



Defence  
Children  
Services

# DCS Directive 3.2.14

## School Governance Committees

DCS Sep 19 v1.1



## General

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| <b>Authorisation</b>            | Director DCS  |
| <b>Senior Responsible Owner</b> | Chief Executive Officer MOD Schools   |
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| <b>Review Date</b>              | Sep 2021  |
| <b>Related Policy/Guidance</b>  | DCS Policy Directive 3.2.8 MOD Schools Complaints Procedure V2.0 Jan 17<br>DCS Policy Directive 3.2.9 MOD Schools Exclusions Policy V2.0 Jan 17 |

## 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 HQ DCS (MOD Schools) 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 MOD Schools/Ofsted Protocol directs that HMI will make judgements on the effectiveness of the SGC using the TORs articulated in this directive.

## Aim

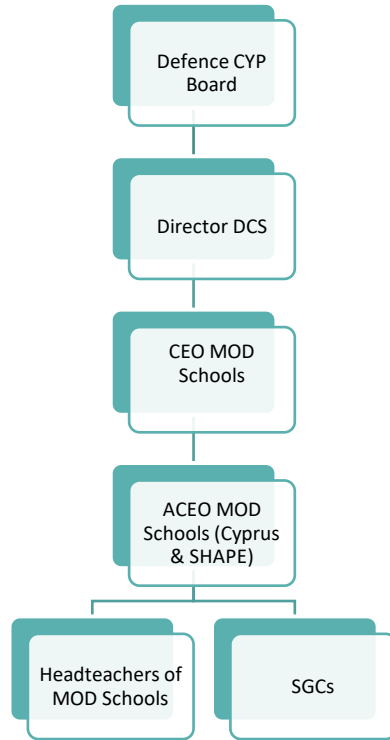
2. The purpose of this directive is to define the structure and Terms of Reference (TORs) for MOD School Governance Committees (SGCs).

## Scope

3. This directive applies to MOD SGCs only.

## Governance Structure within DCS MOD Schools

4. The wiring diagram below provides the overall structure for governance of MOD Schools, 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 regional Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO). This accountability is then passed to the Chief Education Officer (CEO) and the Director DCS, who are then ultimately held to account by the Defence Children and Young People Board.



5. The statutory duties for MOD School Governance Committees include quality assurance of the following:

- a. The performance of schools/Early Years settings and pupil outcomes through the Core Visit Programme undertaken by School Improvement Advisors (SIAs) and the Early Years' team. The ACEO will monitor the work of the SIA through core visit reports and termly review meetings and the DCS EYFS Lead will monitor the work of the Early Years' team. A supported self-review can be requested by a head teacher/setting manager, for example when they have just started employment as a new head teacher/setting manager and wish to establish a baseline in terms of strengths and areas for improvement. This would be undertaken by the ACEO, SIA and/or Early Years' team, working closely alongside the senior leaders of the school/setting;
- b. Safeguarding of pupils through annual safeguarding audits undertaken by the contracted Social Work Service in each region;
- c. Health and safety compliance through bi-annual SHE audits;

- d. Financial propriety through the DCS finance team;
- e. Data protection through audits undertaken by DCS.

## MOD SGC Terms of Reference (TORs)

6. The SGC has a critical role in ensuring positive outcomes for pupils by working closely with the senior leadership team (SLT) in agreeing 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. The head teacher retains responsibility for internal management and for the delegated budget. 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 operational 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.** The SGC holds the school to account on its performance and management.

8. **Responsibilities.** 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. Ensuring that assessment information provided to governors is sufficient and accurate for measuring outcomes for pupils;
  - 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. The ACEO is responsible for:
- a. Undertaking the performance management of the head teacher, which is counter-signed by the CEO. The SGC Chair will be invited to attend these performance management meetings, but it is not a compulsory part of the role.
  - b. The SGC Clerk is responsible for:
    - (1) Liaising with the Chair and head teacher to determine the agenda for SGC meetings;
    - (2) Issuing a calling notice for each meeting confirming date, time and venue;
    - (3) Ensuring accommodation is booked where required;
    - (4) Distributing the agenda and associated papers, including the head teacher's report to ensure receipt at least 5 working days prior to meeting;
    - (5) 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, DCS (via DCS group mailbox/MOSS), School Improvement Advisor and additional individuals determined by the SGC;
    - (6) Maintaining an archive of the agenda, reports and minutes of previous SGC meetings.
11. **Composition.** A successful SGC will draw on a range of expertise to accomplish its aims. It is therefore important that numbers are optimised for collaborative working and decision making. The composition of the SGC should be reviewed annually and with the agreement of the Chair individuals may attend as observers or contributors. 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 of the SGC. The Chair should be in a position to attend meetings and to fulfil the responsibilities associated with the position. It would be an advantage for the Chair to have first-hand knowledge as a parent of a child in the school or attending a school in the UK;
  - 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 Safeguarding Governor, selected by the Chair, with specific duties to maintain oversight of the School's Safeguarding policy and practice;
- f. A single elected representative of all teaching staff;
- g. A single elected representative of all support staff;
- h. 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;
- i. Where a school is closely linked with a MOD Schools 0-3 Early Years setting, the manager should be included;
- j. A minimum of two parent representatives (including FS1 parents). Elections for parent representatives should be held where the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies;
- k. 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;
- l. 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 skype.

12. **Training.** Training for SGC members in their roles and responsibilities is currently provided by a member of the MOD Schools Improvement Team based in the region in which the school is situated. Training can be arranged on request.

13. Specific safeguarding training for the Safeguarding Governor role is required and should be arranged through the Social Worker based in the region in which the school is situated.

14. **Sub-Committees.** 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 MOD schools do not have the same budget delegations as head teachers in England and that financial propriety rests with DCS/MOD Schools.

15. The SGC should establish a sub-committee when required to consider appeals from parents. This sub-committee will include two SGC members and the CEO MOD Schools, 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.

16. 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 MOD exclusions policy and includes one member of the SGC, either the chair or a member nominated by the chair.

17. The SGC may determine that other sub-committees should be established for specific purposes; particularly in meeting 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 annually.

18. **Meetings.** A full meeting of the SGC must be held every term. Additional meetings of sub-committees 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 10 working days prior to the meeting. Items for inclusion in this report are laid out at Annex A.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. **Procedure for resolution of disagreements.** If the SGC or its sub-committees are unable to reach agreement with the head teacher concerning how the school budget is allocated or on any other matter, 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**

22. 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**

23. 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 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**

1. HR
2. Payroll
3. Education Inspection
4. Leadership and CPD
5. Energy supplier and energy management
6. Financial management systems
7. Management information systems
8. ICT systems and ICT hardware supplier contracts
9. Telecommunication systems
10. Stationery and consumer supplier contracts
11. Catering contracts
12. Cleaning contracts
13. Facilities management
14. Capital works
15. Health and safety management systems