

Governing Body Chair Training Progammmes

ALL WALES CENTRE FOR GOVERNOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

This training programme for Chairs to governing bodies was comissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government and produced by the All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research.

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Introduction

The Chair of a school governing body has a key role in ensuring that governors carry out their duties effectively and efficiently to promote high standards at their school. In order to fulfil this role a Chair needs skills for working with different individuals, different groups of people and different situations.

Findings from research undertaken by the All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research indicated that key areas which should be covered in training for Chairs should include:

- Working with the Head teacher
- Effective organisation and management of meetings
- The induction of new governors

The training provided in this programme will be presented under the above headings, though the programme will begin with a brief consideration of the skills required by a Chairperson and the powers and duties of the governing body.

Notes for trainers:

Suggested script appears in **BLACK**.

Instructions to the deliverer appear in **BLUE**.

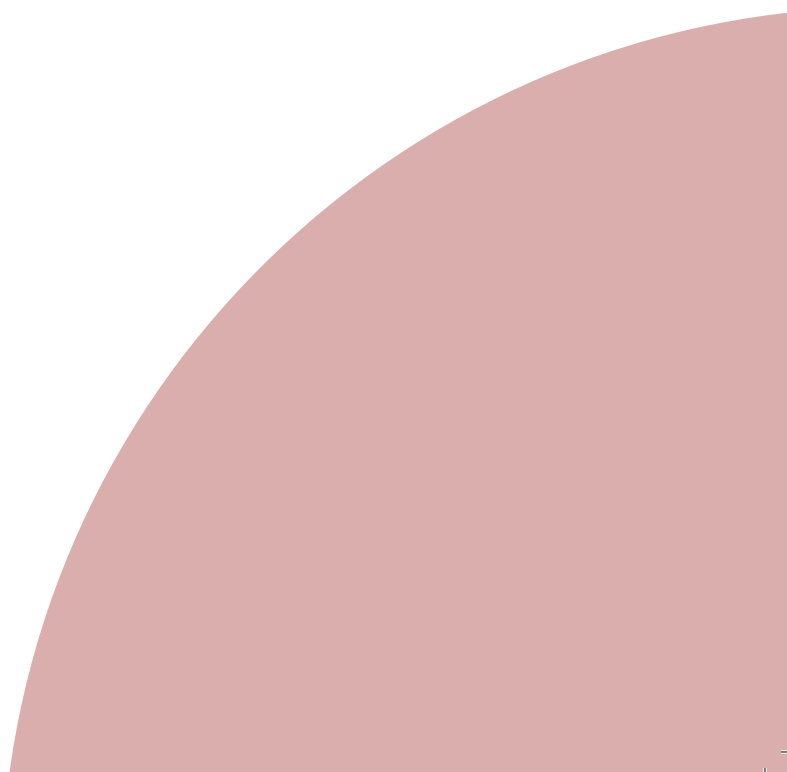
Interactive sections with delegates appear in **RED**.

Notes for the deliverer appear in **GREEN**.

The script does not include a question and answer or discussion at the end, though it is quite likely that this might take place.

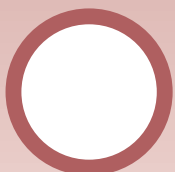
Sections of this training programme contain material used in the Governing Body Clerk Training Programme produced by the All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research.

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Chairperson's Skills



CHAIRPERSON'S SKILLS

- In research undertaken by the All Wales Centre for Governor Training and Research it was found that Governor Support Officers from the 22 local authorities in Wales along with a selection of Head teachers and governing body Chairs believed the following to be the 10 most important skills needed by a Chair.

Show Slide 1 and distribute Handout 1

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CHAIRPERSON'S SKILLS

- Recognises the boundaries between governance and management
- Ability to involve governors effectively in the work of the governing body
- Clear communicator
- Ability to deal with issues sensitively
- Ability to address difficult issues
- Ability to adopt an impartial position
- Ability to prioritise
- Good listening skills
- Good organiser
- Good time manager

1.

- During the training you are undertaking you will see how these skills will be used by a Chair of governors in carrying out his/her role.



Powers and duties of the Governing Body



Powers and duties of the Governing Body

POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- Before considering the working relations between the Chair and Head teacher, it is important that we remember the powers and duties of the school governing body.

Show Slides 2 and 3

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POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY (1)

- Conducting the school with a view to **promoting high standards** of educational achievement:
- **Setting appropriate school targets** for pupil achievement at key stages 2, 3 and 4;
- **Taking general responsibility for the conduct of the school** - in practice this should include how, in broad terms, it should be run;
- **Managing the school's budget** (taking into account the LEA Scheme under section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act);

2.

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POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY (2)

- Ensuring that the curriculum for the school is balanced and broadly based, and in particular that the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. Also reporting on National Curriculum assessments and examination results;
- Determining the **staff complement** and a **pay policy for the school**;
- Participating in the **appointment of the Head Teacher** and **Deputy Head Teacher** and other staff, and regulating **staff conduct and discipline**; and
- Drawing up a **post-inspection action plan**.

3.

Powers and duties of the Governing Body

- As far as the Chairperson is concerned they must always remember that, although in many ways the spokesperson of the governing body they have no more power or authority than any other governor.
- This means that as the governing body is a corporate body, no governor, including the Chair, can speak for the governing body unless the power to do so has been delegated to them.
- However, there is one exception. If a situation arises when a decision has to be made so quickly that there is no time to call a meeting, the Chair (or Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence) has the power to take decisions on behalf of the governing body, though only on those issues which a governing body is allowed to delegate to an individual governor or committee such as the establishment of committees, the suspension of governors, etc., (for a full list of functions which a governing body may not delegate see Regulations 40 and 50 (1) of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005). Any such decision though, should be reported back to the next full governing body meeting.

It should be pointed out to delegates that such situations are not common and Chairs should not abuse this privilege, as this might cause bad feeling within the governing body.

- Finally, no matter how supportive of the school, the Chair (or other governors) may be, (s)he must remember that governors operate at a strategic level only, in carrying out their key roles. Day-to-day management is the role of the Head and Senior Management Team.

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Governing Body Chair Training Programme

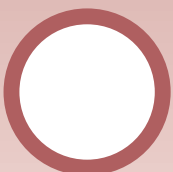
KEY ROLES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- Strategic Planning
- Accountability
- Target Setting
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Critical Friend

4.



Working with the Head Teacher



WORKING WITH THE HEAD TEACHER

- We are going to begin the session on working with the Head teacher with a question.

Ask delegates to list the only times when a Chair must meet with the Head teacher.

Unless a Chair is unable to attend, the only occasions when a Chair and Head must meet are

- Governing body meetings.
- Governing body committee meetings where both are members.
- Annual Parents meetings when the school holds them.
- The governors' meeting with the registered inspector before a school inspection.

- However, if the Chair is to fulfil his/her role effectively it would be wise for the Head and Chair to meet more often than the times outlined above.

Ask delegates to suggest other times when it would be useful for the Chair and Head to meet.

The two most obvious occasions are

- A meeting with the Head teacher (and also the clerk to the governing body) about 14 days before a governing body meeting to set the meeting agenda and discuss issues which will be raised.
- A meeting to discuss the production of the annual report to parents.

Others would include:

- A meeting with the Head teacher before an inspection.
- When an emergency arises.
- Regular, timetabled meetings to discuss the work of the school.
- When either the Head or Chair requests a meeting to discuss a particular issue, e.g. appointing a Deputy Head/key member of staff.

- It is the intention of this training to concentrate on looking at the way the Chair and Head might work at the following meetings.

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MEETING BETWEEN HEADS AND CHAIRS

- Meeting between the Head, Chair and governing body clerk approximately 14 days before a governing body meeting to set the agenda.
- Regular timetabled meeting between the Chair and Head to discuss the work of the school.
- Meeting between the Chair and Head to deal with an emergency.

5.

Meeting between the Head, Chair and governing body clerk approximately 14 days before a governing body meeting to set the agenda.

- It is not essential for the clerk to attend these agenda setting meetings but it can be very helpful for the clerk to be present in order to gain background information on issues on which (s)he will be taking minutes. This is particularly important if the clerk does not work in the field of education and, consequently, has limited knowledge of topics which might be discussed.
- These pre-governing body meetings are business meetings where it is decided which issues will appear on the agenda, and we will look at ways of going about this in the second part of the training programme, "Effective organisation and management of meetings".
- The Chair should use the meeting to discuss topics which will be put on the agenda for the full governing body meeting so that he/she has some knowledge of the topic when introducing it and understands its relevance and importance.
- It is also likely that either the Head or Chair may wish to discuss other business which is not going to appear on the agenda but which has to be dealt with urgently. This meeting provides an opportunity to fulfil this function.

- The following should be borne in mind.
- Nothing other than the ordering of agenda items and non-sensitive information should take place in the presence of the governing body clerk. The clerk is not a governor. He/she may give advice on procedural and legal matters but he/she has no right to take part in discussions on sensitive issues, or in policy making or decision making. If the Head or Chair wishes to discuss such matters at this meeting they should wait until the clerk leaves.

Regular timetabled meetings between the Chair and Head to discuss the work of the school

- We shall look at this topic under the following headings.

Show Slide 6 and read out

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- Why – why hold the meetings at all
- When – how often and how long
- What – what should be discussed
- How – how should the Chair and Head conduct meetings
- Challenges

6.

- Both Head teachers and Chairs are busy people, so, it might be asked "*Why have these meetings at all?*"

Distribute Handout 2 and ask delegates to read it and then ask for any comments or observations

Working with the Head Teacher

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- It is very difficult to say HOW OFTEN these meetings should take place – too rarely and their value is diminished, too often and the Head might find it impinges too much on the time needed for day-to-day school management while the Chair might simply not be able to attend them.
- Similarly, HOW LONG should these meetings last – too short and the business is not covered adequately, too long and neither Chair nor Head can really afford to attend?
- A sensible suggestion might be to arrange at least one of these meetings per half term for approximately 1½ hours, though, if necessary to complete work this could be extended.
- Of course, should the need arise, for instance an emergency of some sort, both the Head and the Chair should feel confident that they can arrange additional meetings.
- We have looked at WHY these meetings between the Chair and Head should take place, HOW OFTEN they should take place, and HOW LONG they should last; let us now consider WHAT might be discussed.
- Obviously, if there are any pressing issues identified by either the Chair or Head, then they should be discussed. However, these regular meetings should be more than simply a forum for discussing immediate problems.
- So, in order to ensure they are worthwhile a list of topics which will usually be covered might be compiled.

Ask delegates to work in pairs/small groups to suggest topics which might be considered at the regularly timetabled meetings between the Chair and Head.
Allow time for the task to be completed and then ask for responses.

When the exercise has been completed, distribute Handout 3

Other topics might include: relations with LEA, contacts with parents, etc.

- There are a number of things we must remember when looking at this list of topics for discussion.

Working with the Head Teacher

- First of all, it is not a strict agenda, simply a list of suggested topics for discussion so the Chair and Head should not feel bound to address the topics included.
- Secondly, apart from the first two subjects on the list, there is no intended priority attached to the order in which the subjects appear.
- Thirdly, no mention is made in the list of topics of a tour by the Chair and Head around the school, or part of it, to look at the work of the school and meet staff. This is because such a visit is not strictly part of the meeting and there might simply not be time to accommodate it. However, its importance should not be under-estimated. It is particularly valuable for the Chair to meet the staff and recognise their input to the school.
- Now, let us consider HOW meetings between the Chair and Head should be conducted.
- First, in all such meetings both Chair and Head should remember the following points.

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Show Slide 7 Read out the 3 points

Governing Body Chair Training Programme

HOW MEETINGS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED

- Listen
- Communicate
- Support

7.

Working with the Head Teacher

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- *Listen.* If the Chair is to have a meaningful input into deliberations with the Head teacher then (s)he must listen closely to everything told to them.
- The oft quoted statement “the devil is in the detail” applies very much here: both Chair and Head need to share the details of an issue before coming to any conclusions which might affect recommendations to the full governing body.
- This is particularly so if the Chair has received information about the issue being discussed before the meeting and has already, albeit subconsciously, begun to form an opinion on how the issue might be tackled. It can have a seriously detrimental effect on Head-Chair working relations if one or both partners enters discussions about an issue having already formed a firm opinion without necessarily knowing all the facts or appreciating fully the views of different school stakeholders.
- *Communicate.* Meetings between Chair and Head should not be monologues by either of the parties. Both should feel confident to ask questions of each other in order that both have as full a picture as possible of the subject under discussion.
- This is particularly so in the case of the Chair who is far less likely to be involved with a school issue than the Head teacher.
- Equally, both Head and Chair must be able to communicate frankly, knowing that their views and opinions will be respected, and their confidentiality assured.
- *Support.* Chair and Head are a team. Consequently, although the Chair at their meetings, is a “critical friend” and should fulfil that critical role, (s)he should remember the word “friend”.
- Consequently, although it is important to point out any concerns or criticisms, this should be done in a supportive, not adversarial, way.
- Any criticisms or concerns raised should be done “with a pat on the back – not a knife in the back”.
- The working relationship between the Chair and Head teacher is pivotal to good governance. However, a number of CHALLENGES have to be met if the partnership is to be effective.

- These may be summarised as follows:

Show Slide 8 and read out the 2 points

Governing Body Chair Training Programme

CHALLENGES TO BE MET

- Strategic and Operational
- Confidentiality and Open Governance

8.

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- *Strategic and Operational.* The role of the governing body is at the strategic level, i.e. governors are involved in long term planning of broad issues to achieve the school's aims.
- The operational level or shorter term detailed planning and day-to-day management of the school is the province of the Head teacher, Senior Management Team and school staff.
- Although this may seem a straightforward distinction, the reality is that they often overlap and it is inevitable that during meetings, topics for discussion will emerge which will move into the operational area and the Chair will be expected to put forward his/her point of view.
- Clearly, an experienced Chair who has worked with the Head for some time and has quite an extensive knowledge of the school will feel more comfortable in this situation than a new Chair, and so will feel more confident in expressing their views.

Working with the Head Teacher

- However, it would be worth the Chair always bearing in mind the following points:

Show Slide 9 and read out

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- Strategic View
- Adhering to policies
- Views of other stakeholders

9.

- *Strategic View.* The governing body, as we have said, operates at the strategic level, so the Chair should always consider with the Head how the particular issue under discussion might be impacting on any strategic plans for the school. If this is the case, then it might be necessary to re-visit the plan, e.g. if one or two pupils sometimes complain of having to rush their lunch as a result of shortening the mid-day break, it would not be appropriate to consider revisiting the issue. However, if a large number of pupils complain regularly of this problem, then a re-consideration of this situation might be advisable.
- *Adhering to policies.* Many situations which arise at schools are covered by a school policy. It is important that the Chair ensure that any course of action adopted to deal with a situation adheres to the School's policy which covers it.

IN THIS RESPECT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CHAIR ENSURES THAT ALL POLICIES AND, INDEED, ALL THEIR WORK ADHERES TO CURRENT LEGISLATION.

- *Views of other stakeholders.* A Head teacher may use the regular meeting with their Chair as an opportunity to make an early “sounding out” for a new idea before presenting it to the full governing body.
- At such times the Chair should always bear in mind the stakeholders who are represented on the governing body and how the Head’s suggested course of action might affect them.

Ask delegates which stakeholders are represented directly on the governing body.

Answer: Parents
 Pupils (in Secondary Schools only, Year 11 and above)
 Teachers
 School staff other than teachers
 The Local Education Authority
 The local community

- We have looked at the challenge presented to a Chair of how operational issues impact on their strategic role. Let us now consider the question of **confidentiality** at Head-Chair meetings and the requirement of the governing body to act corporately.
- It can cause real problems if the other governors perceive the Head and Chair to be in agreement over every question and to present a united voice on every issue at full governing body meetings, thereby inhibiting open discussion.
- This is an extremely difficult problem to overcome as we are dealing with perceptions, and perceptions, by their very nature, need not be true.
- First of all, it might be an idea to tell governors that you are aware that this misapprehension might arise, but assure them that you, the Chair and Head, do not wish to operate in a way which undermines, in any way, the role of the governing body.
- It might be a good idea to give the governing body a copy of Handout 2 which sets out the reasons for holding regular meetings between the Chair and Head teacher.

Working with the Head Teacher

- Also, occasions might arise when another governor could be invited to attend Chair-Head meetings. This would help dispel perceptions that the Chair and Head are working together in such a way as to undermine the role and authority of the governing body to the exclusion of other governors.
- If, for example, the Chair and Head know that they will be discussing the finances of some building work at their meeting and one of the governors has expertise in this field, it would make sense to invite him/her.
- At the same time though, it must be pointed out that inevitably, sometimes issues of a confidential nature will arise in discussions between the Chair and Head and this confidentiality must be respected.
- Finally, if Chairs serve for only one term of office it will help reduce the chances of the development of any unwanted “mystique” surrounding Head – Chair working relations.
- We shall now consider an issue which might well arise at a meeting between a Chair and Head teacher.

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Divide delegates into small groups and ask them how they would deal with the following situation. Allow 10-15 minutes for this activity.

Distribute Handout 4

After the group have worked on this task ask a spokesman from each to report on their approach to the problem.

When each group has reported you might suggest the following approach.

- Before you meet with the Head, ask the governor who reported the incident to you for all the details they were given by the parent.
- At your meeting with the Head teacher, share all these details.
- Ask the Head teacher if (s)he is aware of the situation and, if so, are they already looking at the issue.
- It would then be a good idea to address the following points.

Can the issue be dealt with satisfactorily within the guidelines outlined in the school's homework policy?

Is this type of complaint over homework a relatively rare occurrence or is it happening quite often, and if so, is it confined only to certain subject areas?

Do we need to look again at the homework policy or is it a matter of resource allocation in the subject areas mentioned?

- At this stage there is very little more that you should do:

You have received a concern from a parent via a fellow governor and reported it to the Head teacher.

You have checked whether the Head teacher is aware of the situation.

You have ensured that the problem will be dealt with and whether the issue is covered in the school's homework policy.

You have ascertained whether homework in general is a problem at the school.

- Finally, it would be a good idea to contact the governor who reported the case to you and explain to them what you have done.

Working with the Head Teacher

- We have looked briefly at the meetings between the Chair and Head approximately 14 days before governing body meetings.
- We have also looked in some detail at the regular timetabled meetings between the Chair and Head to discuss the work of the school.

Let us now consider meetings between the Chair and Head to deal with an emergency.

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- It is important to remember that emergencies requiring an input from the Chair are not common in schools.
- It is also a fact that resolutions of many emergencies are faits accomplis and require only the Chair's agreement, e.g. the closure of the school for half a session in two day's time as the water or electricity supply will be cut off for maintenance work.
- However, even in the most efficiently run school, emergencies will occur which require involvement by the Chair though they can only make decisions on issues which can be delegated to an individual or committee by the full governing body (for a full list of the issues which cannot be delegated see Regulations 40 and 50(1) of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005).
- The activity we shall now undertake definitely requires an input from the Chair.

Distribute Handout 5. Read out.

Divide the delegates into groups and ask them how they would deal with this situation.

After the groups have worked on this task, ask a spokesperson from each group to report on their approach to the problem.

When all the groups have reported, distribute Handout 6 and read through this with the delegates.

Note of Caution

- Sometimes a matter which has been discussed by the Chair and Head will at a later date go formally before the governing body or one of its committees e.g. pupil exclusion or staff disciplinary issues.
- When this happens, the Chair should not take part in the formal hearing because (s)he has already been involved in the matter.
- If this problem arises, any formal committee may be chaired by the Vice-Chair.
- It must be remembered, though, that this applies only to formal committees which require impartiality. The Chair and Head can speak on all other matters quite freely without any fears of the Chair becoming “corrupted” and therefore unable to contribute fully to discussions either in full governing body meetings or governing body committees.

Working with the Head Teacher

Conclusion

- We have now considered those occasions when Chairs and Heads most commonly work together outside full governing body meetings, namely:

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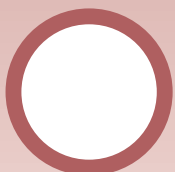
MEETING BETWEEN HEADS AND CHAIRS

- Meeting between the Head, Chair and governing body clerk approximately 14 days before a governing body meeting to set the agenda.
- Regular timetabled meeting between the Chair and Head to discuss the work of the school.
- Meeting between the Chair and Head to deal with an emergency.

10.

- To end this session, look again at Handout 1, *Chairperson's Skills* and simply reflect on how those skills should be deployed in all three types of meetings.

Effective organisation and management of meetings



EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS INCLUDING EFFICIENT USE OF COMMITTEES

- If a governing body is to operate to the best advantage for its school, then it should aim to work as an efficient team. And for a good team to develop, it is necessary to have a good team leader which, in the case of a governing body, is the Chairperson.
- Work can be done by a Chair, often informally outside governing body meetings to support and develop individual governors which will help to build a good team spirit. However, the vast majority of decision making by governors takes place at full governing body meetings so it is essential that a Chair has excellent “meeting skills” if (s)he is to bring out the best in the governing body and get meaningful reports from committees.
- We will be focusing on the development of these “meeting skills” in this session, starting first with the preparations which should be made before a governing body meeting.

Preparation for a governing body meeting

- In the first instance, the Chair is responsible for producing the agenda for governing body meetings though it is usual for this to be done in conjunction with the Head teacher. It is totally acceptable for LEAs to produce a template but it is the Chair’s responsibility to actually set agenda items.
- Any governor can request items to be placed on the agenda, although ultimately the Chair decides if the item is to be included. In addition if any three governors request a meeting of the governing body by giving written notice to the clerk that includes a summary of business to be transacted, the clerk must convene a meeting as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- However, there are certain items which are always included.

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STANDARD AGENDA ITEMS

- Date, time and venue of meeting
- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Matters arising
- Head teacher's report
- Any Other Business
- Date and Time of next meeting

11.

- Some organisations are wary of including "Any Other Business" (AOB) as they feel it might involve an issue of strategic or other serious importance which requires reflection and/or consultation with affected parties prior to discussion.
- Obviously, other agenda items will appear at the appropriate time of year. These would include:
 - Review of committees' constitution and membership;
 - Pay policy;
 - Review of policies;
 - Exam results;
 - Targets for next year;
 - School development plan;
 - Complaints log;
 - Exclusions;
 - Annual report/AGM.
- The order of agenda items is the decision of the Chair, though once again, this is usually decided in conjunction with the Head teacher.
- It would be sensible, though to have a clear rationale as to why the agenda items have been listed in a particular order.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

- Possible criteria could be:

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Governing Body Chair
Training Programme

**CRITERIA FOR ORDER OF
AGENDA ITEMS**

- Perceived importance of item
- Likely length of time to be spent on each item
- Grouped under particular headings, e.g. staffing matters, LEA matters

12.

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- Now let us consider a practical example:

Distribute Handout 7 (a & b)

Delegates should work in small groups for this exercise.

These handouts contain a list of agenda items for two governing body meetings A and B which are not set out in any particular order. Each group should draft the two agendas on flipcharts and, when completed, the group spokesperson should report back to the full meeting giving reasons for the way they have ordered the items and difficulties encountered.

(Allow 10 – 15 minutes).

Effective organisation and management of meetings

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First of all, remind delegates that ALL agendas should start with "Apologies for Absence" which must be recorded, minutes of previous meeting, and "matters arising", and end with "Any other business" (AOB) and "date and time of next meeting".

Secondly, point out that in an exercise like this, there are no right or wrong ways of doing things. However, delegates might consider the following:

- It is logical to group together topics which have a clear connection
- Issues which appear regularly on the agenda, like Head teacher's Report which tells governors what has been happening in their school, require a prominent position on the agenda
- Some issues are so important to the life of the school that they merit a prominent position on the agenda, e.g. public examination results, school improvement plan

Using the above criteria, the agenda for Meeting A might look something like:

- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
- Head teacher's Report
- Analysis of the School's summer public examination results
- Finance Committee Report
- Review of school policies on:
 - Sex Education
 - Attendance
- Receive information on LEA governor training courses
- Consider adopting self-evaluation programme on the work of governing body
- Health and Safety
- Receive and adopt report from Director of Education & Children's Services on Health and Safety for school swimming lessons
- Receive and adopt report from Direction of Education & Children's Services on travelling allowances for school-based staff
- Any other business
- Date and time of next meeting.

The agenda for Meeting B might look like this:

- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of last meeting and matters arising
- Presentation by Maths Co-ordinator (allows them to leave meeting early and as non-governor no need for them to attend full meeting)
- Head teacher's Report
- Progress on School Development Plan
- Report of Curriculum Committee
- Report of Finance Committee
- School Uniform
- Report on Governors' Conference
- Community Governor's vacancy
- Receive and adopt report from Director of Education & Children's Services on Trade Unions and time off provisions
- Receive and adopt report from Director of Education & Children's Services on capability procedures for school-based staff
- Any Other Business
- Date and time of next meeting

(Some would argue that the discussion on school uniform should follow the governors' issues as it is likely to take some time and, in so doing, reduce the impact of the two governors' issues).

Effective organisation and management of meetings

Helping Governors with agendas

- When it comes to producing an agenda for governing body meetings, one of the key aims is to give the governors as much help as possible on each agenda item in as brief and efficient a way as possible.
- The simplest type of agenda just lists the items to be discussed.

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Governing Body Chair Training Programme

A N OTHER SCHOOL
Meeting of Governing Body to be held on
1 February in the Library, commencing at 4:30 pm

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Headteacher's report
5. Progress on School Development Plan
6. Change of School Uniform
7. Report on Governors' Conference
8. Any Other Business
9. Date and time of next meeting

13.

- The value of this style is that it is brief and clear.
- However, that is all it is. No other information is given to governors other than the date, time and venue of the meeting, and the topics which will be discussed.
- Yet by using quite simple techniques, further information can be given to governors which can be an aid in saving their time and preparing them for the governors' meeting.
- It is quite easy, for instance, to indicate on the agenda whether or not papers are attached.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

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Governing Body Chair Training Programme

A N OTHER SCHOOL
Meeting of Governing Body to be held on
1 February in the Library, commencing at 4:30 pm

AGENDA	PAPERS INCLUDED
1. Apologies for absence	
2. Minutes of previous meeting	✓
3. Matters arising	
4. Headteacher's report	✓
5. Progress on School Development Plan	✓
6. Change of School Uniform	
7. Report on Governors' Conference	✓
8. Any Other Business	
9. Date and time of next meeting	

14.

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Also, where appropriate, it is an option to include a very brief description of the purpose of agenda items to help set the context for discussion.

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Governing Body Chair Training Programme

A N OTHER SCHOOL
Meeting of Governing Body to be held on
1 February in the Library, commencing at 4:30 pm

AGENDA	PAPERS INCLUDED
1. Apologies for absence	
2. Minutes of previous meeting	✓
3. Matters arising	
4. Headteacher's report	✓
5. Progress on School Development Plan Halfway through 2 year plan. We need to consider possible effects of increased funding	✓
6. Change of School Uniform Focussing initially on costs and updating school image	
7. Report on Governors' Conference Ms Jones & Mr Smith to lead on implications for us of governing body self-evaluation	✓
8. Any Other Business	
9. Date and time of next meeting	

15.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

Some training agencies suggest that each agenda item can be allotted a certain amount of time and this can be indicated on agendas.

Ask the delegates what are the advantages and disadvantages of this practice.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Helps keep governors "on task" and prevents them digressing.</p> <p>The allocation of time to topics is an indication of their importance.</p>	<p>It is not always possible to tell how much discussion a particular item needs.</p> <p>Too rigid an adherence to time limits might curtail importance discussion.</p>

29

Time scales

- Let us now consider the issue of time scales.
- Every member of the governing body (and also the Head teacher if (s)he is not a governor) must be given at least five days' written notice of the date of a meeting with a copy of the agenda. Also the LEA's Director of Education/Chief Education Officer for community, aided and controlled schools.
- In exceptional cases, shorter notice can be given, but only if the Chair (or Vice-Chair if the Chair is absent) agrees that there is an urgent need for a meeting.
- If we take the more usual first case, though, the following time-scale for actions might well be adopted:

Distribute Handout 8 and go through with delegates

Effective organisation and management of meetings

The Purpose of meetings

- We have dealt with preparation for a full governing body meeting, but before we consider the running of the meeting, It might be worth considering why we hold governing body meetings in the first place.

Ask delegates for their views on the purpose of meetings – you might wish to record responses on a flip chart.

- Here are some of the purposes (by no means exhaustive) that have been put forward, though not all meetings will include such things as guest speakers, crisis management, etc.

Show Slide 16

Governing Body Chair Training Programme

WHY HAVE A MEETING?

Meeting purposes can include:

- Exchange of information
- Discussion (leading to an objective)
- Generating ideas
- Consulting and getting feedback
- Crisis management
- Setting targets / objectives
- Making decisions
- Clarifying policies
- Training
- Raising concerns
- Planning
- Finding solutions / solving problems
- Reviewing progress / outcomes
- Setting tasks and delegating
- Reaching consensus
- Special subjects – guest speakers

16.

- Of course many topics covered in a governors' meeting will satisfy a number of these purposes, e.g. an exchange of information may lead to discussion resulting in the generating of ideas.
- However, it might be worth considering why items are being place on an agenda in order to ensure that they achieve the intended purpose of including them in the first place.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

Getting started – the meeting room

- Governing bodies conduct the strategic business of the school so it follows that the room in which their meetings are held should be fit for purpose.
- First of all, the room needs to be quiet and large enough to accommodate comfortably all the people who are attending.
- Secondly, tables should be provided for all the papers that governors will be using. It would also be sensible to provide governors with writing paper and pen for note taking.
- Although most schools will use the same room for all governors' meetings, if a member of staff, say a Head of Department or subject co-ordinator, is giving a presentation at the start of a meeting it might be a good idea to hold that part of the meeting in their classroom. This would mean the presenter would not have to carry books or artefacts to the governors' meeting room and also give governors a brief view of different parts of the school.
- The actual layout of the meeting room should allow all governors to see the Chair and vice versa and as many of each other as possible.
- It is a matter of choice as to whether the Head, Chair and Clerk sit next to each other, though care should be taken to avoid a feeling of "us" and "them". Seating arrangements should not give the impression that the Head and Chair form an inner team which directs matters irrespective of other governors' views.

Quorums and withdrawals from meetings

- All full governing body meetings must have a quorum or the meeting cannot be held, and it is the duty of the Chair to determine whether a meeting is quorate.
- The quorum for every governing body is 50% rounded up to the nearest whole number and excludes vacancies and suspended governors.
- It is also important to remember that if a governor leaves a meeting and, as a result, the meeting ceases to be quorate, then the meeting must end.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

Ask delegates if they can suggest any occasion(s) when a governor, clerk or Head (if (s)he is not a governor) should withdraw from a governors' meeting.

After Discussion, Show Slide 17

Governing Body Chair Training Programme

EXAMPLES OF ISSUES WHICH MAY AFFECT A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- An issue affecting the pay of a member of the governing body (most commonly Head, teacher governor, staff governor, clerk)
- The removal of a governor (though the governor should be allowed to put their point of view before withdrawing)
- A disciplinary issue, e.g. against a teacher or pupil where there is reasonable doubt that a governor might be impartial.
- An issue, the outcome of which might result in financial gain for a governor or his / her family or business, e.g. the awarding of a contract for work.
- An employee of the school (other than the Head) must withdraw if the pay or appraisal of other members of the school are being discussed.

17.

- A governor should "declare an interest" if an issue is being raised in which they feel they have an interest, though there is help available as all schools must keep a record of any business interests of the governors and Head teacher.
- However, if there is any question over whether or not a person needs to withdraw from a meeting for any particular item, the others present at the meeting ultimately are to make the decision.
- Let us now consider some actual situations which might arise.

Distribute Handout 9

Go over the list of agenda items with the delegates, and ask them whether they think any governors should withdraw while the item is being discussed.

This exercise can be done either individually or in small groups.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

Discuss the following possible solutions with the delegates:

Point 1 is dealt with easily. The Head teacher must withdraw from the meeting while his/her salary is being discussed.

Point 2. It would certainly be the case that the teacher governor, as the Head of Department of the teacher in question, would have knowledge of the teacher's position (indeed, they may well be involved) and is likely to have a view on it. It would be sensible for the teacher governor to withdraw. Similarly, if the staff governor (or indeed any governor) were involved in the case in any way, (s)he should make the governing body aware of this.

Point 3. Much would depend on how much or how little the teacher governor is involved in the case. Only the teacher governor would be fully aware of the extent of her/his involvement and it would be up to them to decide whether or not to withdraw. However, the Chair should alert them to their position and any possible question of a conflict of interests.

Point 4. Provided none of the governors (or maybe their families) stands to gain from any decisions, there is no need for anyone to withdraw from the meeting.

Point 5. This is not as straightforward as it seems. If the teacher/staff governor is a member of the Science Department, they will clearly have an interest and might well be seen as advocating the wishes of the Science Department and not the whole school. Similarly, if the teacher governor is not in the Science Department, they may be seen as being opposed to the move, particularly if their curriculum area might lose teaching time to accommodate an increase in Science teaching. The whole question grows in importance if an increase in time given to Science teaching might result in a teacher from another curriculum area facing curriculum led retraining or even redundancy. On the other hand, when discussing such an issue, governors need as full a picture as possible and the views of a teacher governor would be invaluable.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

Committees

- It has become common practice for governing bodies to establish committees to enable them to carry out their work more efficiently. However, there are only a small number of committees which governing bodies are legally required to establish.

Ask delegates to name the only committees which governing bodies are required by law to establish.

- There are only four statutory committees.

Show Slide 18

Governing Body Chair Training Programme

STATUTORY COMMITTEES

- Staff disciplinary and dismissal committee
- Staff disciplinary and dismissed appeals committee
- Pupil discipline and exclusion committee
- Admissions committee

18.

- When we look at non-statutory committees which governing bodies establish to help them conduct business meetings effectively we find they are often given different names, but typically specialist committees are set up to consider areas such as finance, the curriculum, health and safety, complaints, etc.
- In this respect, it is important to consider how many committees should be established, and what should be each committee's remit.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

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- The temptation might be to set up committees to cover all the main areas of work of the governing body – finance, curriculum, health and safety, pupil welfare, pupil progress, links with the community; the list is very long indeed. At least this would ensure that each area is covered thoroughly.
- However, there are a number of serious problems with having so many committees. First of all, no matter how clear their remits, there would be a large degree of overlap between committees, e.g. health and safety and pupil welfare, curriculum and pupil progress.
- Secondly, it might well not be possible to find enough governors to sit on the committees, especially where the governing body is small, even though governors may sit on more than one committee.
- Thirdly, if governing bodies have a relatively large number of committees, their reports can take up a lot of time at governing body meetings, thereby defeating one of the purposes of establishing committees, i.e. saving whole governing body time.
- And, fourthly the more committees a governing body establishes, the more difficult the job of overseeing and coordinating their work becomes.
- It would be advisable, therefore, to limit the number of governing body committees (this does not apply to working parties which can be set up to consider one issue and then dissolved).

Ask delegates to suggest the non-statutory governing body committees which they would establish for a typical community school. They should bear in mind the points just discussed.

- overlap of the work of committees
- the time governors are able to commit to committee meetings
- the time taken at governing body meetings for committee reports
- coordinating the work of committees

Allow 5 – 6 minutes for this exercise.

Delegates should work in groups and report back at the end of the exercise.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

There is no definitive answer with this task, though, in practical terms it would be advisable to have no more than four committees at the most. It would be worthwhile reminding delegates that in addition to non-statutory committees, governors must also sit on the four statutory committees so this might influence their thoughts on how many non-statutory committees to establish.

- All the work of the governing body is closely inter-related, of course and any division of its tasks is to that extent a false division (almost every aspect of the school's work requires funding and therefore is covered by the governing body's financial role), but, clearly, it makes sense to delegate work in particular areas to committees to allow for a more detailed approach than could be carried out by the whole governing body.
- It is very important therefore to pay close attention to the remit of governing body committees to reduce overlap of their work to a minimum.
- This problem posed by the overlap of work of committees can also be overcome when governors sit on more than one committee. Such governors will be aware of what is being done by both committees where overlap is occurring and be in a position to reduce confusion and possible conflict – and act as a conduit to report their discussions, etc.
- Just as it is important to consider carefully the number of committees, so too should consideration be paid to the size of committees.
- Although particular committees may be very popular, and certainly, no one would wish to disappoint an enthusiastic governor, the fewer members on a committee the more quickly it is likely to come to decisions and the less likely it is to take up individual governor's time. Once again, it is necessary to balance governors' enthusiasm and areas of expertise with demands on time.
- It is very important to remember that there is no "pecking order" of importance with committees. The governing body has ultimate responsibility for all of its work so care must be taken to ensure that no one committee becomes, or is perceived to become, pre-eminent.
- If this happens a situation can develop where the "core team" "A team" or "inner cabinet" are "running the school" and the rest of the governing body are merely "making up the numbers". When this occurs bad feeling and poor governance often follow.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

- Finally, good quality reports from committees to the full governing body are essential.
- Both verbal and the formally written reports need not, in fact in most cases, should not be long. However, they should be full enough and clear enough for the governing body to understand, they should outline any recommendation or decisions made with a brief explanation for their choice of action, but they should not outline details of the discussions which took place.

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Time management

- In order for meetings to be efficient and effective it is necessary for all governors to be alert and focussed.
- However, no matter how important the matters being discussed at a meeting it is unlikely that participants can give the attention they require if the meeting lasts longer than about 1½ hours. This is particularly so in the case of governing body meetings which usually take place in the evening after most governors have been at work for the day.
- Consequently, meetings should last for no more than 2 hours, and if the business of the meeting cannot be concluded in that time then consideration should be given to deferring it to the next meeting or even adding an additional meeting to the annual meeting schedule.
- The length of a meeting will be determined partly by the number and nature of agenda items, so when setting out the agenda, Chairs (and Heads) should ensure that the business to be covered is manageable. This might mean deferring to later meetings issues which are not urgent, but be careful not to build up a large back log of work for the last meeting of the year.
- Length of meetings is also determined by how they are managed, and here the Chair's role is vital.
- It is a good idea for the Chair to arrive at the meeting place about 15-20 minutes before the start time to ensure the room is laid out properly and all necessary paperwork is in place.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

- It is also important to start on time.
- At the start of the meeting the Chair should say how long the meeting is to last and that everyone should bear this in mind, and therefore, while all governors' contributions will be valued they should be concise and certainly not repetitive.
- During the meeting the Chair has to judge if discussion of a particular item is dragging on too long and/or is going over "old ground". When that is the case then it is up to the Chair to close the issue.
- It is not always easy to do this without appearing to be impolite. However, if all agenda items are to have a fair hearing then the Chair must end such pointless discussion.

Ask delegates to suggest strategies which might be used to bring discussion of a topic to an end. Remind them that it is a good idea to give a reason for bringing discussion to a close.

After discussion distribute Handout 10 and read through.

Involving all governors at meetings

- The ideal view of a meeting where everyone contributes in equal measure is invariably very different from the reality where some governors, particularly the Head, speak a great deal, some governors very little and one or two hardly at all.
- It is obviously the aim of the Chair to involve all governors in meaningful participation at meetings, but it would be unrealistic to expect to achieve the ideal of equal contributions from all.
- First of all, people differ temperamentally and it is inevitable, therefore, that the more outgoing type of governor will be prepared to speak more than a more reticent colleague at meetings.
- Similarly, some governors will be able to contribute more than others as a result of their personal circumstances. A governor who is retired is likely to be able to devote more time to preparation for meetings than a parent in full time employment and, therefore, feels more confident to contribute to meetings.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

- It is also important not to confuse **quantity** of contribution with **quality** of contribution. A good point, succinctly made is of far greater value than lengthy, repetitive “waffle”.
- Having said that, the Chair should expect a contribution at meetings from all (even though it may be unequal) according to their interests, experience and expertise.
- What methods, then, might a Chair employ to ensure that all governors, to a lesser or greater degree, take an active part in meetings?
- First of all, it is worth reminding governors that the type of school governing bodies we have in Wales are “stakeholder” organisations, that is, every group which has an interest or stake in the school is represented on the governing body – parents, teachers, staff, local authority, community. This means that although all governors are working for the benefit of the school and its pupils they are representative of one of the groups that has a particular stake in the school. Consequently, they are not really being good advocates for the group they represent if they do not contribute at meetings.
- Although this argument may make governors more aware of their responsibilities it will not necessarily spur all of them to take a more active part in discussion, and this is where the skills of the Chair come into play.
- A Chair may actually prompt a governor to speak by asking for their views on a particular topic. Such an approach can be given added weight if the governor is reminded of their role as representing a particular group – “It would be interesting to hear what you, John/ Jane, as a community/parent/teacher/local authority governor think of this issue.”
- Another method is for Chair to approach a governor before the meeting (this can even be done at the informal pre-meeting tea or coffee if the Chair judges it appropriate) and say that (s)he would value the governor’s views on a particular agenda item when it arises in the meeting.
- For governors who are lacking in confidence, it is important that the Chair ensures they are able to make their contribution without interruptions as nothing inhibits a nervous governor more than their views being criticised before they have finished speaking.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

- Finally the Chair should always thank governors for their contribution at the end of meetings.
- If the Chair has tried all the above methods but feels that a governor is still not contributing to meetings (and this applies to both committee meetings and full governing body meetings) then the governor should be approached privately where the issue can be raised and ways discussed of remedying the situation.

Ask delegates for any strategies they have tried to involve all governors at meetings.

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Managing Conflict

- It is almost inevitable that there will be differences of opinion within a group of people which is as potentially diverse as a school governing body.
- In fact, it would probably be unhealthy if governors agreed on every issue as alternative viewpoints would not be aired and, therefore, different and potentially better decisions made.
- It is also very important that differences of opinion be aired openly so that all governors feel their views are heard even if they are not adopted.
- The problem arises when open debate and argument tips over into conflict which can undermine the morale of the governing body and reduce the effectiveness of its work.
- It is often quite easy to identify the type of action taken by governors which can cause conflict.

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Governing Body Chair Training Programme

TYPES OF CONFLICT BEHAVIOURS

- Aggressors
- Interrupters
- Hijackers

19.

- *Aggressors* are usually negative in all their views. They excel at dwelling on problems rather than looking for solutions, question the value of any suggestions and criticise ideas put forward by other governors. Sometimes their remarks to and about other governors can be personal.
- *Interrupters*, as the title suggests, constantly interrupt when other governors are speaking. This may be because they genuinely disagree with what is being said. If it happens regularly, though, it is usually that they simply like hearing the sound of their own voice or believe they are experts on what is being discussed.
- *Hijackers* often ignore or pay lip service to the agenda item under discussion and try to move the meeting onto a different issue which is on their own personal agenda.

Ask delegates how they would deal with each of these types of action. This activity should be done in pairs or groups. Allow 6 – 8 minutes for the response.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

It is a good idea, when possible, to ask aggressors for their views on how they would go about dealing with the issue under discussion. Wherever possible include them at the outset in providing suggestions or solutions so that their energies are poured into creative activities rather than negative criticism.

Interrupters can be dealt with by either insisting every interjection is made through the Chair, thereby controlling when they can speak, or actually pointing out that someone else is speaking and they must wait until the original speaker finishes.

Hijackers should be told quite clearly when they stray from an agreed agenda topic, that the issue they have brought up is not on the agenda; should they wish the issue to be discussed, then they should ask for it to be included on the agenda of the next governing body meeting.

- Most governors' meetings are conducted quite informally, so if the Chair feels that a meeting is becoming a little unruly or a conflict situation is developing (s)he may decide to adopt a formal approach to running the meeting.
- Insist governors go through the Chair if they wish to make a contribution to a discussion and actually raise their hand in order to gain permission to speak.
- Control both the number and length of interruptions strictly and insist that governors who wish to interrupt a speaker go through the Chair.
- Discussion should be closed when the Chair decides that a topic has been covered adequately and governors are simply repeating arguments.
- In most governing bodies conflicts occur rarely and the strategies outlined above will usually deal with all but the most intractable.
- However, if clashes between particular governors start to become a regular feature then arrange the seating at meetings so that "allies" do not sit together and "opponents" do not sit opposite each other. Even if this does not defuse conflict situations, at least it will not aggravate them.

Effective organisation and management of meetings

- If conflict becomes a feature of governing body meetings, then both governor morale and effectiveness will suffer. If it looks as if this might happen then the Chair, ideally with the Head (and, if not, certainly with the Head's agreement), should see the parties who are regularly in conflict and remind them of their duties and what their actions are doing to the governing body and the school.
- It would be a good idea to enlist the aid of a governor who is respected by all when carrying out this action.
- In most cases, this should have the desired effect, but if there is no real change, the Chair has no option but to continue chairing meetings formally and strictly.

Inducting a new governor



INDUCTING A NEW GOVERNOR

- The first step in establishing an effective governing body is ensuring that new governors gain a positive impression of their role.
- Bearing this in mind how would you deal with the following situation?

This exercise should be undertaken by groups. Allow 10 – 15 minutes and on its completion a group spokesperson should report their recommendations.

Your governing body has co-opted a new community governor. She moved to the area four years ago and works for a small recruitment company. Her two children (one at university and one working away from home) did not attend local schools and she does not have a background in education.

What action would you take to ensure your new governor feels supported in her new position and has a positive impression of her new role?

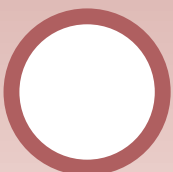
After discussion distribute Handout 11 and read through.

CONCLUSION

- If schools are to provide our young people with the education needed to fulfil their potential they need the critical support of effective governing bodies.
- If governing bodies are to be effective they need the insightful leadership of a wise Chair.
- As this course has shown, and experience tells us, the challenges facing a Chair are many, but the rewards in the form of support for children and their schools make it essential that we do not fail.



Handouts



CHAIRPERSON'S SKILLS

Recognises the boundaries between governance and management

Ability to involve governors effectively in the work of the governing body

Clear communicator

Ability to deal with issues sensitively

Ability to address difficult issues

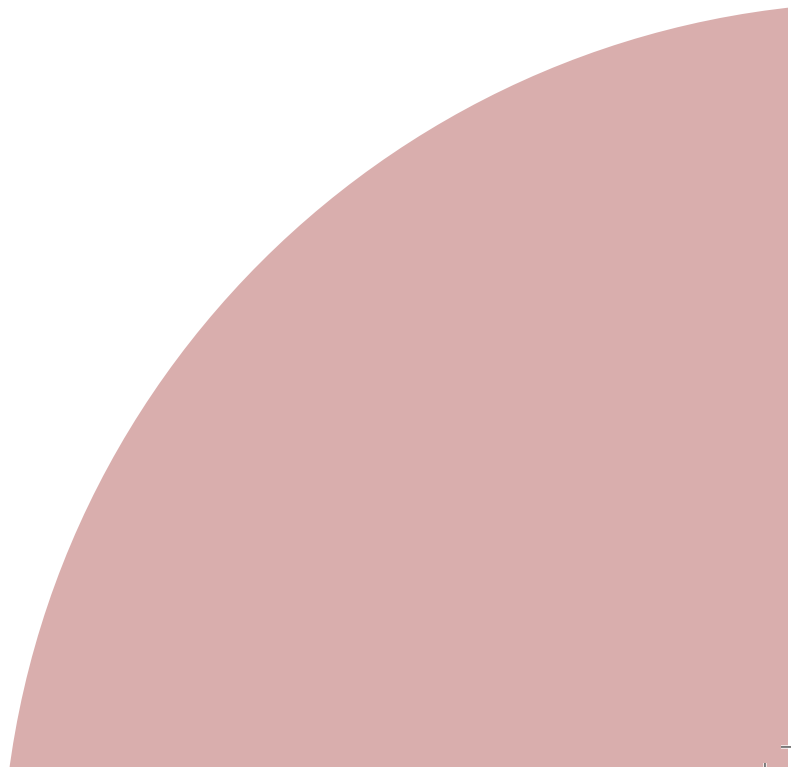
Ability to adopt an impartial position

Ability to prioritise

Good listening skills

Good organiser

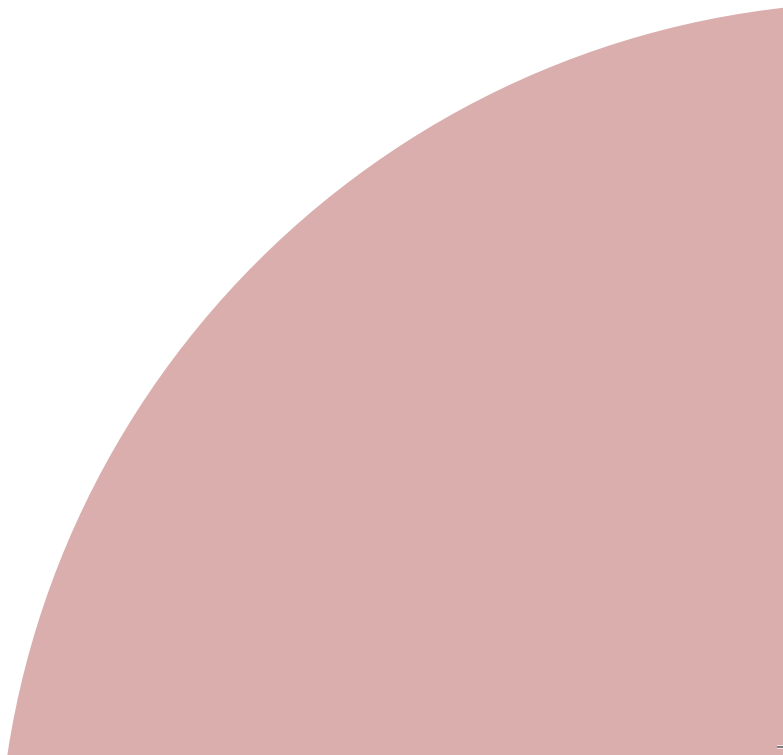
Good time manager



REASONS FOR HOLDING REGULAR TIMETABLED MEETINGS BETWEEN THE CHAIR AND HEAD TEACHER.

- There is a long gap in time, usually one term, between governing body agenda setting meetings, and issues may arise which need an input from the Chair.
- If the Chair and Head teacher meet only when an emergency or difficult issue arises, the Chair, and through him/her the governing body, may gain a totally false impression of the school and how it is managed.
- These meetings give the Chair an opportunity to discuss issues which (s)he and/or other governors feel need considering before the next full governing body meeting.
- The Head can notify the Chair of any issues which might be arising and might need to come to the governors' attention.
- These meetings provide the Head with the opportunity to "stand back" from the day to day running of the school and discuss issues with a "critical friend" who is not involved in hands on management and is able to bring a wider perspective.
- The position of Head teacher is very isolated. A Head teacher may occasionally wish to speak frankly about their hopes and concerns to a sympathetic listener who has some understanding of the Head's job, and who will treat their talk with the highest confidentiality.
- Very importantly, at the end of the meeting, the Head can take the Chair on a brief tour of the school (or part of it) for the Chair to see the school at work and also meet staff.

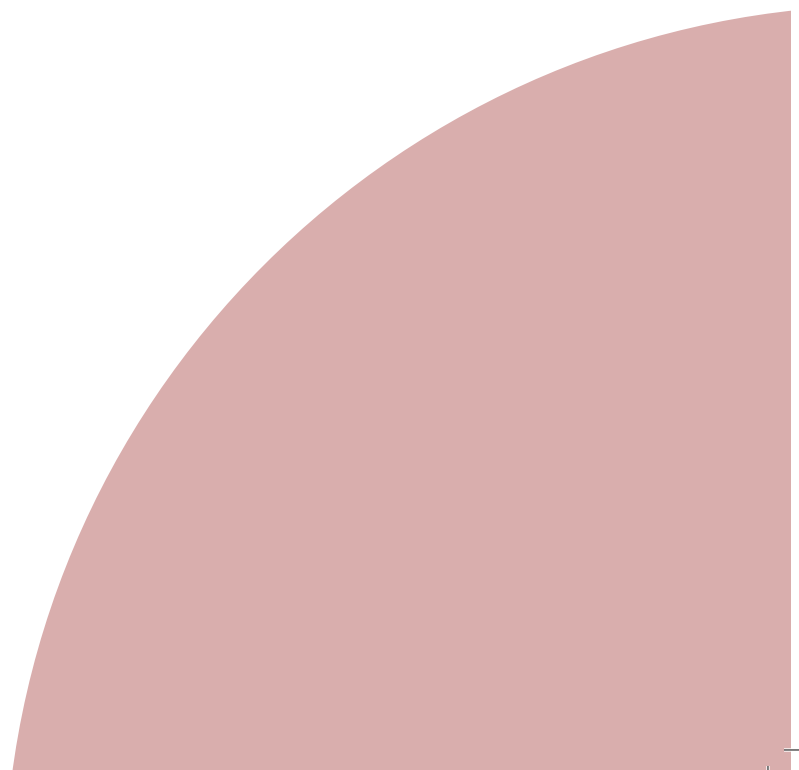
The first two always take precedence

- Issue(s) which need addressing as identified by the Chair and or governors.
 - Issues which need addressing as identified by the Head.
 - Curriculum issues, especially updates or information on initiatives.
 - Extra-curricular activities.
 - Health and safety, and the environment.
 - Staff and pupil welfare, including staff continuing professional development.
 - Finance.
- 

Handout 4

A fellow governor comes to you two days before your next scheduled meeting with the Head teacher and tells you a mother has said to them that they are concerned that her child rarely brings text books home to do their homework, especially for History and Geography. The parent is supportive of the school and does not want the issue brought to a full governing body meeting but is obviously not happy and would like something to be done.

What do you, as Chair, do?



The local authority has been awarded a grant from central government to update and repair a local theatre. However, it has been discovered that the theatre has serious structural damage which is so extensive that the grant will not cover even 25% of the cost of repairing it.

Your school has a drama theatre/hall and the local authority has approached the Head teacher and offered to use the grant to upgrade the facility to theatre standard. The grant will cover 75% of the cost of the upgrade and the local authority has offered to provide a further 15%. The remaining 10% will have to be covered by the school and this will take up 40% of the school's budget reserve.

The local authority has said that if the school agrees, the theatre should be made available to the community during out of school hours unless the school has booked the theatre in advance for school performances, prize-giving evenings, etc.

There is no mention of upgrading the drama theatre in the annual school development plan which was approved by the governing body at the last governors' meeting. Governors are also aware that the Special Needs Department and Information and Communication Technology Department both made strong claims for additional funding which could not be accommodated.

Drama and Music are quite strong at the school, and every year there is a Christmas concert and drama production.

The Head teacher contacts you and says the local authority needs an answer within 5 days. (S)he will be meeting with a number of councillors and council officials in 4 days time and would like you to attend, but (s)he would like to meet you before that meeting to discuss the issue.

What do you, as Chair, do at the meeting with the Head?

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES TO HELP GUIDE YOUR INPUT TO THE MEETING.

- You must remain impartial no matter what your personal interests or feelings about subjects.
- You must be guided by what you believe will be best for the pupils at the school.
- However, you are representing the governing body and all the stakeholders who are represented there (parents, teachers, staff other than teachers, the local community and the local authority, so, although the pupils' needs should come first you should be aware of the views of other stakeholders in the school.)
- Listen closely, ask for all the details, make sure you understand.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- The following questions might be considered.
- How will the school benefit if the drama studio/hall is upgraded?
- Are there any ways in which the school will suffer if the drama studio/hall is upgraded?
- If the local authority's offer is accepted and money from the school budget reserve is pledged to the project how might this affect the Special Needs and Information and Communication Technology Departments and how will the reasons for withholding money from them be explained to them?
- If the offer is not accepted how might the reasons for this be explained to the Music and Drama Departments?

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Are we aware of any calls which might be made on the school budget reserve?
- If these potential calls on the reserve materialise, will the school be able to cope with them and remain solvent?

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

- The legal position of the school and governors especially over the control of school premises.
- What might be the effects on the local authority and community of our decision? (And what might be the effects on their attitude to the school?)

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- The school development plan lays out strategic plans for the school for the next year, and the upgrading of the drama studio/hall did not figure in these plans. If what is agreed in the school development plan determines the outcome of all questions then the offer from the local authority would be turned down.
- However, two questions should be considered: first if the governing body had known about the proposal would it have been accepted?
- Secondly, should the governors oppose any initiative, no matter how valuable to the school, simply because it does not appear in the development plan?

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

- It is quite likely that it will not be possible to give a definitive answer to a number of the questions outlined above.
- However, it is important to discuss them to ensure any decisions made are as informed as possible.

AGENDA SETTING

Draft agendas for meetings A and B. Explain your rationale for the order in which you have listed the items for discussion.

Meeting A

Topics for discussion	Papers included
Promotion of the school	
Receive information on LEA governor training courses	✓
Review school policies on: Sex Education	✓
Attendance	✓
Consider adopting a self-evaluation programme on the work of the governing body	✓
Head teacher's report	✓
Receive and adopt report from Director of Education & Children's Services on Health and Safety for school swimming lessons	✓
Health and Safety issues	
Receive and adopt report from Director of Education & Children's Services on travelling allowances for school-based staff	✓

AGENDA SETTING**Meeting B****Topics for discussion****Papers included**

Report on Governor's Conference

✓

Report of Curriculum Committee

✓

School uniform

Receive and adopt report from Director of
Education & Children's Services on Trade
Unions and Time off provision

✓

Co-opted governor vacancy

✓

Presentation by Maths co-ordinator

Report of Finance Committee

✓

Receive and adopt report from Director of
Education & Children's Services on capability
procedures for school-based staff

✓

Head teacher's report

✓

Progress on School Development Plan

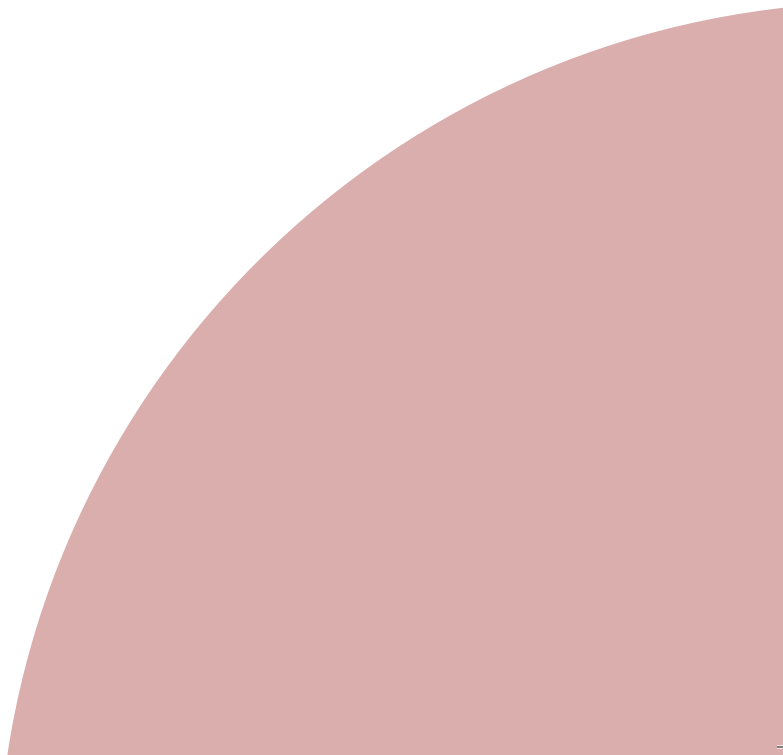
✓

**PREPARATION FOR THE GOVERNING BODY MEETING
SUGGESTED TIMESCALES**

<p>Approx. 28 days before governors' meeting</p>	<p>Ensure the minutes of the previous meeting are in order.</p> <p>Arrange with Head teacher a date and time to meet to set the meeting agenda.</p> <p>Ensure the clerk contacts other governors and LEA Director of Education if school is Community, Aided or Controlled, asking for agenda items (if any) to be sent to the Chair by the date of the agenda setting meeting.</p>
<p>Approx. 14 days before governors' meeting</p>	<p>Meet with Head teacher to set the agenda for the meeting. At this meeting (indeed, throughout the run up period to the meeting) ask the Head teacher to clarify any information (e.g. background to particular points, the meaning of acronyms, etc.) to ensure you will not be fumbling or unclear about any issues during the meeting.</p>
<p>Approx. 10 days before governors' meeting</p>	<p>Ensure the clerk posts letter containing notification of date, time and place of governors' meeting to governors (and LEA Director of Education if appropriate) together with agenda and accompanying papers (including minutes of previous meeting).</p>
<p>Approx. 2 days before governors' meeting</p>	<p>Check with Head for any last-minute items, apologies for absence, etc. and notify the clerk if there are any.</p>

WITHDRAWING FROM MEETINGS

Should any members of the governing body withdraw from the meeting when the following items are being discussed?

- 1 Discussion of the Head teacher's salary.
 - 2 Discussion of disciplinary action against a teacher whose Head of Department is a teacher governor.
 - 3 Discussion of a disciplinary action against a teacher. The teacher governor is not in the same department.
 - 4 Discussion of the awarding of a contract for work to be done at the school amounting to less than £750.
 - 5 Discussion about increasing the amount of time/number of lessons for Science in two year groups, a request made by the teacher in charge of Science (who is not a governor).
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There are many ways of concluding discussion of an agenda item and the method used will vary from item to item, but a few are listed below. Each method of ending discussion gives a reason for do so.

"We appear to have come to **a consensus** so we'll make our decision/ finish our discussion now and move on to the next agenda item."

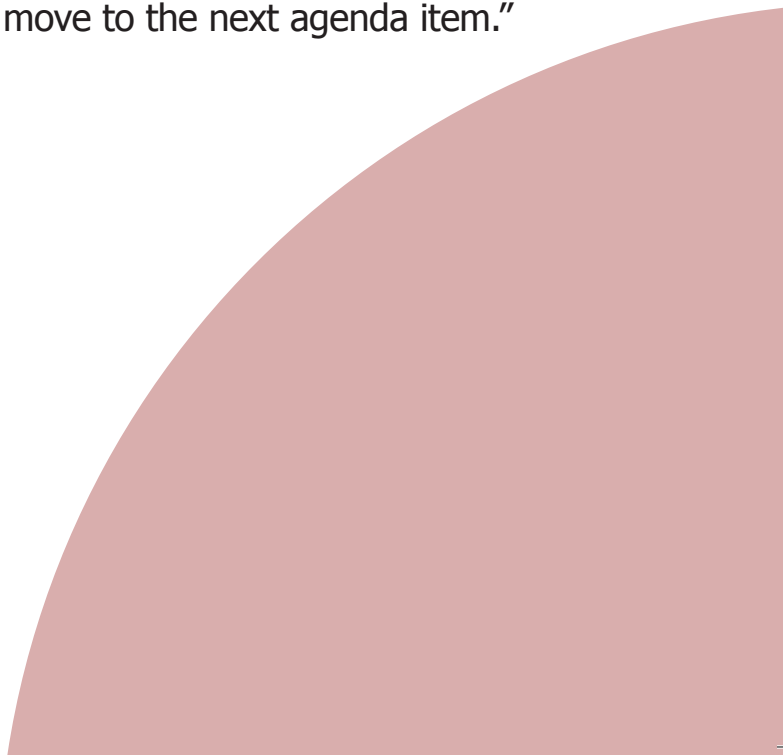
"We've discussed this topic **as far as we are able from the information available** so we'll finish the discussion/make our decision now and move to our next agenda item."

"We've heard **everyone's viewpoints** so we'll take our decision now and move on to our next agenda item."

"We could go on discussing this topic all evening but we have **covered all the main issues** so we must make our decision now or the other important business will not get done."

"We have raised a number of issues; **rather than repeat them I will summarise for the minutes.**"

"We have discussed this issue for (length of time): we either make our decision now or **defer further discussion** and decision making till our next meeting – either way, we will now move to the next agenda item."



A suggested approach might be:

- Telephone the new governor introducing yourself and welcoming them to the governing body of your school.
- Arrange a convenient time for them to visit the school with you to meet the Head for a short tour and a discussion about the main challenges facing the school.
- Either before or at this meeting with the Head teacher the new governor should be given the school prospectus, the latest inspection report and any literature relevant to the work of the governing body, e.g. names of other governors, list of governing body committees, etc.
- At this meeting, explain how the governing body meetings work, e.g.
 - All governors can offer a view
 - Decision making
 - Declaring an interest in an issue, etc.
- At the first governing body meeting the new governor attends make sure that each governor has their name and which type of governor they are (parent, teacher, staff, etc.) on a card in front of them.
- Introduce the new governor to the governing body.
- After the meeting, talk through with them what happened and answer any questions or concerns.

