

TORBAY SCHOOLS' FORUM

Standing Orders

December 2012 edition

Remit of the Torbay Schools Forum

1. By virtue of section 47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002), Torbay Council was required to establish a schools forum.

The Schools Forum will be consulted on matters set out in the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012, that is:

- the terms of any proposed contracts for supplies and services to be paid out of the schools' budget
- arrangements for the education of children with special educational needs
- arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school
- arrangements for early years provision
- administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority.

Membership of the Schools Forum

4. The majority of forum members must be "school members" (see paragraph 5).
5. School members must be headteachers (or deputy headteacher or bursar elected on behalf of a headteacher) or governors. They must represent nursery, primary and secondary schools and the relative number representing each should take account of the relative numbers of pupils in those sectors. At least one schools member must represent special schools. The pupil referral unit must have one representative. Schools representatives of maintained schools and academies should broadly reflect the pupil numbers in maintained schools and academies with a one school de minimus having representation.
6. The membership of the Torbay Schools Forum will comprise 16 school members and 7 non-school members, as set out below:

School Members		
Sector	Headteacher	Governor
Primary*	4	2
Secondary	2	1
Special	1	0
PRU 1 member		

* at least one primary school member will also be a representative of a nursery school

Non-School Members	
Organisation	Places available
A representative of the early years sector	1
A representative of the 14-19 Partnership	1

7. No school shall be represented by more than one person on the Forum unless it is as a result of substitution.
8. The Torbay Association of Primary Schools (TAPS) and the Torbay Association of Secondary Schools (TASH) will nominate the headteacher representatives to sit on the Forum. The Torbay Governors Association (TGA) will elect the governor representatives.
9. In relation to the non-school members, the organisations listed in the table in paragraph 6 will nominate representatives to serve on the Forum. The early years' representatives will be nominated via the Birth to 5 Group. The 14-19 Partnership representative should not already be a member of the Forum. The Local Authority will inform all its maintained schools of the details of any non-school member appointed to the Forum, within one month of such an appointment.
10. The term of office for school members of the Schools Forum will be a maximum of three years, subject to their eligibility. At the end of their term of office, individuals may stand down or the group they represent may replace them. Non-school members will remain in office until they resign or are replaced by the body that nominated them. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms of office an individual may serve, subject to their eligibility.
11. The Local Authority may end the appointment of any Forum member before the expiry of his or her term of office if the member concerned ceases to hold the office by virtue of which he or she became eligible for appointment to the Forum.
12. Any resignations must be given in writing to the Secretary of the Forum.
13. The Education Funding Agency will be entitled to nominate an observer who will be entitled to attend all meetings of the Forum.

Quorum

14. The Forum will be quorate when 40% of the members are present. Therefore the quorum is 6.
15. The Forum can continue to meet if it is not quorate, but any advice given to the Local Authority as a result of such a meeting would not have to be taken into account by the Authority.

Non-attendance at Meetings and Substitute Members

16. Headteachers on the Schools Forum may elect other members of the school senior management teams with finance responsibilities, such as deputy headteachers and bursars into the membership.
17. Any member who is unable to attend a meeting may send an eligible substitute (who will have voting rights, as appropriate) on their behalf provided that the Secretary (or the Clerk) is notified in writing prior to the commencement of the meeting.
18. Any member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings of the Forum in a six month period may be asked to resign unless the Forum determines that the absences were authorised. This Standing Order applies even if the member has opted to send a substitute on their behalf.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman

19. The Chairman of the Forum will be elected annually from within the membership of the Forum.
20. The Vice-chairman will be appointed annually from within the membership of the Forum.
21. The term of office of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be one year although there is no limit on the number of consecutive terms of office that an individual may serve.
22. In the absence of the Chairman at any meeting, the Vice-chairman will preside at the meeting. In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice-chairman at any meeting, a chairman for that meeting will be elected.
23. The person presiding at any meeting of the Forum may exercise any power or duty of the Chairman.
24. The Chairman and/or Vice-chairman shall cease to hold office if they resign from, or cease to be members of, the Forum. The election/appointment of a Chairman/Vice-chairman will then take place at the next meeting of the Forum.

Secretary

25. A Secretary to the Forum will be appointed from nominations from the Local Authority.

Meetings of the Forum

26. A minimum of three meetings of the Forum must be held each year.
27. The Local Authority must arrange for meetings to be held to enable the Forum to be consulted on the issues listed in the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 (see paragraph 2). The Forum must be consulted in time for its views to be taken into account in deciding the disposition of the Schools Budget for the following financial year.
28. Meetings of the Torbay Schools' Forum will be held in public. However, there may be occasions when it is appropriate for the Forum to consider matters without the public and the press present. The Forum may by resolution exclude the press and public if a majority of those voting on the matter consider that because of the nature of the business to be considered it is appropriate to do so.
29. In addition, the Forum may, from time-to-time, invite the attendance of people with particular expertise to meetings. These people may speak but not vote.
30. Agendas, reports and minutes of the Torbay Schools' Forum will be published on the Council's website at www.torbay.gov.uk/education/schools/schoolsforum.
31. The Secretary will convene meetings of the Forum. Whenever possible, two weeks notice of the date of meetings will be given. An agenda (together with any supporting documents) will be circulated at least five clear working days before the meeting, as far as is practicable.
32. The duration of the meetings will be a maximum of three hours unless agreed by the Forum.

Cancellation of Meetings

33. The Secretary will inform all parties concerned of the cancellation of any meetings of the Forum.

Voting

34. Unless these Standing Orders or the law provides otherwise, any matter will be decided by a simple majority of those members voting and present in the room at the time the motion was put. Only schools and Early Years members may vote on funding formulae.
35. If there are equal votes for and against, the Chairman (whether or not he or she has voted) will have a casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chairman chooses to exercise a casting vote.

36. The Chairman will take the vote by show of hands unless it is agreed that a secret ballot should take place, in which case the Clerk to the Forum will circulate voting slips to all members, collect and count the votes and announce the results immediately. The numbers of those voting for, against or abstaining will be recorded in the minutes.

Urgent Decisions Taken Under the Five-day Rule

37. With the agreement of the Chairperson, if an urgent decision is required and it is not practical to call a special meeting of the Forum a paper shall be circulated via email to all Members of the Forum. The circulation of the paper will trigger a period of five working days during which members can give consideration. If before the end of the five-day period any member wishes to raise an issue regarding the content of the paper they should inform the Secretary. If the issue cannot be resolved the paper will be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the Forum. If there are no objections to the proposal(s) the paper will be deemed to be approved by the Forum on the expiration of the five working days period. All decisions taken under the five-day rule will be reported to the next available meeting of the Forum.

Record of Proceedings

38. The Secretary will provide minutes of the proceedings and decisions of the Forum. A copy of the minutes will be signed by the Chairman at the next meeting in order to approve them as a correct record.
39. The Secretary will ensure that the results of the meetings and the action taken by the Local Authority in response to advice from the Forum are disseminated to schools.

Conduct of Members of the Forum

40. Members of the Schools Forum are expected to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
41. Individual members of the Schools Forum should consider their own position in relation to the declaration of interests and, in exceptional circumstances, may feel it appropriate to declare an interest and possibly withdraw from the meeting.

Expenses

42. Members of the Forum will be eligible to re-claim travel and other expenses in accordance with Scheme of Allowances appended to these Standing Orders.

Indemnification for Members

43. The Local Authority will indemnify members against reasonable legal costs and expenses arising from recommendations made in good faith.

Standing Orders

44. A copy of the Standing Orders of the Torbay Schools Forum will be given to each member of the Forum.
45. The ruling of the Secretary as to the construction or application of any of these Standing Orders or as to any of the proceedings of the Forum shall not be challenged by any member of the Forum.

TORBAY SCHOOLS FORUM

Allowances Scheme

1. Members of the Schools Forum who are Headteachers may claim any travel and subsistence allowance in line with their terms and conditions of employment
2. Members of the Schools Forum who are Governors must register as volunteers with Torbay Council in order to claim any travel and expenses allowance. The Council has no obligation to tax any payments to volunteers and does not send any returns to the Inland Revenue in this respect. Volunteers are responsible for reporting to the Inland Revenue any income which they have received that is taxable and it is recommended that they contact their local office if they have any questions.
3. Volunteers can only be reimbursed for actual expenditure and must submit a claim form including receipts (unless claiming for mileage).
4. Volunteers can claim 40p per mile for travel to and from Forum meetings.
5. An allowance of up to £5.84 per hour may be claimed by volunteers when a carer has to be engaged to enable that volunteer to attend meetings of the Schools Forum. The allowance will cover paid care for the following who live with the volunteer:
 - children aged 15 years and under;
 - elderly relative requiring constant care;
 - disabled relative requiring constant care; or
 - relative with learning disabilities requiring constant care.

The paid carer cannot be a member of the immediate family or household.

6. Any other members of Forum who are not entitled to claim under any other scheme (i.e. from the organisation they are representing) may claim travel and expenses allowances in line with paragraphs 2-5 above.
7. If there is a financial consequence to a school by a representative attending a meeting of the Torbay Schools Forum, a claim may be made under the relevant allowances scheme.