



Governing Body Standing Orders

Draft for governing body review and adoption | September 2026

Approved by	Full governing body on 12 th October 2026
Chair	
Review date	2027

These standing orders set out how the governing body conducts its business. They should be read alongside the school's instrument of government, agreed scheme of delegation, committee terms of reference, governor code of conduct and applicable legislation. Where legislation differs from these orders, legislation takes precedence.

1 Purpose and responsibilities

The governing body provides strategic leadership, holds the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and oversees its financial performance. Governors act collectively in the interests of all pupils. The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school.

2 Membership and officers

The governing body's size and categories of governor are set out in its current instrument of government. The governance professional maintains the membership register, records terms of office and reports vacancies. Appointments, elections, removal and disqualification follow the relevant regulations and instrument of government.

The governing body elects a chair and vice chair, first determining the end date of each term of office. A governor employed at the school cannot be chair or vice chair. Elections and any proposal to remove an officer follow the statutory procedure. If both officers are absent, the governors present elect a governor to chair that meeting.

3 Governance professional

The governing body appoints a governance professional (clerk) who is neither a governor nor the headteacher, has regard to their advice on its functions, and ensures minutes are produced. If the clerk is absent, a governor other than the headteacher may be appointed to clerk that meeting. The clerk advises on procedure, convenes meetings and keeps the official record.

4 Meetings and agendas

The full governing body meets at least three times in each school year. The agreed calendar should support timely scrutiny of safeguarding, school improvement, finance, attendance and statutory decisions. The clerk convenes meetings in accordance with directions from the governing body or chair. Three governors may request a meeting in writing, which the clerk must convene as soon as reasonably practicable.

The chair agrees the agenda with the headteacher and clerk. Written notice and agenda are sent to each governor, the headteacher and associate members at least seven clear days before an ordinary meeting. Where urgent matters demand it, the chair may direct a shorter notice period, except for business for which the statutory notice exception is prohibited. Papers should ordinarily accompany the agenda in sufficient time for informed discussion.

Meetings may be in person, virtual or hybrid where the governing body has approved arrangements allowing governors to participate and vote effectively. Attendees must be able to hear and be heard; the clerk records the method of attendance and verifies that the quorum remains present. Confidential papers and discussions must be protected in every setting.

5 Attendance and participation

Governors, the headteacher, the clerk and associate members may attend full governing body meetings subject to applicable exclusions. Other people may attend where the governing body agrees. Only governors may vote at full governing body meetings. Associate members may be excluded from business concerning a named pupil or member of staff. Governors should notify the chair or clerk of absence promptly; apologies and the governing body's decision on acceptance are recorded.

6 Quorum and decisions

The quorum at a full governing body meeting and for each vote is half of the current membership, rounded up, excluding vacant positions. The clerk checks the quorum before decisions and after any departure or withdrawal. If it is lost, the body may discuss matters but cannot decide them until the quorum is restored.

Questions are decided by a majority of governors present and voting. If votes are tied, the chair of that meeting has a casting vote if they are a governor. Abstentions are recorded where material. Decisions made between meetings by correspondence are brought to a properly convened meeting for decision unless a lawful delegated power applies.

7 Interests and confidential business

Governors and relevant attendees declare interests at the start of each meeting and when an interest becomes apparent. A person with a disqualifying conflict, pecuniary interest or impaired impartiality must disclose it, withdraw for that item and take no vote, in accordance with regulation 16 and Schedule 1 of the 2013 Regulations. The remaining governors decide any dispute about withdrawal. The clerk records declarations and withdrawals and checks the quorum again.

Governors respect the confidentiality of named pupil, staff and other properly confidential matters. Confidential minutes and papers are separately marked and circulated only to those entitled to receive them. The governing body decides which material can be withheld from public inspection under the statutory exceptions.

8 Minutes and records

Minutes record attendance, apologies, declarations and withdrawals, the substance of challenge and response, decisions, votes where appropriate, and actions with named owners and dates. Draft minutes are circulated promptly for checking. At the next meeting, the governing body approves them and the chair signs them. Agendas, signed minutes and considered papers are made available for inspection by interested persons as soon as reasonably practicable, with permitted confidential material removed.

9 Committees and delegation

The governing body determines each committee's constitution, membership and terms of reference and reviews them annually. Each committee has a clerk and an annually appointed or elected chair. Its own quorum is determined by that committee and must be at least three governor members. No committee vote may take place unless the majority of committee members present are governors. Voting rights for adult associate members are determined by the governing body.

Committee meetings are normally convened with seven clear days' written notice and agenda; a shorter period is available for urgent business as permitted by the regulations. Committees keep minutes and report decisions and actions to the full governing body. The governing body records all delegations, legal restrictions and financial limits in its scheme of delegation, reviews delegated functions annually and remains accountable for them. Any governor, headteacher or committee exercising a delegated function reports the action or decision back to the governing body.

10 Urgent action

The chair may exercise only those urgent powers allowed by law, where delay would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, a pupil, a parent or a person who works at the school. The chair consults the headteacher and clerk where practicable, records the reason for urgency and the action taken, and reports it to the next governing body meeting. Other urgent matters are handled by an extraordinary meeting or lawful delegation.

11 Conduct and review

Governors follow the adopted code of conduct, prepare for meetings, challenge respectfully and support collective decisions. The chair keeps discussion focused and ensures all members can contribute. The governing body reviews these standing orders at least annually and after a relevant change in law or governance arrangements. Amendments are approved and minuted by the full governing body.

Adoption checks for the clerk and chair

- Confirm the school's current instrument of government, committee structure and scheme of delegation.
- Agree the chair and vice chair term end dates, committee quorums and remote participation arrangements.
- Insert adoption date, chair's name and next review date after the resolution.

Reference points

School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, especially regulations 7–10 and 12–26; School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012; Department for Education, Maintained schools governance guide, updated July 2026. Check any later amendments and local authority advice before adoption.