



Almond Hill Junior School

Governor Induction Information

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“School Motto : Aim High”

Welcome

Thank you for offering your support and commitment as a governor of our School.

Governing Boards have a strategic role in school development. Working in partnership with the Head teacher and staff we have a very real part to play in the success of the school. As governors we are committed to working to ensure high standards of achievement, behaviour and discipline and excellence for all pupils in the full range of opportunities provided.

Education is an ever-changing world and Governing Boards need to adapt, grow and learn to ensure the best for all children. Your skills and efforts are needed and very much appreciated by the rest of the Governors, Senior Leadership Team and staff and we very much look forward to the contribution you will make.

The role of School Governor is daunting for some and it is true that the responsibilities of the role are significant. The Governing Board and Head are, however, committed to helping you settle into the role and there are many sources of information and training opportunities for you to fill any gaps in your knowledge.

We have produced this handbook to help you understand how a Governing Board works and where you will play a part. Please take time to read the whole booklet as it covers much of the information you will need in the short term and directs you to where you can develop your knowledge as time moves on. We will require you to confirm that you have read this pack when you have done so.

In your first Full Governing Board meeting, we will help you decide which sub committees you will join and from there will be assigned a relevant mentor to guide you in your role. In the meantime, if there is anything you are unsure of please contact me.

Thank you once again for joining us, I look forward to working with you.

Claire Lanni
Chair of Governors

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The Role of a School Governor

The Governing Board of any school has three core functions set out by the Department for Education (DfE). These are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for the aim and direction of the school and is accountable to the Local Authority and parents for the way the school is run. The Headteacher (HT) is responsible for the implementation of policy, curriculum and day-to-day management of the school and is accountable to the Governing Board.

Governing is a delicate balance between supporting the Headteacher and holding her to account. This is one of the most important aspects to grasp in the initial stages of the induction process and is key in maintaining an effective governing body.

Governors' roles cover the following areas:

- **Strategic Leadership** – establishing aims and vision for the school and helping set and review the policies that underpin how staff run the school
- **Evaluation & Compliance** - using evidence to review progress against targets and to see if policies and practice are effective
- **Accountability** – triangulating data received and being accountable to the community that the school serves; engaging with stakeholders to make sure they are kept informed about what is happening in the school.
- **People** – taking direct responsibility for the recruitment and performance management of the Headteacher (and senior leaders) and supporting the Headteacher in their role.

Governing Boards Must:

- Recognise and celebrate the achievements of the school
- Know where the school is not achieving as well as it could
- Provide support and encouragement when strategies to bring about improvement are being explored
- Strike an appropriate balance between support and challenge

Governing Boards Do:

- Set the budget for the school and decide on the level of pay for its teachers
- Help decide priorities for school improvements and targets for achievement
- Ensure all necessary information is available to parents
- Receive information about the quality of teaching in the school
- Monitor the performance of their school
- Have a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns
- Ensure health and safety issues are addressed

Governing Boards Don't:

- Inspect the school
- Judge or report back on quality of teaching
- Share concerns about staff capability
- Decide on how pupils are taught different subjects

Governors must act as a group. Individually, governors have no responsibility, liability or power. As a governor, you may find that individuals (parents and staff) raise issues with you in the hope that you will act on them. Remember that you cannot act for the Governing Board. If you are ever in doubt as to what to do, your chair or clerk will advise you.

The Governance Handbook

The DfE Governance Handbook provides information about the role and legal duties of Governing Boards: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Our Governing Board

Governing boards are made up of different types of governor. Our Governing Board constitution includes:

- ✚ Head teacher
- ✚ LEA governor: 1
- ✚ Staff governor: 2
- ✚ Parent governors: 2
- ✚ Co-opted governors: 7

You have been appointed as a governor and your term of office is four years.

Committees and Meetings

The full Governing Board (FGB) meet once every term. Meetings last no longer than 2 hours and are usually held early evening.

The governing board then split into sub committees or working parties (separately meeting once a term at the school) to cover the main strategic areas of school governance:

1. Finance, Resources, Personnel and Premises Committee
2. Curriculum and pupil focused working party
3. Safeguarding working party

Committees for Pupil Discipline, Grievances, Staff Dismissal and Appeal meet when needed and working parties are set up on an ad-hoc basis to work on specific issues of interest.

Roles

The remit of each committee is outlined in a document called the **Terms of Reference** which can be found on Governor Hub. Each committee has a **chair**, elected by the Governing Board each year, that leads the work of the group and a **clerk** that records the minutes (topics discussed, decisions made and actions to carry out). You can find the minutes of our meetings on Governor Hub.

Our clerk is also responsible for ensuring we are well organised and lawful, providing administrative services and giving advice on legislation and procedures. Please feel free to contact our clerk directly with any questions

Each committee is responsible for fixing its own set of dates with the Chair having the responsibility for scheduling. Governors are expected to attend all meetings. Apologies must be given for unavoidable absence.

Confidentiality

At any meeting, please remember that whilst the minutes are a public record, any discussions during the meeting are **strictly confidential** – this is to make sure that issues can be fully discussed, and different opinions taken on board before a decision is reached. Some more sensitive discussions may be minuted in a 'Confidential Part 2' of the minutes, with only the final decision made publicly available – chairs will make it clear when meeting discussion will not be recorded in open minutes.

Governors are in a position of trust, so please be mindful never to discuss publicly anything you have heard, or that you may have been told and remember that even if we don't agree with a decision, we must recognise it as a corporate decision and support it publicly.

Additional Responsibilities (Governor Roles)

Whilst the committee acts as one and takes joint responsibility for all decisions, all governors will be given responsibilities of their own. This involves learning about a specific area of interest, carrying out governor training and school visits on the subject, monitoring how the school deals with these areas and reporting findings to the rest of the Governing Board.

We currently have governors with a responsibility for Health & Safety, Pupil/Sport Premium, Safeguarding/Child Protection, SEND.

Committee and governor responsibilities are reviewed yearly, and you may be asked if there are any areas which interest you or match your particular skills.

Our Performance

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They report directly to Parliament and are independent and impartial. Ofsted inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and those providing education and skills for learners of all ages. When carrying out a school inspection,

Ofsted follow the Education Inspection Framework. This framework sets out how the general principles and processes of inspection are applied and summarises the main features of school inspections.

Our most recent Ofsted visit was in May 2021. The school was judged as 'Good' and you can access the report here:

<https://www.almondhill.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Ofsted+Reports+and+School+Performance&pid=25>

Performance Data

The Board regularly reviews a number of data sets to see how the school is performing and assesses progress both within school and in comparison, to national data.

- Read our latest data (link on the school website)
- ['Find and Compare Schools in England'](#) to check performance against ours.
- [Analyse School Performance](#) – includes an Inspection Data Summary Report (produced by Ofsted/DfE) that is used by Ofsted to prepare for inspection.

Parents' Association (Friends Of Almond Hill F.O.A.H)

The School is very fortunate to be supported by the Parents' Association, called the Friends Of Almond Hill which runs a number of events to raise valuable funds for the school. These events allow us to raise vital funds each year and to build parental engagement.

Your Commitment

Time Commitment

Being a governor involves more than just taking an interest. Although this is a crucial part of the job, it also takes time. There will be reports, data and associated paperwork to read and feedback on, which we all commit to doing in advance of meetings. Please be aware that the time you give makes a direct difference to pupils, staff and the community. Your fellow governors will expect you to 'share the load'.

If you work, your employer must, by law, allow you reasonable time off work in order to fulfil your role as a governor. It is a good idea to tell them about your role and agree whether any leave will be paid or unpaid. It is worth noting that the development of wider strategic and leadership skills holds marked advantages for employers.

Meeting Preparation

Agendas are always full, and you are expected to play your part in making sure that meetings are effective. Papers will be sent to you via Governor Hub; please read all papers prior to the meeting, prepare questions in advance and carry out the tasks that you have been asked to do in a timely manner. Keeping the school's latest priorities at the forefront of your mind during all your governance activities will help you in your role. These can be found in the School Development Plan which is stored on Governor Hub.

School Visits

You will be expected to make termly school visits to meet staff, get first-hand evidence of how policies are working and learn what it is like to be a pupil here. Visiting will enable you to make informed decisions. This is vital reading before any visits are made. Schools are busy places, and our school day is very tightly timetabled for all staff so do please ensure your visit is planned in advance.

Governors must fill out and submit a visit report after each visit, in accordance with our agreed procedure. Please ensure you do this, as it is evidence of board activity and impact.

The board must work as a team and accept decisions reached by the majority for the benefit of our school. It is vital that process is transparent and inclusive and as such we expect all governors to invite feedback and discussion on their reports and do their best to cascade learning and pass on new information. Never assume that you are the only one who doesn't know something!

The clerk to the Governing Board will add you to our online portal (Governor Hub). This is where we store board documents, communicate outside of meetings and keep a record of meeting dates, attendance and training. Governor Hub has been designed to ensure that governors have the ability to be aware of and up to date with what the rest of the board is doing. It is also a requirement for a board to evidence the impact of what they do; Governor Hub acts as our body of evidence. All governors are responsible for keeping this up to date; all are required to access Governor Hub, reply to communications on the Noticeboard, upload documents and maintain the body of evidence.

Please check that Governor Hub emails are not dropping into your spam folder or you may miss some important information.

Code of Conduct

Our governors are bound by our governor code of conduct which can be found on Governorhub. Please read this for information about our expectations of you. Once read, we ask you to confirm your agreement by signing and returning to our office. Failure to abide by this code of conduct may result in your removal from the Board.

Child Protection

When your appointment is confirmed, the law requires that you declare whether or not you are qualified/disqualified from being a school governor. You will be asked to sign a declaration to this effect. You will also be asked to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Transparency

To ensure all school business is open and transparent, you are required to complete and return a Declaration of Pecuniary (Business) Interests. This will be supplied to you on induction and is then completed annually on Governor Hub. The school is required to publish any Governors' Business interests on its website.

Training

The DfE Governance Handbook states that schools "should set aside budget for ongoing training and development" and that they should "make the most of the resources, guidance and training available to develop their knowledge and skills".

The DfE Competency framework states that everyone on the board should be open to development and be able to link it to the school's strategic aims

Ofsted include governance in their judgement of leadership and management by "evaluating the extent to which those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively".

Training is a vital part of your role and we do hope you will take advantage of any training offered to you. In the interest of keeping the board up to date, and to provide evidence of our commitment to self-improvement, a summary of learnings or action points you feel are needed should be cascaded to the rest of the Board by uploading a report to Governor Hub.

Training that we ask ALL governors to complete: -

- Governor Induction, Safeguarding and PREVENT
- Any courses specific to your individual roles (e.g. chairing, curriculum, finance etc.)
- Courses specific to areas within our school development plan

You are welcome and encouraged to complete face to face courses and online modules. You can browse and book onto face to face training courses via Governor Hub and find instructions on how to login to Modern Governor Online training on Governor Hub. Please note, if you book but don't attend courses without cancelling first, we will be charged a non-attendance fee.

Guidance & Information

The initial stages of being a governor can be overwhelming as there is a lot of information in a short space of time. There is, however, lots of help at hand.

Our School Website

A great way to learn about the school. You can access information, some policies and data from here and keep up to date with what the children have been doing.

School Policies

Our school policies are kept on Governor Hub with some of the statutory policies on the school's website. Policies and procedures are written by the school for the Board to review and adopt. They describe how the school aims to carry out its business and should be the basis of monitoring visits alongside School Development Plan priorities.

The Modern Governor App

New governors are often bewildered by the terms and acronyms in Education. Download your [free Modern Governor app](#), a searchable, cross-referenced, offline glossary for school governance, plus book extracts & the full text of relevant blogs on governance and education.

Induction Checklist

We are committed to providing an induction that is both useful and effective. Please date each step below and contact the school office with any questions.

Prior to 1st Full Board Meeting (FGB)	Date
Meet with the Headteacher (introduction to role, responsibilities, scope of work). (contact office to arrange)	
Complete a DBS check and declaration (contact the school office to arrange)	
Fill in personal details and any business interests on (GovernorHub / form supplied and return to school office)	
Read ' KCSiE Education 2024 ' (confirm on GovernorHub / to the office)	
Read the Governor Code of Conduct (return to the office)	
As soon as possible after 1st FGB	
Carry out Induction training: (Introduction, Safeguarding, PREVENT)	
Carry out an Induction 'Learning Walk' (Guided tour with Headteacher) Complete a report on your 'Learning Walk' and [send via /file on GovernorHub]	
Confirm any specific roles and responsibilities	

Glossary

One of the most difficult things to get to grips with when joining a board of governors is the jargon! Hopefully this glossary will help you but always ask if you aren't sure. There are no silly questions!

Term	Definition
ARBOR	Schools Information and Management System. A computer package to assist schools in managing information on pupils, staff and resources
DfE	Department of Education
EAL	Children for whom English is an additional Language (speaking a different language at home)
ECT	Early Careers Teacher
FGB	Full Governing Board (termly meeting with all members)
FSM	Children entitled to Free School Meals
INSET	In-Service Education and Training – courses/learning for teachers
IOG	Instrument of Government. A document setting out the composition of governing bodies
KS1 – 4	Key stages – the four stages of the National Curriculum: KS1 for pupils aged 5-7; KS2 for 7-11; KS3 for 11-14 and KS4 14-16
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education. The body which arranges, and sets standards for, school inspections
PP (Pupil Premium)	Additional funding for children who have been entitled to free school meals in the last 6 yrs and for families in the armed forces. Used primarily to help close any gaps in results between Pupil Premium Pupils and Non-Pupil Premium Pupils.
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks used for National Curriculum Assessment
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disabilities
SENCO	The teacher responsible for coordinating SEND, EAL & MA provision in school
SLT/SMT	Senior Leadership Team/Senior Management Team (The Head, Assistant and Deputy Head)
SFVS	School's Financial Value Standard. Helps maintained schools and local authorities meet basic standards for good financial health and resource management.

And finally, a note from the Headteacher....

I do hope you will enjoy your time as a school governor and am very grateful for your commitment to the role. Being a governor can be challenging, but I am sure it will be ultimately satisfying, knowing that you are a part of a team working to make a difference for the school and supporting the pupils, staff and other governors.

I know that my staff members will welcome you and am sure that our pupils will inspire and impress you. You can find up to date lists of staff and governors on the school website.

Our School Aims

A copy of our most recent SIP (School Improvement Plan) can be found on Governor Hub. This underpins everything we do. Governance is very much about ensuring our vision and values are fit for purpose, understood and lived by all stakeholders. I do hope you will join me in working to achieve our aims.

Best wishes

Emma Fordham
Headteacher