

## **Grayshott Primary School**

### **School Based Induction of New Governors**

#### **1. Why School Based Induction?**

When a new governor has been elected, appointed or co-opted to **Grayshott Primary School** governing body they will need information about the school and guidance on how the governing body operates. We are best placed to provide this information.

It can be hard for a new governor arriving at a strange venue, having to find their way to the meeting room and then being faced with a group of people they have never met before. As well as this they are not sure what is expected of them and they may be unsure of the role of the governing body in the school. Add to this the use of language which is unfamiliar to them and we have a very uncomfortable situation for the newcomer to deal with. This is a common experience for many new governors.

On the other hand some new governors may be over-confident, believing that their professional expertise - for example in education, finance or personnel - can be applied without any need for adaptation to the regulations and procedures that apply to school governance.

It might not always be possible for a new governor to attend the Governor Services' induction course for new governors prior to their first governing body meeting. It is therefore vitally important that new governors receive some induction to the governing body, its role in the school and an outline of what is expected of them before they are faced with attending their initial meeting.

For the governing body to be effective we need all our governors contributing fully at meetings as quickly as possible. The governing body therefore needs to help new governors settle into their role and make sure they feel part of the team from the start of their term of office.

*The positive benefits of providing a structured, school based induction programme for all new governors will be felt by everyone.*

- The quality and effectiveness of the work of the governing body in the school will be enhanced.
- It will facilitate a more rapid integration of the new governor into the governing body and assist in quickly establishing the team dynamic.
- It will allow the new governor to gain confidence and therefore become a fully contributing member of the team quickly.
- It will minimise the risks of inappropriate questions, responses and behaviour, and the embarrassment which these inevitably bring.
- It will assist in keeping everyone's motivation high.
- It should ensure meetings continue to be focused and to the point.
- In the long term, the time spent in providing school based induction should positively influence the retention of knowledgeable and committed governors for the school.

The school based induction does not cover the same information and training undertaken at the HCC Governor services' induction and both elements should be undertaken by a new governor.

#### **2. Who is responsible for providing school based induction?**

Once a new governor is appointed following all the correct procedures, provision has to be made to establish an induction procedure. It is a role well suited to the Training Liaison Governor (TLG), but can be shared with other governors.

The TLG (or governor undertaking the induction ) should be advised as soon as new governors come on to the governing body as they will need to make contact with them to discuss their

development needs and let them know what training is available. The chairman will write a letter of welcome and this can be used to let them know who will be responsible for their induction. That person should then contact the new governor concerned with an offer to meet them at a mutually convenient time and place.

At this meeting the following issues will be covered:

- How the governing body is organised and how they work in partnership with the school
- Outline the governing body's expectations of its members and the degree of formality which exists in meetings
- Pass on relevant documents and explain the way in which the governing body operates
- The Role and Commitment of Governors document and sign the undertaking
- Allow the new governor to ask questions about school governance, the governing body and the school.
- The difference between the governors role and management of the school (strategic role against the operational day to day management)
- A tour of the school to meet the headteacher, staff and pupils. Make governor aware of the agreed practice of school visits by governors
- Access to the school website and governance area that holds documents and policies.
- Declarations of Pecuniary Interest
- Access to HCC Governor services and training programmes
- How to respond to communications by parents or the media

Once the initial meetings have taken place the TLG (or appointed governor) will continue to act as a mentor for the first few months thus providing a source of help and advice. During this period they should also be working with the new governor on a training plan. This will help the new governor become an effective member of the team as quickly as possible and also minimise their need to ask lots of questions in meetings. Furthermore, it may avoid the new governor making inappropriate comments in their early days as a member of the governing body.

### **3. The school based induction package**

**Welcome:** on appointment to the governing body a letter of welcome will be sent from the chairman to the new member of the team. The letter should outline the initial induction procedures as detailed above.

**A Guide to the Law for School Governors** is the main reference book for governors. It details the governing body's legal responsibilities and provides guidance on how these may be fulfilled. It is available at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/governance/b0065507/gttl/>

**Governing body documents and materials:** to avoid putting off the new governor before they have begun, it may be appropriate for the mentor to provide this information over a period of time. It would also be helpful to point out that the contents of these documents and materials do not need to be committed to memory. They are provided to form a useful reference resource, which can be used as the need arises. They can be provided in paper format or the governor shown where they are available on the school website.

- a. Minutes/papers from previous governing body meetings and the agenda (with accompanying paperwork) for the next meeting.** Provide background information on current business.
- b. Governing body's main policy documents**
- c. Latest Governors' Annual Report to Parents.**

- d. The Governing Body's Handbook.** This will outline the roles, responsibilities, expectations, structure and procedures of the governing body. The handbook will contain the following information:
- Value statement
  - The role of governors
  - Governors' areas of interest
  - Governors' duties and responsibilities
  - Committee structures, delegated powers and procedures
  - Working party structures and procedures
  - The role of the chairman, vice chairman, committee chairman and clerk
  - Training information, requirements and the role of the TLG
  - Safeguarding of children
  - List of school policies
- e. Grayshott Primary School's instrument of government** should be provided by Governor Services in the welcome pack it sends to all new governors. This document shows the composition of the governing body.
- f. Information about the governing body**  
**List of governors** giving details of:
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses
  - Types of governor and terms of office.
  - Special roles - chairman, vice chairman, clerk, special educational needs governor, TLG.
  - Links with the school by class, subject area, year group etc.
  - List of committees with membership details.
- g. List of the dates, times and venues for future full governing body, committee and working party meetings.**
- h. Information on recent whole governing body training events** with papers supplied.
- i. Information about the school.**
- **School prospectus.**
  - **School handbook:** this will provide information on the structure and organisation within the school, as well as lists of staff and their areas of responsibility.
  - **School Improvement Plan:** the mentor should discuss the plan with the new governor and provide information on how it was developed, the part governors played in the process and what their on-going responsibilities are in relation to monitoring its implementation.
  - **School's latest OFSTED report and Local Authority monitoring reports.**
  - **School newsletters**

### ***Training and resources***

It is expected that Governors undertake training to ensure they can effectively fulfil their roles on the governing body and in committee. The TLG will regularly provide all governors with a copy of the termly training programme which outlines all events taking place in the current or forthcoming term. They will also provide details on how to register for training.

If members of the governing body are invited to attend teacher in-service training days at the school this should be explained to the new governor together with the purpose of such events.

Information and support is available from Hampshire County Council - Governor Services, Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service, Financial Services and Personnel Services.

The Governor Services Website is a source of useful and up to date information  
[www.hants.gov.uk/education/governors/](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/governors/)

### **At the new governor's first meeting**

All members of the governing body should try to make a new governor's first meeting a welcoming and positive experience. The TLG or mentor should meet and take them into the meeting room.

**Welcome and introductions:** the chairman will welcome the new governor and allow time for introductions. It can be helpful if members say who they are, their length of service, the type of governor they are, which committees they serve on and possibly something about their background. It is helpful if each person has a name card for the first few meetings to assist the new governor in putting names to faces.

**Participation in the meeting:** the chairman will try to involve the new governor in the meeting where appropriate. They should try to ensure that the new governor does not needlessly take up valuable meeting times with requests for information or with issues that have already been dealt with by the governing body. They should refer them to the relevant documentation or offer to explain the point after the meeting.

### **Annual review**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the governing body will meet privately once a year with each governor to review their effectiveness, attendance, contribution and future role on the governing body.

For discussion at F&GP April/May 2013

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