

Appointment, Induction & Retirement of Governors Policy

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RECRUITMENT

As Trustees of a registered charity, the Governors of Bedales schools are responsible for the selection and appointment of new Governors. This is a legal responsibility that cannot be delegated, although we encourage the Head Master, Bursar, and other senior staff and organisations, such as the Bedales Association, or those who are close to the school, such as parents, to suggest the names of potential candidates. As Charity Trustees, we are aware of the importance of identifying the appropriate mixture of skills and experience that we and our successors need to manage the multi-faceted affairs of a modern school which is also a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLBG), a medium sized business and an important local employer, with some 350 employees.

We devote a good deal of thought to successor planning and keep a register of the mixture of skills and professional backgrounds that we require for our Governing Body. Our aim is to achieve a balanced Board with a core of individuals with educational, legal, accountancy, finance, property management, business and marketing backgrounds. We review this balance regularly, and try to achieve a wide range of professions and backgrounds. We currently have 12 Governors on our Board, although our Governing Instrument specifies that there should be a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15.

There are no ex-officio Governors at the school.

SELECTION

The Clerk to the Governors

The Clerk to the Governors combines the role with that of Bursar. In that capacity, he/she is required to advise and assist the Governors in the exercise of their functions, more details of which are set out below. The Clerk to the Governors plays an important role in assisting with the appointment of new Governors, in arranging briefing and induction programmes at the school and in ensuring that the correct paperwork is sent.

The Initial Stage

When a potential Governor has been identified, who has expressed an interest; he or she will be invited to visit the school and to meet the Headmaster informally, and to have a tour of the school with the Bursar. If the Chairman of Governors is not present at that stage, s/he will probably arrange a separate informal meeting, perhaps in the company of another, experienced Governor. At that meeting, we will briefly describe our strategic vision for the next 3-5 years and the direction in which the Governors see the school moving. Our aim at the informal meeting is to ensure that every prospective Governor has a clear understanding of the commitment expected of him or her, in terms of time and attendance and is given sufficient material about the school that is in the public domain (prospectus, latest ISI Inspection Report, Statutory Accounts and

Annual Return for the previous year) to allow a well-informed judgement to be made before committing themselves to the appointment process. At the informal meeting, we also brief all potential candidates about the range of statutory checks that are required as part of the appointment process.

THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The second step is to invite the prospective Governor to submit a copy of his/her CV under a covering letter to the Chairman of Governors and to the Nomination Committee. Prospective Governors are interviewed by the Nomination Committee which recommends all appointments to the full Governing Body. Care is taken to select Governors who are prepared to serve for a maximum of eight years and prepared to commit the time necessary to get to know the school.

All new appointments are formally recorded in the minutes of the Board, and a formal letter of appointment is sent by the Chairman, which specifies the term of the appointment, the total tenure for a Governor, and, if appropriate, the sub-Committee(s) to which the new Governor has been appointed.

The Bursar in his/her role as Clerk to Governors at Bedales Schools obtains enhanced CRB disclosures on all new Governors and asks for evidence of their entitlement to work in the UK, and that they are not disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee or Company Director, for example by virtue of an undischarged bankruptcy, before their appointment is confirmed. *From November 2010:* all new Governors will additionally need to be registered with the ISA by the Bursar before starting at the school. Existing Governors will not be affected until 2011. *If the new Governor is also appointed as a Company Director:* a completed Appointment Form will be sent to Companies House to register the appointment. All the paperwork is handled by the Bursar/Clerk to the Governors.

THE INDUCTION PROCESS

Once a Governor has been appointed, the Bursar/ Clerk to the Governors will send him/her an information pack on the school that supplements the information that was provided at the preliminary selection stage (see above). This includes:

- The Governing Instrument
- List of fellow Governors and their contact details
- The terms of reference and membership of the sub-committees
- Dates of meetings for the ensuing year
- Minutes of most recent meetings
- AGBIS/ISC “Guidelines for Governors”
- The Charity Commission’s CC3 – The Essential Trustee: What You Need to Know”
- School staff list

- The School Development Plan
- The School's Risk register
- The School's Conflict of Interest Policy
- The School's Register of Interests
- The School Calendar and list of functions
- A list of School policies

The new Governor should be invited to complete and return a declaration of interests form and a register of interests document (which will be re-issued annually to the Governing Body).

Child Protection

All new Governors attend a formal session at the school on child protection as an important part of their induction. The session, which is led by the school's Child Protection Officer, covers the legal position on child protection, the Governors' responsibilities, handling allegations of abuse, including allegations involving a member of staff, dealing with bullying (including cyberbullying), the school's arrangements for checking staff, temporary staff, and volunteers.

Governors who will become involved in the recruitment of staff are asked to complete the National Learning and Skills Council's (NCSL's) public online training package "Safer Recruitment".

Familiarisation Visits

New Governors are invited to spend a day at the school and to meet the key personalities and to attend lessons in order to gain an insight into the curriculum and to meet groups of pupils.

Formal Training

The AGBIS one-day training course is strongly recommended to all new Governors. Details of other training courses and seminars for Governors organised by AGBIS and others are circulated regularly and Governors are encouraged to attend, where possible.

DUTIES OF GOVERNORS

Governors' duties are to protect the assets of the school, to promote the achievement of its charitable objectives and to ensure that it is diligently and well run. They are expected to exercise independent judgement with reasonable care and diligence. They have to act fairly and in a manner that protects the reputation of the school. It is their duty to keep in mind the interests of pupils, staff and parents, as well as that of the

community. They make sure that the school complies with the law, is solvent and complies with the financial regulations for charities and companies. It must be adequately insured against possible public and employers' liability (including Governors' liability) claims. Governors and Directors have a duty to declare any personal interest in any transaction or arrangement proposed by the school, to avoid conflicts of interest and not to accept benefits from interested third parties.

The school's Governing Instrument covers:

- The election of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman
- The election of the Chairmen and membership of all the sub-Committees
- The circumstances in which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman could be removed from office
- The role of the Clerk
- The constitution of a quorum
- Voting procedures

These are onerous duties, which cannot be properly discharged in one meeting each term. This has necessitated the creation of a number of Governors' sub-committees, to whom specific tasks have been delegated in their terms of reference.

Role of the Clerk to the Governors

The Clerk to the Governors is responsible for assisting the Governors in the proper performance of the following responsibilities:

- The school's investment strategy, including its approach to risk and the selection of appropriate investment vehicles
- The selection of professional advisers, including Lawyers, Accountants and Bankers
- The tendering or re-tendering for all contracts worth in excess of £50K a year, where it is expected that a re-tendering exercise takes place at 3 yearly intervals.
- Approving the purchase of capital items costing more than the level specifically delegated by the full Board.
- Approving expenditure on buildings and maintenance costing more than the amount specifically delegated by the full Board.
- Ensuring that the Governors discharge their responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the governing instrument.

It is his/her duty to compile and produce agendas, papers and reports and minutes of meetings, to attend meetings and to speak as necessary at meetings of the Board and its Sub-Committees in order to enable the Governors to monitor of the exercise of the operational powers which have been delegated.

LEGAL LIABILITIES OF TRUSTEES/GOVERNORS/DIRECTORS

The legal liabilities of the Governors are detailed in the Articles of Association.

Insurance

Governors bear significant legal responsibilities and indemnity insurance to cover the liability of members is in place with further details in the Articles of Association.

RETIREMENT

Governors are normally appointed for a term of eight years.