

GOVERNING BODY PROCEDURES AND CONVENTIONS

BRANSTON COMMUNITY ACADEMY

This document should be read in association with the Instrument of Government, the Funding Agreement and Articles of Association and Memorandum for Branston Academy Trust.

Branston Academy Trust has delegated the strategic management of the Academy to governors/directors/trustees who operate according to the following procedures and conventions.

GENERAL PATTERN OF MEETINGS

The Governing Body and its three main specialist committees (Curriculum & Staffing, Finance & Resources and Standards & Specialism) each meet once a term, and at other times if there is a need. A Personnel Committee (which serves the function of the statutory “staff committee”) meets at least once a year to resolve individual staffing matters other than appointment to advertised posts. The Standing Committee (composed of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body, The Chairmen of the Committees, the Principal and one other Governor chosen by the full Governing Body) normally meets once a month in term time. The Chairman and the Principal meet informally on a regular basis. In addition to these meetings for ongoing business, there are the statutory appeal committees for admissions and exclusions, which meet as necessary and the statutory appeal committee. The Governing Body may also set up other committees from time to time.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Principal are ex-officio members of all Committees. Governors are asked to serve on two Committees, making a minimum of nine meetings a year. This is in addition to meetings such as the approval and presentation of the Annual Parents’ Report. Governors may also be asked to participate in the visiting Governor rota. In addition to that, Governors are asked to show a supportive presence where possible at school events such as Open Evenings, dramatic and musical and artistic shows and exhibitions, reunion evenings etc. Governors are also asked to be ready to participate in interviews for appointments etc. even if not serving on the specialist Staffing and Curriculum Committee. Taken together, all these duties and opportunities imply a dozen or twenty

contacts with the school each year, most of them of about 2 or 3 hours duration. This is a considerable time demand.

However, the Governing Body at Branston Community Academy also sees education as a worthwhile, even joyous enterprise, and hopes Governors will find the task of discharging their functions an important, but also optimistic, rewarding and enjoyable service.

APPROACH TO THE ROLE

The Branston Community Academy Governing Body sees its role as strategic. It governs rather than manages. It is particularly concerned with broad policy and directions and although it becomes in certain defined cases a court of final appeal and although it is able to consider any matter at all, brought to it through the proper channels, in general it is not concerned with matters of detail and individual happenings except as examples of strategy or policy.

DELEGATED POWERS

The Full Governing Body has many powers. Most of these are most efficiently and effectively discharged through delegation to the professional management and to Committees of Governors.

The Principal, representing the senior professional management of the Academy has, unless otherwise stipulated by the law or by previous Governing Body policy, full delegated powers to act, then report. He also has the important responsibility not only of responding to issues raised by the Governing Body, but also of actively bring to it a continuing professional analysis of current and future strategy and policy, to aid the Governing Body in its decision-making. The partnership between the professional management and the lay Governorship of the institution is especially evident in this two way identification of strategic policy.

COMMITTEE POWERS, REMITS AND CONVENTIONS

Committee Powers

The Full Governing Body has, in the interests of debate, and to avoid excessive call on Governors' time, delegated its powers to Committees wherever possible. There are some limits to this (e.g. the very act of delegation to committees) but except in those instances the Committees do not recommend, they actively decide, on behalf of the Governors, within their

remit. Since the Full Governing Body remains accountable for its Committees' decisions, Committee Chairmen report their decision to full Governing Body - usually by presenting Minutes of the last Committee meeting. Committees should have a week's notice of meetings and will have an agenda and minutes. The Committee Chairman is responsible for the drawing up of an agenda, in consultation with the Principal (see also Standing Committee).

Committee Membership, Chairmanship, Quorum

The Chairmen of Committees, like the Chairman of the Governing Body, are elected annually at the first normal meeting of the Committee. Like the Chairman of Governors, committee Chairs have a casting vote in their Committees and have (within legal constraints) delegated power to act on behalf of the Committee, after consultation and agreement with the Principal and Chairman of Governors. Any such actions will be reported to the Governing Body. Before the first meeting of each year, the Standing Committee will, after seeking individual preferences, provisionally allocated membership across Committees so as to ensure a balance of numbers. These allocations will be presented for adoption by Full Governing Body. Until such adoption Committees may conduct business with pre-existing membership. The Governing Body appoints reserves to the discipline, admissions, staffing and staffing appeals committees, in case of difficulty with quoracy. In cases where a decision is needed, but insufficient members of the Committee to form a quorum are available the nominated reserves will be asked to serve. Beyond that, the Chairman is empowered to ask any eligible Governor to join the Committee in order to conduct urgent necessary business.

Unless otherwise stated the quorum for a committee is three. (See Articles of Association and the Funding Agreement).

Governors may attend other specialist Committees than those of which they are members (and may participate in the discussions but not vote), if the Committee Chairman is informed in advance of such attendance and gives approval.

The Governing Body and Committees may invite non-Governors to attend, for example to give specialist information. The convention is that the Vice-Principals normally attend Full Governing Body and at least one attends the specialist Committee dealing with matters particularly relevant to his/her sphere of duties.

THE CURRICULUM AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

This Committee has delegated powers, within legal constraints, to decide matters concerning the Curriculum and staffing of the Academy.

Each year this Committee receives a presentation, with debate, on the following year's curriculum plan, and also the corresponding staffing plan, after which it needs to decide on an establishment figure for the coming year and discuss in general any associated strategies to achieve the required quantity and quality of staff (i.e. the right number in the necessary areas). During the year the Committee will receive updates on major curriculum and staffing developments and receives and decides upon recommendations from the Principal on the general pattern of allowances within the Academy. Matters concerning individual members of staff must, for legal reasons, be decided upon by a small group (see Personnel Committee). The Committee may also receive reports and make determinations as required (and where the Academy has powers) relating to the Community aspects of the Academy (e.g. Library, Nursery).

Appointments

On appointments, the Committee members are on the priority list for requests to participate in interviews for appointments or promotions, but any Governor may be approached if there is a need, and may make known to the Committee Chairman a particular interest in an appointment.

For senior posts, two or three Governors might be asked to attend. (Special arrangements must be made for appointment of a Principal or a Vice-Principal and the number of Governors involved would be likely to be larger). For other full-time, permanent posts one (or two) Governor(s) might be asked. The Principal has the general delegated power to appoint on behalf of the Governing Body.

In the case of the internal award of allowances within the pattern already agreed by the Governors, the Committee or its Chairman will agree with the Principal on whether there is a need for direct Governor involvement, depending on the size of the allowance and the extent of competition.

Teacher Associations and the Governing Body

The Governing Body has already formulated its policy, (see Appendix B) which is that consultation with all staff, and Teacher Associations, is in the first instance a matter for the internal management, with whom all matters must be first raised by individuals or through their representatives.

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

This Committee has delegated power, within legal constraints, for all matters concerning the maintenance and development of buildings, for financial matters, including the creation of the annual budget and its subsequent monitoring (see also the role of the Standing Committee). It makes recommendations on banking arrangements and ensures that financial regulations are observed. At Branston the curriculum, its development and achievement is seen as primary, and while the Curriculum and Staffing and Finance and Resources Committees work together, the work of the Finance and Resources Committee is to assure itself that proper costing of curriculum and staffing plans has been done, and to ensure that resources are not exceeded. It does not itself make the curriculum or educational policy which cause expenditure. The Committee receives reports on the Finance and Resources each term, and annually discusses and decides upon a draft budget, which must be approved by the Full Governing Body. Within the framework of the approved budget, Academy Financial Regulations and any Governing Body guidelines on particular matters, the Principal has delegated power to spend as necessary, and report. The Committee remit extends to finance and resource issues arising from the Community aspects of the programme.

STANDARDS AND SPECIALISM COMMITTEE

This Committee has delegated powers, within legal constraints, to consider and decide policy matters relating to the monitoring of performance and standards and the progress and development of the Academy specialism.

In particular, the Committee will receive annual reports from the Principal and/or senior post-holders on the Academy's self-evaluation of overall performance. It will also be the vehicle through which the Governing Body is made aware of the nature of the processes of review and self-review the Academy has adopted, and/or those to which it must respond (e.g. OFSTED or LEA inspection/monitoring procedures).

STANDING COMMITTEE

This Committee has several functions. It discusses any general issue it considers concerning the well-being of the Academy and can act as a Steering Committee for business, directing issues to the agenda of specialist committees or the Full Governing Body. It reacts, where necessary, to current issues it feels need a response before an appropriate Full or Committee meeting is held; it receives reports from the Principal on action he has taken on issues which he feels significant enough to raise at once with the Governing Body. It receives monitoring reports on the budget in between meetings of the Finance and Resources Committee. The Standing Committee has delegated powers to act on behalf of the Governing Body in any area where a decision is necessary before the next meeting of the appropriate Governing Body group. Such decisions are reported to the next meeting of the Governing Body.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Whereas general policy is decided by Curriculum and Staffing or Full Governing Body, as appropriate, this Committee resolves individual cases of pay, discipline, grievance, dismissal or redundancy, since the Curriculum and Staffing Committee may be attended by too many members to allow, should it ever prove necessary, proper appeal procedures to operate. The Personnel Committee membership consists of the Chairman of Governors, the Chairman of the Curriculum and Staffing Committee and one other elected annually. Except where otherwise stipulated by law, the quorum is two. The Committee will after receiving recommendations from the Principal who attends the Committee as adviser, resolve all matters relating to individuals. This committee therefore also acts as the statutory Staff Dismissal Committee where required.

In case there is a need to hear an appeal, the Governing Body appoints a panel to hear it, consisting of Governors not involved in the original decision, and at least equal in number to those who were.

STATUTORY AND APPEAL COMMITTEES

(See also Instrument and Governing Body regulations and Branston Community Academy policies on grievance, discipline, employment protection, consultation)

Any matters relating to individual student admissions, or to exclusions of a kind which require Governing Body involvement are dealt with by the Admissions Committee and the Student Discipline Committee each of three members elected or appointed annually (except that the Principal is ex-officio of the three Admission Committee members). There must also be a staff committee of three members to deal, when required, with individual cases of staff discipline or dismissal. The Academy Personnel Committee serves this function, as well as dealing with individual cases of pay or grievance.

APPEAL COMMITTEES

There must be arrangements for a corresponding Appeal Committee. These will normally be established at the first Full Governing Body meeting of each school year (previous committees will operate until this is done). The Admission Appeal Committee is appointed by the Local Authority of people who are not members of the Governing body unless the Governing Body chooses to appoint its own independent committee (where again Governing Body members would not be eligible). The Staffing Appeals Committee will consist of at least three members, elected annually, with reserves.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

The Committees are the workhorses of the Governing Body, and they are important. The Full Governing Body is accountable for all decisions they take on its behalf. Members of Governing Bodies have no powers as individuals, except the power to put matters on the agenda of an appropriate meeting. Although the Chairman of Governors, Committee Chairmen and the Principal, do have powers to act alone (and report), they are always acting ex-officio, not as individuals.

This fact is a useful protection for individual Governors. If for example Governors find themselves asked to “do something about X”, it is perfectly correct to respond with an assurance that the matter will be referred, and that the Governor will ensure a reply; but it is not necessary, and not proper, to offer to play the role of judge, or ombudsman. The Governing Body (or its committees) do that.

Strategies for raising policy issues/dealing with complaints

The normal route is via the agenda in the case of broad policy issues. If not known, information on the current policy position can usually be ascertained from the Principal or relevant Chairman, who can be asked to place the matter on an agenda.

In the case of complaints please refer the complainant direct to the Academy in the first instance (or to the Chairman of Governors if the complaint concerns a Governor). Most complaints are not matters of policy and most are satisfactorily dealt with once discussion with the Academy is established. Individual Governors should not try to resolve the complaint or give the impression that is their role, but they can offer themselves as a point of contact to be used if the matter is not resolved. It is helpful if Governors who have referred complainants can contact the Academy to say that they have done so, so the Academy knows, and in any case they will want to follow the progress of the complaint and learn what the response is.

Equality, Loyalty and Confidentiality

Ex-officio roles aside, all Governors have equal powers, not as individual governors, but as members of a powerful corporate body. Each has special responsibility to the whole community, not to any one section. Governors are not delegates, but individuals drawn from various groups in the relevant community.

All Governors also have responsibility to the Governing Body itself, and the Academy, and obviously should respect the usual conventions of loyalty and discretion. For example, they support the Academy in public and they should be prepared to support policies they may have argued, even voted against. Outsiders should not be able to ascertain, except where minuted, which Governors said what in discussion. In short individual Governors should support each other and the Academy in good times and in bad.