially sensitive information is discussed.

On other occasions, perhaps a parent or other member of the community may give you information which is relevant to your work as a governor on the understanding that you will repeat it to no-one else, i.e. the information is given to you **'in confidence'**. It is essential to your personal reputation and credibility that you do not abuse the rule of confidentiality, unless it is about a child protection issue. This applies when information is given to you in confidence whether you receive the information in the playground or in the street, or during the meeting of the governing body.

In a meeting you may be privileged to receive information about parents, pupils, members of staff or even the headteacher. The information is given to you only because it is necessary for you to do your work as a governor. For example, when considering pupils with additional learning needs, the pupil concerned will not be identified by name in order to maintain confidentiality. You must never repeat information received in confidence in a governors' meeting to others in the community (including friends and members of your family). Equally, information given to you confidentially outside the meeting must not be brought into discussion during the meeting.

If you break this rule of confidentiality, your personal reputation in the community, your standing as a governor, the status of your governing body and of governors generally, are all likely to be seriously damaged. You may even be suspended from the governing body for a period of up to six months, or even removed from the governing body. Elected governors cannot be removed but they can be suspended.

The only circumstances when a breach of confidentiality is justified arises when a governor of a school receives information in confidence outside a meeting, which suggests that a pupil is at risk of physical, sexual or other abuse of some kind. **Child protection matters cannot be kept confidential and must be reported to the statutory authority i.e. the police or social services.** However, if a problem of this kind arises, you would be wise to seek the advice of your chairperson or headteacher as soon as possible before breaching the confidence.

10. SUPPORT AND TRAINING

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>TO DISCUSS COURSES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>GOVERNOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS</p> <p>CONTACT:</p> <p>MRS MELERI MAIR HUMPHREYS GOVERNOR SUPPORT UNIT EDUCATION OFFICE CYNGOR GWYNEDD STRYD Y CASTELL CAERNARFON GWYNEDD LL55 1SH</p> <p>melerimairhumphreys@gwynedd.llyw.cymru</p> <p>Tel: 01286 679 303 Fax: 01286 677 347</p> | <p>GOVERNORS' HELPLINE</p> <p>CONTACT:</p> <p>EDUCATION OFFICE CAERNARFON 01286 679303 01286 679888 llywodraethwyr@gwynedd.llyw.cymru</p> <p>GOVERNORS WALES 3 Oak Tree Court Mulberry Drive Cardiff Gate Business Park Cardiff CF23 8RS</p> <p>Tel: 029 2073 1546 contact@governorswales.org.uk www.governorswales.org.uk</p> <p>Helpline 0845 6020100</p> <p>e-mail helpline@governorswales.org.uk</p> |
|---|---|



11. GWYNEDD PRIMARY SCHOOLS' WELSH LANGUAGE CHARTER

The simple aim of the Language Charter – the first of its kind in Wales – is to lead to an increase in the use of Welsh by children in a social context, inspiring them to make full use of Welsh in their everyday lives. In a nutshell, to get children to speak Welsh.

The Language Charter exhorts participation from every member of the school community, and members of the school workforce and council, the pupils and their parents, school governors and the wider community are all encouraged to take full ownership of it.

To ensure that all efforts are rewarded, the Charter is based on the principle that every individual school may set its own challenging and attainable vision in connection with promoting the use of the Welsh language. This recognises that circumstances may vary from school to school and provides an opportunity for every school to implement its own programme and achieve its own vision.

With regard to the role of school governing bodies, it is expected that:

- the governors have contributed towards preparing a strategy to encourage pupils to make full use of Welsh in their everyday lives;
- there is a designated Language Charter governor;
- a community governor raises awareness of the Language Charter and its implementation in the Town/Community Council;
- governor representatives attend an activity that directly stems from an idea by the school council on ways to promote Welsh at the school/on the playground or in the local community.

Gwynedd Council realises the importance of the Welsh language to the future of our children and supports this principle to give our pupils the greatest advantage – educationally, socially, economically and culturally.

The objective of Gwynedd Council's Language Policy is to ensure that EVERY child leaves primary school totally bilingual. Every school under the County's control is committed to this policy so as to ensure that everyone benefits from being able to speak two languages fluently.

The Welsh Government recognises the need for a skilful, bilingual workforce. The ability to speak Welsh is a skill that employers are looking for.

With the support of the school, home, governors and community, we can achieve the aim of nurturing a generation of future employees who are confident in Welsh and in English.

12. TRAINING

It is worthwhile to consider your training needs as a governing body, and through group discussion, to decide who would be best placed to attend training events on behalf of the governors.

At your first meeting early in the new academic year you may wish to consider the following questions:

As a group:

- What are our main goals and plans this year?
- What skills and information do we need to help us achieve our priorities?
- What are the main issues, both national and local, about which we need more knowledge?
- Which of the training courses would help us in achieving our aims?
- Who should attend on our behalf?
- How will the knowledge and skills acquired be fed back to other colleagues?

As individuals:

- What are my role and responsibilities on the governing body?
- What skills and knowledge do I need to carry out my role effectively?
- How can I best acquire that information - through course attendance or reading materials and similar resources?

Our courses are open to all Gwynedd governors, including headteachers.

All governing bodies are expected to include the training needs of governors in the School Development Plan.

Whatever training and support you need, the **Governor Training Programme** provides a range of opportunities to choose from. The **Support Unit** will gladly help you with suggestions and ideas if you cannot find what you need in this handbook

MANDATORY COURSES FOR GOVERNORS –

available at a local venue or on-line

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Induction for New Governors | all governors need to attend once |
| Understanding Data | all governors need to attend once |
| Role of the Chairperson | all Chairs need to attend once |
| Governing Body Clerks | all Clerks need to attend once |

REGISTRATION -

- Please return details of the courses of interest on a registration form available from the clerk of governors. The Training Pamphlet is also available from the clerk of governors.

Or

- Telephoning the Governor Support Unit **01286 679303** the Support Unit can assist registration on courses at a local venue or on-line courses.

Or

- Contact by e-mail:- melerimhumphreys@gwynedd.gov.uk

13. SCHOOL PROSPECTUS CONTENT

September 2011 Regulations

It is a statutory requirement for all governing bodies to publish a school prospectus for parents and prospective parents. It should be made available free to parents on request and also at the school for reference. It should be published during the summer term before admitting children for the following September, and for secondary schools at least six weeks before parents are asked to apply for admission.

Information to be published in the school prospectus : Checklist

The school prospectus must contain, as a minimum, the required information detailed below:

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Name, address and telephone number of the school. | |
| 2 | Name of the head teacher. | |
| 3 | Name of the current chair of governors. | |
| 4 | The classification of the school as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community, foundation, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, community special or foundation special school; • primary, middle or special school; • comprehensive, grammar or partially selective; • co-educational or single-sex school; • day, boarding or both. | |
| 5 | The language of the school as shown in their PLASC category. See guidance <i>Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision</i> available at : http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/definingschools?lang=en | |
| 6 | Any affiliation of the school with a particular religion or religious denomination. | |
| 7 | Details of the admissions policy for pupils of different ages, including those above or below compulsory school age (not applicable for special schools) and special arrangements for the admission of, and to enable access for, disabled pupils. | |
| 8 | Secondary schools (but not special schools) should also include details of the number of places for each relevant age group which were available at the start of the preceding year, the number of written applications or preferences, the number of appeals made and the number of them that were successful. | |
| 9 | Details of any arrangements for parents to visit the school. | |
| 10 | A statement on the ethos and values of the school. | |
| 11 | Information about the curriculum, the organisation of education and teaching methods. This should include details of any special arrangements made for particular groups of pupils including those with special educational needs. | |
| 12 | A summary of the content and organisation of sex education. | |
| 13 | Details of any careers education and any arrangements for work focused experiences for pupils. | |
| 14 | A summary of the religious education provided at the school and details of how a parent, or sixth-form pupil, can exercise their right to choose not to participate in religious education and of any alternative provision made for such pupils. | |
| 15 | A summary of the school policies and arrangements in relation to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. provision for children with special educational needs. b. supporting and promoting the education achievement of looked after children. c. charging for optional extras and details of the policies in relation to circumstances where these charges will be waived. d. equal opportunities | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 16 | Details of the member of staff designated as having responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of looked after children. | |
| 17 | Information about any determination made in relation to the character of collective worship in the school. | |
| 18 | A summary of the sporting aims of the schools and details of arrangements for pupils to participate in sport and extra-curricular sports activities. | |
| 19 | Details of the term dates and session times for the school for the year to which pupils are being invited to apply for admission. | |
| 20 | The arrangements made to ensure the security of pupils, staff and the school premises. | |
| 21 | A summary of the key features of the home-school agreement. | |
| 22 | <p>A brief statement about the use of the Welsh language in the school, to ensure that parents and prospective parents can gain a full understanding of the linguistic character of the school. This should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. use of Welsh as a language of instruction in different key stages, different subjects and - if appropriate - the availability of alternative instruction in English; b. details about the use of Welsh as a usual language of communication at the school outside of formal instruction; c. any restriction to the ability to choose the language of instruction; d. arrangements at the school for facilitating continuity for pupils instructed through the medium of Welsh whilst registered at the school or when transferring from primary to secondary school; e. details of any exception from the National Curriculum in Welsh as long as inclusion of this information does not identify an individual pupil affected. | |
| 23 | The most recent school comparative report(s) of performance in end of key stage teacher assessments (DEWi contextual reports) and, for schools with pupils following key stage 4 study programmes, the most recent Summary of Secondary School Performance (SSSP). | |
| 24 | <p>Secondary schools should include details of the proportion of pupils aged 15 or 16 at the start of the previous academic year who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. continued in full-time education, training or work based learning b. went on to employment c. are known to have neither continued in education nor gained employment, or d. whose destination is unknown. | |
| 25 | Details of the most recent annual attendance and absence figures for the school. | |
| 26 | A statement of how a complaint can be made. | |
| 27 | A brief statement on parents' right to request up to three meetings per year | |

14. CONTENT OF GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

Items in *italics* are for Secondary Schools only

All governing bodies of maintained schools are required to produce an annual report to parents. Governing bodies are reminded of the requirement to produce the full report. It is no longer necessary to distribute the full report to all parents, though parents must be aware that they have access to a copy of the full report if required. A summary report, containing the information indicated below (✓), must be distributed to all parents.

| | Summary Report | Item | |
|----------------------|----------------|---|--|
| 1 | ✓ | Where a governing body has held a parents' meeting pursuant to section 94 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 – (a) the date the meeting was held; (b) the place the meeting was held; (c) the reasons given by the parents of registered pupils at the school for petitioning for a meeting; (d) the names of the following who attended the meeting— (i) members of the governing body; (ii) members of the school staff; (iii) representatives from the local authority; and (iv) the name of any other person except that of a parent of a registered pupil not attending in their capacity as a parent governor member of the governing body; (e) how many parents of registered pupils at the school attended the meeting; (f) a brief description of the matters discussed at the meeting; (g) a brief description of the action the governing body resolved to take, if any, as a consequence of the matters discussed at the meeting; and (h) a brief description of the result of the action taken by the governing body, if any, as a consequence of the matters discussed at the meeting.”. | |
| 1a | ✓ | Where a governing body has not held a parents' meeting pursuant to section 94 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 a brief statement to that effect. | |
| 1b | ✓ | Where a governing body has received a petition to hold a parents' meeting pursuant to section 94 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 but no meeting was held— (a) a brief statement to that effect; (b) the purpose given by the parents for the need to hold a meeting; and (c) the reason why a meeting was not held. | |
| 2a | | Names of the members of the governing body, and status, e.g. parent, teacher, foundation governor, community, otherwise appointed, ex-officio | |
| 2b 2c | | In the case of an appointed governor, by whom he or she was appointed. In relation to each governor the date on which their term of office ends (except for ex-officio governors) | |
| 2d | | The names and addresses of the clerk and chairperson | |
| 3 | ✓ | Any information as is available to the governing body about the arrangements for the next election of parent governors | |
| 4a 4b 4c 4d | | A financial statement reproducing or summarising any statement provided by the LA under Section 52 of the Education Reform Act 1998 since the previous governors' report; indicating how any money provided by the LA to the governing body was spent, give details of any school gifts and of governors' travelling and | |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|--|
| | | subsistence expenses | |
| 5 | ✓ | The most recent school comparative information in relation to the school's performance in end of foundation phase and key stage assessments published by the Welsh Ministers on DEWi | |
| 6 | ✓ | <i>In the case of a School with registered pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the reporting year, the most recent Summary of Secondary School Performance in relation to the school</i> | |
| 7 | ✓ | Attendance information (the number of unauthorised absences and authorised absences in the reporting school year expressed as a % of the total number of possible attendances in that year) | |
| 8a | | <i>Information relating to pupils leaving the school, or employment or training taken up by pupils on leaving the school; Authorised and unauthorised absence of pupils</i> | |
| 8b | | | |
| 9 | | Action taken to develop or strengthen links with the community (including links with the police) | |
| 10 | | Information about any targets set by the governing body for improvement in respect of the performance of pupils and for reducing the level of unauthorised absences | |
| 11 | ✓ | In relation to the period since the previous governors' report a summary of the provision made for pupils to participate in sport at the school including the provision made for extra-curricular sports activities during that period | |
| 12 | | A summary of any review and resulting action carried out by the governing body in respect of any policies or strategies adopted by them | |
| 13 | | Term dates (including half term holidays) for the next school year | |
| 14 | | Summary of changes to the school prospectus since the previous governors' report was prepared | |
| 15 | | A statement on the curriculum and organisation of education and teaching methods at the school, including details of any special arrangements in the curriculum or otherwise for particular categories of pupils, including those with a statement of special educational needs | |
| 16 | | The language category which most closely describes the school | |
| 17 | | Particulars as to the use of the Welsh language in the school by pupils of all age groups including, in particular- (a) the use of Welsh as the language in the foundation phase and each of the key stages in which instruction in any such subject is given and of the extent, if any, to which alternative instruction in English is available in that subject; (b) of the extent, if any, to which Welsh is the usual language of communication at the school; (c) any restriction that applies to a parent's ability to choose the language in which instruction is given; (d) a brief description of the arrangements at the school to facilitate continuity in the extent of instruction in Welsh for pupils— (i) whilst registered at the school; (ii) transferring from the school, where that school is a primary school, to a secondary school. | |
| 18 | | A brief statement on the provision of toilet facilities at the school for pupils registered at the school and the arrangements in place for cleaning such toilet facilities | |
| 19 | | Information about the action taken to promote healthy eating and drinking by pupils of the school (for primary schools from September 2012 and for secondary schools from September 2013) | |

*The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 now enables parents of registered pupils at the school to request up to three meetings per year with the governing body via a petition.

The governing body must hold a meeting within 25 school days of receiving the petition, providing that the petition contains the signatures of the required minimum number of parents of registered pupils at the school, which is the lower of the following:

1. The parents of 10% of registered pupils, or
2. The parents of 30 registered pupils.

The meeting requested by parents must be to discuss matters relating to the school.