

Schools Forum Constitution

SCHOOLS FORUM: CONSTITUTION, PROCEDURE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Schools Forum is a statutory group with terms of reference set by the Education Act 2002 and now incorporated in the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012. This has been revised following amendments published within The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014. The procedures are summarised under the following headings:

- Terms of Reference
- Membership
- Conduct of meetings
- Administration
- Costs of the Forum
- Members allowable expenses

1. Terms of Reference

The function of the Schools Forum is now set out in the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012. The regulations define the functions as:

1.1 Consultation on contracts

The authority must consult the schools forum on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services (being a contract paid or to be paid out of the authority's schools budget

- (a) where the estimated value of the proposed contract is not less than the threshold which applies to the authority for that proposed contract pursuant to regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006
- (b) at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender

The threshold specified in the above regulations is updated annually in December, to be effective from the following January, in line with the relative value of the Pound to the Euro.

1.2 Consultation on Financial Issues

The authority must consult the schools forum annually in respect of the authority's functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following—

- (a) arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs, and in particular (i) the places to be commissioned by the Local Authority in different schools and other institutions, and (ii) the arrangements for paying top-up funding to schools and other institutions
- (b) arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school; and in particular (i) the places to be commissioned by the Local Authority and by schools in pupil referral units and other providers of alternative provision and (ii) the arrangements for

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paying top-up funding to PRUs and other providers of alternative provision.

(c) arrangements for early years provision;

(d) administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority.

1.3 The authority may consult the forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as they see fit.

1.4 **Information about consultations**

The schools forum must inform the governing bodies of schools maintained by the authority of any consultation carried out by the authority under 1.1 or 1.2 above, as soon as it reasonably can.

2 **Membership**

2.1 The Schools Forum membership is set out in Appendix A to this document. It represents the minimum membership which secures a reasonable non-school membership.

2.2 The maintained school members are to be an equal number of heads and governors. Heads and governors conferences can nominate substitute members from maintained schools in order that full representation across the three phases is secured at each meeting of the Forum. The Clerk should be notified in advance when a substitute is to attend a meeting.

2.3 The Headteacher of the City's Pupil Referral Unit shall be a representative on the School Forum.

2.4 The Academy members are representatives of Academy proprietors in Southampton and so could be a principal/headteacher or a governor or another person elected by Academy proprietors. Academy proprietors can nominate substitute members in order that full representation of the Academy sector is maintained. The Clerk should be notified in advance if a substitute is to attend a meeting

2.5 The balance of maintained schools members and academy members in the schools block is broadly proportionate to the numbers of schools and pupils educated in each sector and will be reviewed annually in September.

2.6 Following the determination of non-school members, special school and pupil referral unit representatives the balance of maintained primary and secondary school members takes account of the relative numbers of pupils in those sectors as at September 2020 and will be reviewed annually in September each year.

2.7 Where the annual review shows that an adjustment in relative group sizes is necessary the relevant group(s) will review the current membership and advise the Clerk of the revised membership. In the

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absence of a voluntary agreement lots will be drawn by the Service Director for Children and Families.

- 2.8 Executive Member(s) of the City Council (usually the portfolio holders with responsibility for Children's Services, Education and Resources) can attend meetings, contribute to the discussion and receive first-hand the views of the Forum. Executive Members shall be non-voting members of the Forum.
- 2.9 The election processes for maintained schools, The Pupil Referral Unit, non-schools members and Academies will be through the Headteacher and governors conferences, The Pupil Referral Unit, the Teachers Liaison Panel, the Early Education and Childcare Partnership Steering Group, the FE Board, Southampton Academy proprietors as a group, and the Diocesan Education Liaison Group. The latter will always nominate one Church of England and one Roman Catholic representative. Such members will represent the collective views of their colleagues wherever possible.
- 2.10 Members' terms of office are normally for four years from the date of appointment. Members are encouraged to serve for a minimum of two years but may resign at any time by sending written notice to the Clerk. Members may stand for reappointment if they remain eligible.
- 2.11 Members cease to hold office when they are no longer part of the interest which they represent but can stay in office if they have a change of school within the same phase. Thus a governor or a head moving from an infant school to a junior school would still represent the same phase and remain a member but, if a maintained school became an Academy, then a head or governor at that school would no longer be part of the maintained schools' membership and would cease to hold office.
- 2.12 The administrative arrangements for the replacement and induction of members will be managed by the Clerk appointed to the Schools Forum and membership will be published on the Schools Forum website.

3. Conduct of Meetings

- 3.1 The meetings will be open to the press and public.
- 3.2 During any meeting the Forum has the right to go pass a resolution to go into confidential session for all or part of the meeting. Confidential sessions are not open to the press and public.
- 3.3 The dates of meetings will be fixed on a 12 month cycle, with a minimum of four meetings per annum. The timing and frequency of meetings will be set by the Forum.

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- 3.4 The Forum will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair for two years at the first meeting in each academic year beginning with an odd number i.e.2021/22, 2023/24 and so on. An elected Councillor or an officer of the Council cannot hold the office of Chair or Vice Chair of the Schools Forum.
- 3.5 Agenda items will be agreed in advance with the Chair of the Forum.
- 3.6 The agenda and all supporting papers shall be sent, whenever possible, to members of the Forum not less than five clear days (excluding weekends and bank holidays) before the meeting. Major items will be circulated, whenever possible, up to 10 working days prior to the meeting to allow representatives time to consult.
- 3.7 The quorum will be 40% of the total of school and non-school members and 40% representation from Primary, Secondary and SEND
- 3.8 Declarations of interest by members should be made at the start of the proceedings in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct. In the event of a Conflict of Interest it shall be at the discretion of Chair as to whether the conflicted member shall be able to stay and / or vote on a particular issue.
- 3.9 In order to fulfil its functions the Forum may commission work from the City Council; commission work from outside the City Council and/or undertake additional consultation at the request of the City Council.
- 3.10 The Forum has discretion to set up sub committees and to determine the terms of reference and membership of those sub committees.
- 3.11 It will be normal practice for the Forum to indicate its view on all items. Where necessary a specific counted vote will be taken and where such a vote is taken the Clerk will record the numbers alongside the decision in the minutes of the meetings. Except as provided for in 3.12 all members are entitled to vote.
- 3.12 Non-school members, other than those who represent early year's providers, must not vote on matters relating to the funding formulae to be used by the local authority to determine the amounts to be allocated to schools and early years providers.
- 3.13 When considering those services where regulations allow for maintained primary and secondary schools to determine that budgets should be de-delegated and pooled centrally only those members representing the relevant maintained school phase may vote.
- 3.14 Minutes of the Forum will be circulated as draft minutes, with the approval of the chair, to members of the Schools Forum within 10 working days of the meeting and used by the Clerk to ensure actions agreed are implemented. Draft minutes will be adopted at the following meeting. The

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Forum will determine any matters to be recorded as confidential. The adopted minutes will be included on the Education Intranet website.

- 3.15 The outcomes of discussions at the Schools Forum will feed into the Executive Member and other decision making processes of the City Council.

4. Administration

- 4.1 A Clerk to the Schools Forum shall be nominated by the Service Director for Children and Families. The Clerk will be responsible for arranging all meeting administration including venue, notification of meetings, clerking and recording of meetings, pre-agenda management, distribution of agenda and minutes, including the results of meetings and the action taken by the City Council in response to Forum advice, to Forum members, and the wider school community (as agreed by the Schools Forum).
- 4.2 In accordance with the e-government strategy all Forum matters will be managed electronically wherever possible although on occasions the use of paper may be deemed more appropriate.
- 4.3 The Clerk will be responsible for the management of all expenses claims.
- 4.4 The Service Director for Finance and Commercialisation will be responsible for preparing and monitoring annual accounts on the cost of servicing the Schools Forum and all costs associated with work commissioned by the Schools Forum.

5. Costs of the Forum

- 5.1 Costs will be attributable to the Schools Budget
- 5.2 The financial undertakings of the Forum will be bound by the current Financial Procedures, Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders as published by the Service Director for Finance and Commercialisation.

6. Members' Allowable Expenses

- 6.1 The regulations require that members of the Forum be paid reasonable expenses. Expenses may be claimed as detailed below (6.2 - 6.5) in accordance with the current policy on travel allowances and claims as published by the Service Director for Finance and Commercialisation.
- 6.2 On travel it was agreed that members be reimbursed for the standard public transport fare. Motor vehicles will be reimbursed in line with the current casual staff rates specified by the NJC for local government services. Actual cost of parking will be met with proof of parking fee paid. Subsistence will not be paid.

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- 6.3 Financial loss allowance will be paid. Entitlement to this allowance is subject to the respective member incurring any loss of earnings or any individual expenses (other than travel expenses).
- 6.4 Childcare arrangements will be reimbursed at actual cost of care with a registered childminder and/or establishment registered under the Children Act 1989. Receipts will be expected to be submitted along with the claim form.
- 6.5 The Clerk will be responsible for issuing claim forms and for ensuring that claims are submitted regularly and completed in accordance with the current policy on travel allowances and claims as published by the Service Director for Finance and Commercialisation. Claims may be submitted at any time but must be within the same financial year.

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Appendix A

SOUTHAMPTON SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP from September 2019

School & Academy Members (Heads & Governors)	%	Primary Secondary %
Special	1.5%	
Nursery	0.4%	
Primary	38.6%	66.0%
Secondary	19.9%	34.0%
Academy	38.7%	
Academy Alternative provision	0.0%	
Academy special school	0.8%	
Pupil Referral Unit	0.1%	
TOTAL SCHOOL & ACADEMY MEMBERS	100.0%	100.0%

Summary of representation at Schools Forum:

Primary School	6
Secondary School	3
Academy	5
Special School	2
Pru	1
Special Academy	1
Nursery	1
16-19	1
EYPVI	1
Diocese	1