



Shavington Academy Governance Policy



Governance leaders have the following core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the academy
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the academy and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the academy and making sure money is well spent

Governance Leaders ensure accountability, by:

- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to academy self-evaluation

As individuals of the Local Governing Body we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the Headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the academy. Our actions within the academy and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the academy well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in academy activities.
- We will visit the academy, with all visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.

- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the academy website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside the academy.
- We will always exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding academy business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the academy's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the academy as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example

Governors' Charter

The Local Governing Body of Shavington Academy is committed to working in partnership with the Trust Board, Headteacher and staff to provide the best possible education for our children.

Shavington Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its children and expects all staff, governors, trustees and volunteers to share in this commitment.

The Governing Body will:

1. Respect the professional expertise of the Headteacher and staff, and the fact that responsibility for the day to day running of the academy rests with the Headteacher.
2. Ensure that meetings are chaired effectively, so that the Chair:
 - a. Keeps to the agenda
 - b. Paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance
 - c. Draws on all members for contribution
 - d. Keeps discussion to the point
3. Encourage all governors to contribute equally.
4. Support the training and development needs of all governors.
5. Support leadership development and succession planning within the academy, through education improvement partnerships and more widely within the Local Authority.
6. Ensure that its decision-making processes are transparent.

The Headteacher will:

1. Respect governors as volunteers who bring additional skills, experiences and perspectives, and value their contribution.

2. Work openly with the governing body and provide clear, concise and relevant information on which the Local Governing Body can base decisions.
3. Promptly provide any reasonable information requested by the Local Governing Body.
4. Ensure appropriate paperwork is available to governors with meeting agendas.
5. Be approachable and accept governors' role of 'critical friend'.
6. Enable all governors to become involved in the life of the academy.
7. Contribute to the induction, training and development of governors.

Expectations of individual governors are that they will:

1. Respect confidentiality and support corporate decisions even where they go against personal opinions.
2. Act and take decisions that are in the best interests of the academy and not those of the self, individuals or groups.
3. Regularly attend meetings and play an active part.
4. Where this is impossible, send apologies to the Clerk to the Governors or to the Chair of the meeting.
5. Be prepared to contribute personal skills through involving themselves in the work of appropriate committees and/or working parties.
6. Prepare for meetings so that they are well informed, having as a minimum read all the papers sent out with the agenda.
7. Respect the points of view of other governors even where these differ from their own.
8. Raise concerns with the Headteacher between meetings in a positive and constructive way.
9. Respect the guidelines laid down for governor visits to academy.
10. Demonstrate their commitment by getting to know the academy and becoming involved in academy life and activities.
11. Support the academy with parents and in the community.
12. Take a proactive approach to their training and development.

Governors' Visits to the Academy

Without a good knowledge of the academy, it is impossible to govern effectively. In order to assist and inform their governance, governors at Shavington Academy visit the academy on a regular basis, insofar as their own commitments allow. This may include, but need not be restricted to:

- Attendance at Open Evenings, etc., as the role of governor.
- Attendance at sports days or at other sports events.
- Attendance at celebrations such as awards ceremonies.
- Attendance at and/or participation in school council meetings or school council committee meetings.
- Assisting in any areas in which they might be individually skilled.
- Contributing to interview conferences and other activities.

Governors with special responsibilities will also visit the academy as required to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively. This will include governors with responsibility for:

- Special Educational Needs
- Pupil Premium
- Safeguarding children
- Mental Health

When visiting the academy, governors will agree in advance a mutually convenient time and duration for the visit with the Headteacher and (where appropriate) other members of staff affected and will make every effort to minimise any disruption caused by their visit. Throughout visits, governors and staff will do all they can to further positive and mutually supportive relationships between staff and governors. Governors who attend Curriculum Team Meetings, Learning Walks or other meetings as a Link Governor will feed back via a short follow up report, at the next available Local Governing Body Meeting. Reports should be sent to the Clerk, who will include it as part of the next Local Governing Body Meeting agenda.

Governors accept that the day-to-day management of the academy is the responsibility of the Headteacher. Included within the Headteacher's responsibility is that of ensuring pupils receive high quality teaching, and governors accept that it is not appropriate for them to conduct visits with a view to forming judgements on the quality of teaching and learning within the academy. However, governors should have access to monitoring information regarding the quality of teaching and learning within the academy.

When visiting the academy during the school day, governors will be aware of safeguarding and confidentiality issues in their interactions with pupils.

The Headteacher and staff accept that, while governors do not have an automatic right to enter the academy, it is appropriate for governors to do so and will not unreasonably refuse a request made to visit the academy. The Headteacher is committed to involving governors in the life of the academy and will provide them with sufficient information about academy events and activities to facilitate this.

Social Media/Networking

This section is applicable to all governors of Shavington Academy and covers all uses of social networking applications which are used privately. As academy email accounts are subject to Freedom of Information legislation, this policy also applies to external email communication.

Aims

To support all governors by establishing clear guidelines on the proper use of social media so that:

- the academy is not exposed to legal challenge;
- the reputation of the academy is not adversely affected;
- Governors do not put themselves in a vulnerable position;
- Governors understand how information provided via social networking applications can be representative of the academy; and
- the use of social media does not impact on the academy.

Principles

The academy recognises that many governors and trustees make use of social media in a personal capacity and, in the majority of cases, this is uncomplicated and trouble-free. Whilst the academy respects a governor's right to a private life and has no wish to interfere with this, when using such sites governors must consider the potential impact it could have on their professional position, their own reputation and that of the academy. The following identifies how a governor's personal life and work life can start to overlap.

- By identifying themselves as governors of the academy, i.e. adding the academy name on profiles, the perception of users will be that governors are representative of the academy. It is therefore important that governors are mindful of the professional standards that are expected of them. Anything posted, including innocent remarks,

have the potential to escalate into something that could potentially damage the image and reputation of the academy, or undermine its work. The originating comment may be traced back to a governor of the academy and, even if they have not been involved in the latter stages of the comments, they may find themselves subject to a disciplinary investigation.

- Individuals making complaints search the web for information about persons involved in their case – finding social networking sites, blogs and photo galleries that could give fuel to their concerns or help them to identify personal information about them.
- Journalists increasingly use the web to research stories and may reprint photos or comments that they find.
- Law firms research social networking sites as a matter of course in preparing divorce, private law children's cases and other court proceedings.
- Some organisations also look on social networking sites to find out information about people applying for jobs.

Social Media

Definition of social media

For the purpose of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. The term social media refers to a number of online networking platforms such as:

- blogs (written, video, podcasts), e.g. WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr;
- micro-blogging websites, e.g. Twitter;
- social networks, e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn;
- forums/message boards; and
- content-sharing sites, e.g. TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

Governors should be aware that there are many more examples of social media and this is a constantly changing area. Governors should follow the guidelines outlined in this policy in relation to any social media that they use.

Personal use of social media

Governors are not allowed to access social media websites for their personal use from the academy's computers or devices at any time. This includes laptop/palm-top/hand-held computers or devices (e.g. mobile phones) distributed by the academy for work purposes.

The academy understands that governors may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops and palm-top and hand-held devices, to access social media websites while they are in the building. However, in accordance with the academy's current rules and regulations, governors are not allowed to access such devices (e.g. mobile phones) for private purposes during visits to the academy (unless there is an emergency).

Social media in a personal capacity

The academy recognises that many governors make use of social media in a personal capacity. However, a governor's online profile, e.g. the name of a blog or a Twitter name, must not contain the academy's name. Furthermore, while they are not acting on behalf of the academy, governors must be aware that they can damage the academy if they are

recognised as being one of the academy governors. Any communications that governors make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

- a. bring the academy into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising the academy;
 - criticising or arguing with management, colleagues, children or their families;
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations; or
 - posting images that are inappropriate, for example, photographs of themselves or colleagues taken at work or links to inappropriate content;
- b. breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - revealing any information owned by the academy; or
 - giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or child) or an organisation, e.g. the academy or the Local Authority;
- c. abuse their position of trust when working with children/young people, for example by:
 - contacting children or their families through social networking sites unless the reason for this contact has been clearly and firmly established by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors;
 - accepting any requests to become a named friend on a social networking site made by a child/young person; or
 - uploading any photographs or video containing images of children/young people for whom the employee holds a position of trust unless in line with academy procedures;
- d. breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else's images or written content without permission;
 - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or
- e. do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
 - using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the academy);
 - using social media to exclude other individuals; or
 - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive.

Security and identity theft

Governors should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if the governor is part of a "network". Governors should not assume that their entries on any website will remain private. Governors should never send abusive or defamatory messages.

Governors must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords. In addition, governors should:

- ensure that no information is made available, or referred to, that could provide a person with unauthorised access to the academy and/or any confidential information;

- inform the Chair of Trustees or Governors immediately if they suspect that their personal site has been compromised or accessed by an unauthorised person;
- refrain from recording any confidential information regarding the academy on any social networking website;
- check their security settings on social networking site so that information is only visible to the people who they want to see it;
- put their name into an internet search engine to see what people can find out about them; and
- help friends and colleagues out by letting them know if they spot things on their pages that might be misconstrued.

Defamatory statements

Material posted on a site may be defamatory if it contains something about the academy's trustees/governors, partners, children or other individuals that a governor may come into contact with during the course of their work that is not true and undermines the academy's reputation. For example, photographs or cartoons that may have been doctored to associate the academy or its governors with a discreditable act.

Libellous statements

Material posted on a site may be considered libellous if it is in permanent form and directly or indirectly clearly identifies the academy or one of its governors or children with material that damages their reputation. Governors should always use their own judgment but should bear in mind:

- that information that they share through social networking sites is still subject to copyright, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Safeguarding legislation;
- the Code of Conduct; and
- other relevant academy policies (e.g. Dignity at Work, Whistleblowing Procedure, Equality Policy and other policies related to Governance).

Disciplinary Action

All volunteers are required to adhere to this policy. Governors should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to the academy trustees terminating your position as a volunteer at the academy.

Induction for New Governors

The Trust Board, Local Governing Body and Headteacher believe it is essential that all new governors receive a comprehensive induction package covering a broad range of issues and topics. There is a commitment to ensure that the new governors are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence. The process is seen as an investment, leading to more effective governance and retention of governors.

Purpose

- To welcome new governors to the Local Governing Body and enable them to meet other members.
- To encourage new governors to visit the academy to experience its atmosphere and understand its ethos.
- To meet the Headteacher, staff and pupils.
- To explain the partnership between the Headteacher, Trust Board and Local Governing Body.
- To explain the role and responsibilities of governors.

- To give background material on the academy and current issues.
- To allow new governors to ask questions about their role and/or the academy.
- To explain how the Local Governing Body works

Procedure

1. When Governorship is confirmed, the Governance Professional makes contact and informs Head and Chair.
2. New governor asked to complete DBS check and declaration with Business Manager.
3. Head to arrange Learning Walk with a member of the Leadership Team.
4. Leadership Team member to provide informal briefing on the academy, explaining the way it works, the current issues facing it, the number of children on roll and the trend in pupil numbers, the catchment area from which the children are drawn, an explanation of how classes are organised and how the curriculum is delivered, a list of staff (both teaching and non-teaching).
5. Governance Professional to provide copy of academy prospectus (including: term dates, examinations).
6. Governance Professional provides informal briefing on the role and responsibilities expected from governors, including the training and learning that is available.
7. Governance Professional arranges for new governor to complete register of interests form and ICT security agreement.
8. New governors are expected to familiarise themselves with the academy policies via the academy website.
9. New governors are required to read the academy's Ofsted and data dashboard on the Ofsted website.
10. Direct to the DfE's 'A Competency Framework for Governance'

Information Pack for new governors

Dates of meetings for coming year

List of governors and email addresses

Committee membership

School Improvement & Sustainability Plan

Provided with Shavington Academy email account

Given access to Governor SharePoint

Approved by Shavington Academy Trustees

Signed: 

Headteacher

Signed: 

Chair of Trustees

Date: 05.12.2025

Review Date: Autumn 2026