



CoGS (CLUSTER OF GELL SCHOOLS)

AGREEMENT FOR 'FORMAL COLLABORATION' BETWEEN SCHOOLS WITHIN THE ANTHONY GELL CLUSTER OF SCHOOLS

Purpose and Definition

The Anthony Gell Cluster of Schools (CoGS) is a group of schools working in a formal collaborative partnership to serve the Derbyshire Dales area of Derbyshire.

These schools are:

Anthony Gell School**

Bonsall CE (VA) Primary School

Brassington Primary School*

Carsington and Hopton CE School*

Kirk Ireton CE Primary School*

Crich CE Infant School

Crich Carr CE Primary School

Crich Junior School

Cromford CE Primary School

Matlock Bath CE (VA) Primary School

Middleton Community Primary School

Turnditch CE Primary School***

Wirksworth CE Infant School

Wirksworth Junior School

*The Village Federation

** Part of the Embark Federation

***Member of the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust (DDAT)

This partnership exists to improve educational outcomes for the young people in the area served by our schools. Its formation builds on a history of successful, informal collaborative working between the schools concerned.

This agreement transfers no powers away from the governing body of any of the schools concerned, nor will it alter any individual school's ethos.

This collaboration agreement first commenced on 27th May 2016. The agreement will be reviewed by the COGS Strategic Board at the start of each academic year. The Strategic Board consists of the Headteacher plus a governor from each school within the partnership.

Aims

The partnership's overarching aim is:

“To improve educational outcomes for the students of all of the schools concerned”

The partnership aims to achieve this aim by:

- Using close collaboration between the schools to provide a wider range of educational opportunities.
- Improving transition arrangements between schools by collective collaboration and recognition of the inclusive 4-18 provision across the cluster
- Improving outcomes for disadvantaged students, for example those eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs, by early identification and cross phase support and by sharing SENCo and Family Support expertise
- Improving the support and training opportunities available to all staff, and governors, by networking and joint training.
- Taking advantages of economies of scale that may be available.
- Sharing resources, expertise and knowledge
- Providing supervision and support for each other
- Adhering to the COGS Code of Conduct (see annex 1)

Governance and Management

The schools agree to form a Strategic Board.

The Strategic Board will consist of the Head teacher and one nominated governor from each school, ensuring an appropriate range of skills are represented by governors.

The Strategic Board will, annually, elect one of its members as Chair and will meet three times a year.

At the first meeting a protocol for working arrangements and Code of Conduct will be agreed. This protocol will be reviewed annually. This protocol will include matters such as confidentiality and communication.

The functions of the Strategic Board are:

- To set overall aims and targets for the group and to monitor progress against them.
- To secure an appropriate development plan and to monitor progress against it.
- To support meetings of the Headteachers' Group and other working groups as deemed appropriate.
- To make recommendations for action.

Powers of the Strategic Board

The Strategic Board has no legal powers; any decision requiring approval at governor level will remain the responsibility of each school's governing board.

Any approach from another school wishing to join the partnership will be discussed at the next meeting of the Strategic Board.

Shared Staff

It is not possible for the group of schools to hold the contract for, and therefore employ staff.

It is possible to make an agreement to share a member of staff employed by one school with the others in the group in return for reimbursement of costs.

Administrative Support

A Clerk to the Strategic Board was appointed, following a recruitment process initially in December 2016 and subject to the approach in the paragraph above, to provide joint administrative support for the group of schools.

The current postholder of Clerk is paid on the basis of additional hours and is already an employee as School Business Officer at Wirksworth Church of England Infant School.

The Clerk to the Strategic Board:

- Circulates dates for all meetings of the Strategic Board and joint events.
- Sends out invitations to meetings and joint events
- Compiles and sends out agendas for meetings
- Records and distributes minutes for all meetings of the Strategic Board

Headteacher Group

The Headteacher Group will consist of the head teacher of each of the schools concerned, and will meet six times per year (once per half term). Three of these meetings (once per term) will include governors and be CoGS Strategic Board meetings.

The Headteacher Group will be responsible for the day to day leadership of the partnership. The Headteacher Group will be chaired by a nominated Headteacher from within the group.

Working Groups

Working Groups will be set up in response to a particular issue, or to meet the requirements of specific objectives detailed in the development plan.

Each working group will be chaired by one of the Headteachers and may have a membership of Headteachers or Headteachers and Governors as appropriate. Meetings will take place in line with the agreed calendar.

Annex 1

The COGS Code of Conduct

reaffirm commitment or withdraw at the Spring term Strategic Board meeting preceding the end of that period.

- Individual Governing Boards will make decisions and inform CoGS of any changes to their commitment in a strategic and timely matter.
- Any revisions to membership will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the Strategic Board.

Relationships

- We will develop and maintain effective working relationships.
- Membership of CoGS will not prevent members pursuing or forming other partnerships or collaborations that will be of benefit to their individual schools.

Confidentiality

- We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the Strategic Board.
- We will observe confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the Strategic Board, especially regarding matters concerning individual schools or staff.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the schools and/or partnership arises outside the Strategic Board. School staff will similarly be expected to act within professional teacher standards.

Conduct

- We will encourage the open expression of views at Strategic Board and working group meetings.
- Any decision of the Strategic Board which does not carry a financial obligation will carry by a majority vote, unless members expressly require decisions to be considered by individual Governing Boards for approval.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the CoGS when we have been specifically authorised to do so by the Strategic Board.
- As a member of CoGS schools agree to adopt and implement in practice a consistent approach to the Local Authority Leave of Absence Policy.
- As a member of CoGS schools agree to develop and implement consistent practice which all Headteachers will follow which allows a transparent and seamless approach to requests from parents to transfer children between schools, setting parameters in the best interests of children and their families and allowing the transition process to start as soon as possible.
- The role of chairing the Strategic Board meetings will be undertaken by a Headteacher within the COGS partnership.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life, established in 1994 under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, made the following recommendations for standards of conduct in public life, which CoGS will uphold.

- **Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- **Integrity** - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity** - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- **Openness** - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty** - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership** - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

At the start of each academic year the Governing Board of each individual school will via GovernorHub complete a CoGS confirmation which confirms their commitment to abide by the CoGS Code of Conduct.

The Clerk to CoGS will ensure all confirmations are kept up to date.

If, in the unlikely event, a COGS school fails to abide by this Code of Conduct, their membership of COGS will be placed at risk.