

Swindon Borough Council
Children's Services

Schools Forum

Terms of Reference

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1. Regulations

Section 43 of the 2002 Education Act required Local Authorities to establish a Schools Forum to represent its schools. Subsequent regulations have extended and amended the original Act. As at 1st October 2013, the current regulations are Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 2261 Education England: "The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012". Guidance issued by the Department for Education available at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/financialmanagement/schoolsreviewfunding/schoolsforums/a0070290/guidance-for-schools-forums-on-their-role>

2. Functions

The Functions of the Schools Forum are set out in Appendix 1.

3. Membership

School Members (15)

Maintained and Secondary School

- 1 Head of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or senior member of staff
- 1 Head of Special School, Headteacher or senior member of staff
- 1 Secondary Headteacher or senior member of staff
- 3 Primary Headteachers or senior members of staff

Academies

- 3 Secondary Headteachers or senior members of staff (may include the UTC or a Free School)
- 3 Primary Headteachers or senior members of staff

Governors

- 3 Governors (1 primary, 1 special and 1 secondary)

Non School Members (5)

- 1 Representative of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Dioceses
- 1 Early Years Representative
- 1 Representative of the 16-19 Institutions
- 1 Representative from the Black and Minority Ethnic Community
- 1 Representative of the Teachers' Trade Unions

Observers

- 1 Education Funding Agency

Other attendees permitted to contribute

The Director of Children's Services
 Officers providing financial & technical advice to the Schools' Forum
 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services
 Presenters (restricted to the paper they are presenting)
 The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources

4. Period of membershipSchool Members

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Governors | 3 years |
| Headteachers | 4 years |

Non-School Members

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| All Members | 3 years |
|-------------|---------|

- The varying lengths of membership terms are designated to ensure that continuity of experience is maintained within the Forum.
- Where a vacancy arises, the Authority shall appoint a replacement elected by the members of the relevant group or sub-group nominated in accordance with the set procedure for such nominations.
- In addition to a term of office coming to an end, a schools' member ceases to be a member of the Schools Forum if he/she resigns from the Forum or no longer occupies the office that he/ she was nominated to represent.

5. Substitutes

No substitutes are allowed.

6. Election of schools members

Members will be elected through the following process:

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- The Chair of the Forum will be drawn from schools members only. He/She will be elected by a simple majority vote of members at a quorate meeting. The Vice Chair will be elected by the same process.
- Election for Chair will be held on an annual basis. The next election is to be held at the first meeting in the financial year 2014-15.
- In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair at any quorate meeting, the members will elect a chair for the meeting, drawn from the whole membership present.

Schools and Academies Members

Each representative group will be responsible for the method by which they elect and nominate representatives and should take full account of the Department for Education guidance upon the election and nomination of school representatives.

Governors

Nominations will be sought for governor members when a vacancy arises through the Governor Services Team of the Leisure, Libraries, Traded Services and Culture Department.

7. Quorum

The Forum shall be quorate if at least 40% of total membership is present at the meeting. If a meeting is inquorate, it may proceed but it cannot legally make decisions. An inquorate meeting can respond to the local authority's consultation and give views to the authority. It would normally be good practice for the authority to take account of such "unofficial" views but it is not legally obliged to do so. An inquorate meeting would have to be reconvened for decisions to be legally taken.

8. Declaration of interest and conduct

- In carrying out their functions, members of the Forum shall act in accordance with the seven principles of public life set out in the The Code of Conduct drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) in 1995 and revised in 2013: integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- At each meeting, members of the Forum shall declare an interest in any proposals, which directly affect a school at which they are a governor or headteacher or which their children attend or in which they have a pecuniary interest.
- Forum members must declare an interest where relevant, for example, when discussing the letting of service contracts.

9. Voting arrangements

The voting arrangements shall be as follows:

- (a) Voting on the funding formulae will be restricted to school members and the Early Years Provider.
- (b) Voting on items which are subject to de-delegation will be restricted to the relevant maintained school members.
- (c) Any other question to be decided at a meeting of the Forum shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members present. The Chair will not vote unless there is a need for a casting vote.

10. Conduct of meetings

- Consultation on final changes to the formula will take place within a given period of the start of the financial year. Otherwise, meetings will take place a minimum of three times a year.
- Extraordinary meetings may be called at the request of Council Officers and with the agreement of the Chair.
- Meetings will be held at a time of day and at an appropriate location to allow full participation by members – 4.00 pm in the Civic Offices – or otherwise notified to Forum members ten days before each regular meeting.
- These arrangements may be changed by a quorate meeting of the Forum.
- Working groups or sub-groups of the Forum will be constituted as necessary to discuss specific issues and to produce draft advice for the Forum to consider. The Forum will agree the terms of reference of such groups and specify membership arrangements.
- Sub-groups of the Forum will consider policy and make recommendations to the Forum but will not have delegated decision-making powers.
- Sub-groups will be required to report to a full (quorate) meeting of the Forum for approval of findings before such findings are published or formally passed to the Local Authority.
- Meetings of the Schools Forum shall be open and notes of the meetings will be available to the public. This will apply to sub-groups.
- Forum members must declare an interest where relevant, for example, when discussing the letting of service contracts.
- The Forum shall inform the Governing Bodies of all schools of the results of these consultations within 14 days of the date of the consultation.
- Reports on the action taken by the Local Authority in response to Forum advice will be given by the Director of Children's Services or his or her representative as necessary.
- Feedback from Governing Bodies on the value of the Forum and the appropriateness of its response to consultations will be requested at regular intervals of 12 months

11. Public access

- Papers, agendas and minutes of the Forum will be publically available through the Council's website.

- Public questions may be asked on the day or sent to the Clerk before the meeting. A written answer will be provided if questions are received 3 clear working days before the date of the meeting. The Chairman will advise timescale for any questions asked on the day of the meeting or received less than 3 working days before the meeting.
- Proceedings and meetings of the Forum shall be open to the public except in limited circumstances as decided by the Forum.