



Through God's grace, a community growing in knowledge and understanding

Governor News – February 2019

Attendance Survey Feedback

Thank you to all of you who completed our attendance survey at the parents' evenings last term. We received 110 replies. 105 of these answered "Yes" to the question "Are you aware the school has an attendance policy?" and 106 answered "Yes" to the question "Are you aware that children do not have a right to take term leave for a family holiday?"

55 of the responses contained comments. The most common themes of these comments were:

- The school is already doing well to address attendance/we have no concerns (17 replies)
- Don't agree with the policy (8)
- Individual attendance could be rewarded more often (7)
- Concerns about the cost of holidays outside term time (6)
- Concerns about germ control/hygiene education/health (6)

The governors reviewed the survey results at our January meeting. We were pleased to see the high level of awareness of the policy and its key points. We were also pleased to hear feedback from those of you who came and spoke to us in person. The policy is based on the Cambridgeshire County Council Model Attendance Policy for Schools and reflects national legislation so we are not in a position to change the substance of the policy. This means, for example, that there is no flexibility in considering differences in costs of term time holidays when reviewing requests.

At St. Laurence, we work proactively and extensively with individual families to support children's regular attendance. This may include working with other agencies such as Family Support Workers, the School Nursing Service and Education Welfare as well as linked secondary or pre-school settings. Our focus is always the child's wellbeing.

Class attendance is celebrated weekly through the award of our attendance trophy for the best attending class (as shown here in the photo). Individual excellent and improved attendance has been rewarded at the end of the school year. Moving forward, this will become a termly focus.



We have also asked class teachers and mid-day supervisors to continue to remind children regularly about thorough hand washing and have ordered some display posters to reinforce this important message.

The governors continue to receive termly reports on attendance from Mrs Clark. We ask questions about what the school is doing to support children to have good levels of attendance and what impact this is having. As always, if you have any questions relating to your own situation please arrange a time to speak with your child's class teacher.

We shall be conducting our usual general parent survey in March (around the time of parents' evenings). At the moment we're exploring the possibility of doing this as an online survey rather than on paper. However, we're still planning on having a governors' table at parents evening; do come and say hello!

What do governors do?

Our school has 14 governors. We are volunteers and our main responsibilities are:

- To ensure that the school has a clear vision, ethos and strategy
- To hold our head teacher to account for the educational performance of the children
- To oversee the school's financial performance and make sure its money is well spent

We do this by receiving reports about the school and asking lots of questions of the school's senior leadership team. We make planned visits to the school during the school day to see it in action and monitor that the school is developing in line with its own improvement plan. Last term governors visited the parents' cafe sessions and several assemblies. Three governors attended the school's annual review of overall pupil performance and progress with the school's External Advisor.

Our role is to monitor how the school is performing overall rather than getting involved in individual issues. As Governors, we work as a team; individual governors do not have the authority to act on the school's behalf.

Would you like to join us?

Governors are appointed or elected for a 4 year term of office (though some choose to serve more than one term). So, we're always looking out for new governors. The majority of our governing body are Foundation Governors (Catholics, appointed by the Bishop). We are committed to our governing body being a group which reflects the diversity of our school and parish community. We ask non-Catholic governors to be committed to supporting the school's Catholic Ethos. At the moment, we have one vacancy. However we are always planning ahead and interested in hearing from people who have the skills and enthusiasm to join us.

What we ask of governors is:

- Time and interest in the school: typically governors spend between 5 and 10 hours per month on governor duties. Most governors visit the school during the day at least once a year,
- Attending 2 Full Governing Body meetings per term; coming to meetings with questions about the reports which are provided in advance,
- Joining a committee of governors which meets once or twice a term (either during the school day or immediately after school) to look in more detail at a particular area of the school's performance (eg children's learning & progress or premises management),
- Attending training provided by Cambridgeshire School Governance Team; this involves a whole day induction training plus attending further training (daytime or evening) each year,
- Commitment to supporting the school to maintain its Catholic Ethos, academic standards and financial viability. Some governors bring professional expertise (financial, legal, human resources), some a willingness to develop their skills in the interests of the school.

Being a governor requires commitment but is also immensely rewarding and interesting. So, please think whether you have the time and enthusiasm to join us. New governors are buddied up with a more experienced governor and receive an in-house induction programme.

If you think you might be interested, the first step is to talk to one of us. Please ask at the school office or e-mail our clerk at Clerk@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk to arrange an informal conversation with one of our current governors.

You can find out more about our governing body on the school governors page of the school website (in the community section). Here you can see minutes of our Full Governing Body meetings, information about our responsibilities and profiles of current governors.

<https://www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk/page/?title=School+Governors&pid=26>