



## Thought Piece: Governor Induction



## Governor Induction

It's always an exciting time when new Governors join the Board. They bring fresh ideas, new skills and a new way of thinking. They challenge the status quo and question why we do what we do. But it can also be frustrating for experienced Governors. For new Governors who are not from education or the public sector, the protocols and bureaucracy involved can be challenging and if new Governors do not follow existing protocols, this can cause tensions for experienced Governors.

If we liken governance to industry, when new employees start a new job there will be an onboarding process, a process which gives new starters a thorough introduction to their job role and the Company.

Within governance, this is called the Governor Induction and it is critical that this is done effectively if new Governors are going to add value to the Board quickly and utilise the skills that they have. It is important that they feel part of the team and are not made to feel inadequate due to their lack of knowledge or that they try and do too much too quickly without sufficient background information about the job role.

So what does effective Induction look like? Well, there are various processes and it is a good idea to have to give them a check sheet so they can tick off when they have completed tasks. This way they will feel engaged about their own induction and it is not just a 'done to' process.

The first task would be to assign a 'Buddy' to the new Governor. This would be an experienced Governor who would be a first point of contact, somebody who could check in with the new Governor regularly, who sits next to the new Governor to give pointers about what is going on in meetings.

Next we start to think about the legal documentation. Has the new Governor seen, read and signed the Code of Conduct? Have they given all documents to the School Bursar so their DBS can be completed? Has the new Governor given information about any conflicts of interest? Have they given all their personal details so Get Information About Schools can be completed?

Now we can consider documents about how Governance works in general terms. They should be signposted to the Governance Handbook, the Competency Framework and in Academies, the Academies Financial Handbook. These are easily found on Google, so quite easy for the Chair to drop the new Governor an email with links.

That brings me onto the subject of emails. With GDPR coming into force, it is very important that all Governors use School email addresses and not personal or work

email addresses. So the new Governor needs to have a School email address created.

Whilst still on the subject of how Governance works, they need to have sight of any Terms of Reference for the Board and any Committees. This will help them understand what work is carried out and what subjects are discussed. It is also important that the new Governors sign to confirm they visited the School website and also that they understand the School's Vision and Values, which will be on the website.

As far as Policies are concerned, it is imperative that new Governors are familiar with at the very least, Keeping Children Safe in Education, the School Safeguarding Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy. New Governors must sign to say they have read and understood as a minimum Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

When it comes to understanding how the individual School works, the Chair or the Buddy should provide the new Governor with a list of all key staff and the staffing structure, the term dates including inset days, the latest Ofsted report, in Church Schools the latest SIAMS or S48 inspection, the last set of statutory test results, the School Development Plan, the Self Evaluation Form, the current Governor's Development Plan, a list of current Governors with contact details and a list of meeting dates for the current academic year.

Finally, the new Governors should have had a meeting with the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and had a tour of the School.

As I said at the start, it is good practice to formalise the Induction process and keep a record, signing and dating as tasks are completed. But the important thing is that new Governors feel able to utilise the skills for which they were elected or appointed and add value to the educational experience of the children.