

**BARNSELY COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND ACCESS TO COLLEGE BUSINESS

Approved by the Board on 17 October 2006 and reviewed annually thereafter

1. Attendance at Board Meetings

1.1 Meetings of the Board of Governors are not open to members of the public and representatives of the press. Agendas for Board meetings are split into two sections as follows :

Part I Papers available to the public and the press
Part II Confidential – papers not available to the public and the press

1.2 Agendas and other papers for Board meetings are organised so that they reflect this structure of business.

2. Consideration of Confidential Business by the Board

2.1 The Board's policy is that details of the Board's business will generally be available to the public but nevertheless the Board reserves the right to keep certain matters confidential. The criteria for confidentiality under Part II of the agenda are :

- i. Consideration of the financial position of the College where disclosure might harm the College or its competitive position, as determined by the Board
- ii. Consideration of financial or other information relating to procurement decisions, including that relating to the College's negotiating position
- iii. Items containing personal information relating to an individual
- iv. Information provided in confidence by a third party who has not authorised its disclosure
- v. Where appropriate, professional advice received from or instructions given to the College's professional advisers
- vi. Discussion of any legal proceedings in which the Board is involved
- vii. Information planned for publication in advance of that publication
- viii. Any other matters the publication of which would, in the Board's view, be detrimental to the College's interests

2.2 The Board has the discretion under the provisions of the relevant clauses in the Instrument of Government to exclude certain governors for specific items of business. Where such exclusions may take place, papers for the relevant items will not be provided to the governor(s) concerned in advance of the meeting.

2.3 Following an annual review by the Governance & Search Committee, the Board will decide which items of business that were dealt with in confidence can be regarded as non-confidential.

3. Minutes of Committee Meetings

3.1 Formal minutes of committee meetings are prepared and submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Board. Items which are confidential in terms of the criteria set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of this policy are prepared separately and submitted in the appropriate part of the Board agenda.

4. Attendance at Committee Meetings by Persons who are not Committee Members

4.1 Meetings of committees of the Board shall not be open to members of the public and representatives of the press.

- 4.2 With the exception of the Audit Committee, the Chair of the Board of Governors shall be entitled to attend and speak (but not to vote) at meetings of any committees of which he/she is not a member.
- 4.3 Subject to paragraph 4.7 below, the Principal shall be entitled to attend meetings of any committee of which he/she is not a member except for the Audit Committee which he/she shall attend only if requested to do so by the Chair of the Committee.
- 4.4 The Clerk to the Governors shall be entitled and expected to attend meetings of all committees except that he/she shall withdraw from that part of any meeting at which his/her remuneration, conditions of service, conduct, suspension, dismissal or retirement are to be considered.
- 4.5 The Principal is authorised to invite other members of staff to attend committee meetings.
- 4.6 The Chair of any committee may invite the attendance of any other person at a committee meeting after having taken the advice of the Principal and the Clerk.
- 4.7 All committees shall have the right to exclude any person who is not a member of the committee from all or part of a meeting should this be warranted by the nature of the business to be considered. However, a committee may not exclude the Clerk to the Governors unless the provisions of paragraph 4.4 apply.

5. Access to College Documentation

- 5.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 promotes greater openness and accountability across the public sector by requiring all public authorities to proactively publish information which they hold through the adoption of a publication scheme. This is a document which describes the information a public authority publishes or intends to publish. In this context publish means to make information available routinely. Barnsley College has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the FE sector and is committed to publishing the information it describes.
- 5.2 The College's publication scheme is available :
- On the College's website www.barnsley.ac.uk
 - In the College's Learning Resource Centre, Falcon Street, Barnsley
 - From the Administration Department, Barnsley College, Eastgate Site
 - In the Barnsley Central Library, Shambles Street, Barnsley
- 5.3 To request information from the College contact the Information Officer :
- Carolynne Thurlbeck
Barnsley College
PO Box 266
Barnsley
S70 2YW
- Telephone : 01226 216279
Email : c.thurlbeck@barnsley.ac.uk
- 5.4 A downloadable/on-line 'Request for Information' form is also available on the College's website.
- 5.5 The majority of College information will be provided free of charge. In particular, for any information declared in the College's publication scheme there will normally be no fee charged as it is anticipated that this information is readily available. For information not declared in the publication scheme, the College will follow the Secretary of State's guidance (the appropriate limit for public authorities is £450 per request). The College will endeavour to provide single copies of the majority of requests free of charge. Charges will only be applied if the College is likely to incur

costs which exceed the £450 limit set by statute. Any such charge will be notified in advance to the person making the request to check that they wish to proceed.

- 5.6 Information which is confidential in the terms of paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 will normally be withheld from any documentation or other information generally provided. If any request for information is turned down on the grounds of confidentiality, the College will give the reason for denying access. In addition, the College is not required to supply information if it falls under one of the 23 exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act, in which case the College will explain why it is not releasing the information.
- 5.7 The College will endeavour to provide requested information within 20 working days.
- 5.8 Any person having a complaint about the availability of information should put their complaint in writing to the College's Information Officer:

Carolynne Thurlbeck
Barnsley College
PO Box 266
Barnsley
S70 2AX

- 5.9 If the College is unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant may contact the Information Commissioner, the independent body who oversees the Freedom of Information Act:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

6. Complaints about the Board of Governors

- 6.1 Any member of the public wishing to make a complaint against the Board or against an individual governor should put the matter in writing to the independent Clerk to the Governors via the College. The Clerk is authorised by the Board to arrange for any such complaint to be investigated and to report to the Learning and Skills Council if in his/her judgement this is warranted by the nature of the complaint.
- 6.2 The Clerk will ensure that a full response is made to the complaint and, where a lengthy investigation is undertaken, that the complainant is kept advised of progress. The Board of Governors is committed to acting as openly as possible but reserves the right, acting upon the advice of its lawyers, to keep confidential any matters which should not be publicised.