



Defence
Children
Services

DCS Directive 3.2.14

School Governance Committees TORs

DCS Directive 3.2.14 v2.0 Sep 22

General

Authorisation	Head DCS
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Related Policy/Guidance	DCS Directive 3.2.8 MOD Schools Complaints Procedure DCS Directive 3.2.9 MOD Schools Exclusions Policy

Introduction

1. MOD School Governance Committees (SGCs) do not have the statutory responsibilities or full delegations held by a Governing Body in England. These responsibilities lie with Defence Children Services (DCS) acting as the Appropriate Authority. For example, SGCs will be **not** be judged by Ofsted on the same criteria as governing bodies in England. The DCS /Ofsted Protocol directs that HMI will make judgements on the effectiveness of the SGC using the TORs articulated in this directive.

Aim

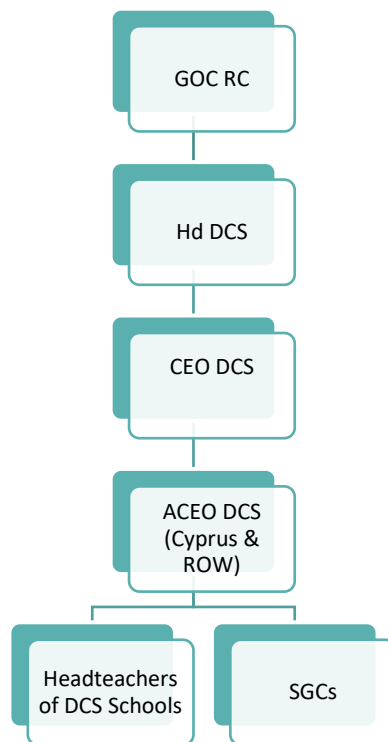
2. The purpose of this directive is to define the structure and Terms of Reference (ToRs) for DCS SGCs.

Scope

3. This directive applies to DCS SGCs only.

Governance Structure within DCS Schools and Settings

4. The wiring diagram below provides the overall structure for governance of DCS Schools and Settings, and the context in which SGCs operate. Headteachers work closely together with SGCs as part of the leadership of the school and are held to account by the District Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO) who has line management responsibility for the Headteacher. The Early Year's Advisor (EYA) has line management responsibility for the Setting Managers. The responsibility for schools and settings is held by the Chief Education Officer (CEO), who reports to Head DCS. DCS subordinates to Regional Command (RC).



5. Representing key local stakeholders, duties for DCS SGC include strategic level review of the following:

- a. The performance of schools/Early Years settings and pupil outcomes through the termly reports on the Core Visit Programme undertaken by School Improvement team, including the ACEO, School Improvement Advisor (SIA), Early Year's Advisor (EYA) and Teaching and Learning Advisor (TLA)
- b. Safeguarding of pupils through annual safeguarding audits.
- c. Health and safety compliance through SHE audits.
- d. Financial propriety through the DCS business team.
- e. Data protection through audits undertaken by DCS.
- f. Other relevant audits and performance indicators.

DCS SGC Terms of Reference (TORs)

6. The SGC has a critical role in ensuring positive outcomes for pupils in school by working closely with the senior leadership team (SLT) in supporting priorities for improvement, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluating school performance. The SGC acts in the best interests of all pupils in the school, focussed by the question, '**What difference will this make to the pupils in the school?**'

7. **Roles.** The SGC may involve itself in a range of matters consistent with the aim of improving educational provision and outcomes for pupils and families and is consultative in approach. The head teacher retains responsibility and authority for all aspects of school operation within their delegation from DCS. The SGC has the following key roles:

- a. **Supporting the provision of a strategic view.** The SGC contributes to the setting up and review of the school's strategic framework, focussing on raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning.
- b. **Acting as critical friend.** The SGC supports the head teacher and staff through provision of advice, guidance, information and constructive challenge.
- c. **Ensuring accountability.** Representing key stakeholders, the SGC holds the school to account by maintaining a strategic view on performance and, when appropriate, suggesting areas for development.

Responsibilities

8. The SGC is responsible for:

- a. Working closely with leaders to communicate the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and developing a culture of ambition; providing a channel of communication between school, parents and community and promoting improvements to this communication;
- b. Working with senior leaders to ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust and that the school provides a safe and healthy environment for pupils and staff;
- c. Providing a balance of challenge and support to leaders to deliver continuous improvement;
- d. Understanding the management of school finances and how this supports the needs of pupils, including those with SEND, and vulnerable children;
- e. Understanding the role of performance management for teachers in supporting objective setting and delivering priorities outlined in the School Improvement Plan;
- f. Understanding the extent to which the school's curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage (Intent), the way in which the curriculum is taught and assessed in order to support pupils to build their knowledge and apply their skills (implementation), and the outcomes that pupils achieve as a result of the education they have received (impact);

- g. Understanding the statutory assessment outcomes for pupils and other key performance data.
 - h. Identifying specific SGC members who will contribute to the hearing of complaint or exclusion appeals as detailed in the MOD Schools Complaints and Exclusions policies.
9. Responsibilities that do not fall to the SGC are listed at Annex C.
10. Individual Governor role duties and TORs are identified on Annex D

Composition

11. A successful SGC will draw on a range of expertise to accomplish its aims. It is therefore important that numbers are optimised for collaborative and consultative working. The composition of the SGC should be reviewed annually and with the agreement of the Chair individuals may attend as observers or contributors. The Chair is responsible for recruitment of new Governors, deciding upon appointments and their continuation and can hold elections if necessary. It is recommended that membership includes:

- a. The Chair is nominated by the local Garrison Commander. The choice of nominee should also take account of the Chair's ability to further the interests of the school and its community and to take forward, where relevant, the decisions and actions of the SGC. The Chair should be in a position to attend meetings and to fulfil the responsibilities associated with the position.
- b. The Vice-Chair is selected from and by the membership of the SGC. The Vice-Chair should be in a position to chair the meetings if the Chair is absent. It would be an advantage for the Vice-Chair to be in a non-deployable position;
- c. The Clerk should be selected by the Chair and does not need to be a member of the SGC;
- d. The head teacher as an ex officio member or deputy head teacher in lieu;
- e. A single elected representative of all teaching staff.
- f. A single elected representative of all support staff.
- g. A single elected representative of the Foundation Stage (FS1&2) in a large school. In small schools, a single representative of all teaching staff will suffice;
- h. Where a school is closely linked with a MOD Schools 0-3 Early Years setting, the manager should be included;
- i. A minimum of two parent representatives. Elections for parent representatives should be held where the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies;
- j. Community representatives such as the Unit Welfare Officer, Padre or AFF. The SGC may determine that a higher or lower number of unit representatives is required;

- k. A MOD Schools representative (usually the SIA) will endeavour to attend every SGC meeting, and where schools are geographically spread, he/she may attend these meetings via Teams.

Training

12. An induction pack is provided by the Clerk for new Governors (SGC member induction) and the SGC must agree and complete the SGC Code of Conduct agreement.
13. Training for SGC members in their roles and responsibilities is currently provided by a member of the MOD Schools Improvement Team based in the district in which the school is situated. Training should be requested by the SGC when required.
14. Specific safeguarding training for the Safeguarding Governor role is required and should be arranged through the School as can Level 2 Safeguarding training for all new Governors. This training is provided online.
15. Further role specific can be requested as required through the District offices.

Sub-Committees

16. Each SGC will have a Finance Sub-Committee, or at least Finance Governor, selected by the Chair, with responsibility for monitoring, alongside the head teacher, how the school's finances are used to support priorities and outcomes for pupils, as well as the use of non-public funds held by the school. Alternatively, as school expenditure is monitored closely by DCS, the role of ensuring that spending is aligned to the priorities of the school, could fall to a representative of another sub-committee such as one focused on the curriculum. It is important to note that head teachers in DCS schools do not have the same budget delegations as head teachers in England and that financial propriety rests with DCS.
17. An individual named Governor should be selected and appointed by the Chair with specific duties and responsibilities for the following key areas (annex D):
- a. Safeguarding Governor to maintain oversight of the School's Safeguarding policy and practice;
 - b. SEND Governor to maintain oversight of inclusive practice;
 - c. Early Years' Governor to maintain oversight of Early Years provision and practice, including any Setting associated with the school
18. The SGC should establish a sub-committee when required to consider appeals from parents. This sub-committee will include two SGC members and the district ACEO, or their nominated representative. The sub-committee will normally include the chair or vice-chair of the SGC, who will chair the meeting. No members of the sub-committee should have any prior involvement in the case. Staff members at the school may not serve on the complaints sub-committee. Further guidance can be found in the Complaints Procedure for MOD Schools.
19. An Exclusion Review Panel (ERP) will be convened as and when required, to address a parental representation following a fixed term or permanent exclusion. The membership and

remit of an ERP is outlined in the DCS exclusions policy and includes one member of the SGC, either the chair or a member nominated by the chair.

20. The SGC Chair may determine that other sub-committees or individual named Governors should be established for specific purposes to meet the needs of the school. For example, sub-committees may be established around the key priorities of the school, to ensure that progress towards identified improvement can be monitored. In such cases, the SGC must determine the membership and terms of reference of the sub-committee. The sub-committee must have a chair, appointed by the SGC or elected by the sub-committee. The SGC must review the establishment, terms of reference and membership of any sub-committee or Individual named Governors annually.

21. A suggested structure which combines the requirements outlined in these TORs is provided at Annex E for SGC Chairs to consider and agree with the Headteacher, adapting as required to suit the context of the school. This is a useful starting point for any Chair new to role.

Meetings

22. A full meeting of the SGC must be held every term. Additional meetings of sub-committees and/or Individual named Governors meeting staff members will also be necessary. The head teacher will present a written report to each termly meeting and, where necessary, to other meetings. This report should be sent out to all SGC members at least 5 working days prior to the meeting. Items for inclusion in this report are laid out at Annex A.

23. Items for discussion at SGC meetings may be proposed by any member of the SGC, and DCS MOD Schools to the Clerk, Chair or head teacher. Standing items for the agenda can be accessed in annex B.

24. The head teacher should ensure that minutes of SGC meetings are readily available to parents, staff, and other interested parties, for example by publication on the school website and/or notice boards for parents and staff.

Procedure for resolution of disagreements

25. If the SGC are unable to reach agreement with the head teacher concerning how school matters, the chair of the SGC should refer the matter to the relevant ACEO for resolution. If a resolution is not reached at this level, the matter will be referred to the CEO, whose decision will be final.

Annex A – Headteacher’s Report

Items should include:

- a. School roll, class organisation and staffing.
- b. Pupils’ achievement - end of previous year pupil progress and attainment at end of each key stage (autumn term), and update on pupil progress and attainment (spring and summer terms);
- c. School Improvement Plan - sharing of school priorities (autumn term) and progress towards achievement of school priorities (spring and summer terms);
- d. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
- e. Attendance;
- f. Continued Professional Development (CPD) of staff;
- g. Budget updates;
- h. Major and minor new works (Premises);
- i. Health and Safety;
- j. Forthcoming school events (where not listed on school website).

Annex B – SGC Standing Agenda

Items should include:

- a. Opening remarks by Chair
- b. Matters arising from previous minutes
- c. Headteacher's Report
- d. Safeguarding/Health & Safety Update
- e. Finance update
- f. Sub-Committee and Individual Named Governor Feedback/Updates/Reports
- g. Issues raised by:
 - (1) Teacher/Practitioner Representatives
 - (2) Parent Reps
 - (3) Unit Representatives
 - (4) AOB
 - (5) Date of next meeting

Annex C – List of Responsibilities that do not fall to the SGC

HR

Payroll

Education Inspection

Leadership and CPD

Energy supplier and energy management

Financial management systems

Management information systems

ICT systems and ICT hardware supplier contracts

Telecommunication systems

Stationery and consumer supplier contracts

Catering contracts

Cleaning contracts

Facilities management

Capital works

Health and safety management systems

Annex D - Individual named Governor's key duties and responsibilities

Chair of the SGC

1. The Chair of the SGC (or their nominated representative) is responsible for:
 - a. Leading and managing the SGC to best support the school in providing high standards of compliant educational provision.
 - b. Managing and deciding upon the appointment of new Governors through recruitment and if necessary, elections.
 - c. Agreeing SGC structure with the Headteacher and assigning roles and responsibilities to Governors and maintaining oversight of whether these roles are being adequately performed.
 - d. Managing the SGC composition, dynamics and performance and can, if necessary, instruct an SGC member to leave the committee.
 - e. Deciding on the agenda, managing the full SGC meetings and ensuring that the minutes are an accurate record.
 - f. Liaising regularly with the Headteacher for informal discussion about school business, providing support and challenge as required.

SGC Clerk

2. The SGC Clerk is responsible for:
 - a. Liaising with the Chair and head teacher to determine the agenda for SGC meetings.
 - g. Issuing a calling notice for each meeting confirming date, time and venue.
 - h. Ensuring accommodation is booked where required.
 - i. Distributing the agenda and associated papers, including the head teacher's report to ensure receipt at least 5 working days prior to meeting.
 - j. Taking minutes of all SGC meetings, submitting draft minutes to the Chair for approval within 10 working days of meeting and distributing minutes to all SGC members, district ACEO, SIA, EYA and additional individuals determined by the SGC.
 - k. Maintaining an archive of the agenda, reports and minutes of previous SGC meetings.
 - l. Distributing induction packs to new Governors and retaining a training record.

Early Years' Governor

3. The Early Year's Governor is responsible for:

- a. Meeting with the Foundation Stage Leader and Setting Manager in onsite visits including discussions with children and Early Years' staff.
- b. Reviewing and discussing provision in the Early Years, including the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum.
- c. Reviewing and discussing how the Early Years unit meet the standards outlined in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DFE, 2017).
- d. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement plans relevant to Early Years.
- e. Reporting back to the SGC and completing visit reports as required.

SEND Governor

4. The SEND Governor is responsible for:

- a. Meeting with the SENCO in onsite visits to discuss inclusion, current needs and provision.
- b. Reviewing and discussing provision for SEND, including the current needs in the school, provision maps, interventions and impact the provision is having on the children's learning.
- c. Reviewing and discussing how effectively the school's SEND policy is being implemented and whether there are any changes requires.
- d. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement plans relevant to SEND.
- e. Reporting back to the SGC and completing visit reports as required.

Safeguarding Governor

5. The Safeguarding Governor is responsible for:

- a. Meeting with with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in onsite visits to review and discuss safeguarding practices.
- b. Reviewing the previous Safeguarding audit and appraising the current situation through questioning.
- c. Attending any relevant training with outside agencies to ensure good understanding of safeguarding.
- d. Reviewing the annual Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) school improvement plan and previous SHE audit.

- e. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of any actions required relevant to Safeguarding.
- f. Reporting back to the SGC and completing visit reports as required.

Annex E – Example structure for SGCs, to be adopted and adapted to suit the school context

School Governance Committee (SGC) structure XXX School

Terms of Reference (TORs)

This SGC adheres to the DCS Directive 3.2.14 School Governance Committees TORs (2022), the SGC Code of Conduct Agreement and working practices outlined in the National Governance Association guidance 'School Visits' (2015). Sub-committees and individual named Governors have TORs which are provided as part of the Committee structure.

Selection of Governors

The Chair of the SGC is selected by the Commanding Officer. Applications to become a new Governor are advertised by the school at the request of the Chair of the SGC which outline why they are interested and what they could bring to the committee. Applications which are received are sifted and selected by the Chair on the grounds of suitability for the needs of the school and the SGC. All interested parties are contacted after application, whether successful or not, and thanked for the interest in supporting the school and volunteering for the SGC. The Chair of the SGC can organise elections to become a Governor, if deemed necessary due to numbers of volunteers and suitability.

Composition of the SGC

Role/representation	Name of Governors
1) The Chair	
2) The Vice-Chair	
3) One representative of all teaching staff	
4) One representative of all support staff	
5) Four parent representatives	a) b) c) d)
6) Three community representatives	a) b) c)
7) One representative from Defence Children Services (DCS)	School Improvement Advisor (SIA) or Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO)
8) The head teacher (as an ex officio member) or nominated representative	
9) Clerk to the SGC (does not need to be an SGC member)	

Sub-committees and TORs

School Improvement Plans Sub-committee

Membership:

The Committee shall consist of three named Governors, clerk and Headteacher or their nominated representative.

Names of Governors:

- a)
- b)
- c)

Meetings: The Committee shall meet at least twice per year and otherwise as required. Each meeting will commence with a “Learning Walk” of the school, focussed on the committee area of responsibility (AOR) and meet with key staff and other stakeholders as required. It may be more effective for individual governors within this committee to be assigned to a core strand within the school improvement plan and to follow the TORs, organising separate individual meetings.

Terms of Reference

1.	To understand why school improvement priorities have been identified.
2.	To review the intent, implementation and impact of the school improvement plans with a focus on ‘Are they having the desired impact?’
3.	To ensure that attention is given to key stakeholders’ views (i.e. If improving behaviour is a school priority, children’s, staff and parents’ views on improving behaviour should be sought and understood).
4.	To report back to the SGC on the school improvement plans and complete visit reports as required using the NGA School Visits ‘Knowing your school’ materials for Governors.

Individual Areas of Responsibility (IAOR)

Governors with IAORs

Meetings: *The Governor is responsible for making contact with the relevant school staff to arrange a meeting to discuss provision. They should complete visit reports and report back to the SGC as required using the NGA School Visits ‘Knowing your school’ materials for Governors. There should be a minimum of one meeting per year.*

Early Years’ Governor

Name of Governor:

Meeting with: Foundation Stage Leader, ‘learning walk’ around the provision which should include discussions with children and Early Years’ staff.

Terms of Reference

1.	To review and discuss provision in the Early Years, including the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum.
2.	To review and discuss how the Early Years unit meet the standards outlined in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
3.	To monitor and evaluate the impact of school improvement plans relevant to Early Years.
4.	To report back to the SGC and complete visit reports as required using the NGA School Visits 'Knowing your school' materials for Governors.

Safeguarding Governor

Name of Governor:

Meeting with: Headteacher or nominated representative

Terms of Reference

1.	To review the previous Safeguarding audit and appraise the current situation through questioning.
2.	To attend any relevant training with outside agencies to ensure good understanding of safeguarding.
3.	To review the annual Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) school improvement plan and previous SHE audit.
4.	To monitor and evaluate the impact of any actions required relevant to Safeguarding.
5.	To report back to the SGC and complete visit reports as required using the NGA School Visits 'Knowing your school' materials for Governors.

Finance Governor

Name of Governor:

Meeting with: School Business Manager, Headteacher or nominated representatives

Terms of Reference

1.	To monitor the use of the school budget by gaining an overview of expenditure and how this relates to school effectiveness in delivering positive outcomes for pupils and consistency with the school's priorities.
2.	To understand the checks used to ensure financial regularity and to ensure that value for money is achieved.
5.	Ongoing (no need to complete record of visit as this is evident through audit) - To complete half-termly checks on expenditure in non-public fund accounts.
6.	To report back to the SGC and complete visit reports as required using the NGA School Visits 'Knowing your school' materials for Governors.

SEND Governor

Meeting with: SENDCO, 'learning walk' around school to see and discuss provision.

Terms of Reference

1.	To review and discuss provision for SEND, including the current needs in the school, provision maps and impact the provision is having on the children's learning.
2.	To review and discuss how effectively the school's SEND policy is being implemented and whether there are any changes requires.
3.	To monitor and evaluate the impact of school improvement plans relevant to SEND.
4.	To report back to the SGC and complete visit reports as required using the NGA School Visits 'Knowing your school' materials for Governors.