

# Code of Conduct for Governors and Governing Boards

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour and conduct expected of all school Governors.

## The Governing Board

The Governing Board is legally responsible for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

The purpose of Governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

## Core functions of the Governing Board

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**

It is the job of the Governing Board to:

- Set a clear and explicit vision.
- Ensure strong and clear values and ethos are defined and modelled by the board.
- Set the school's strategic framework, defining medium to long-term goals and processes to monitor and review progress.
- Ensure mechanisms are in place for the board to listen, understand and respond to the voices of parents, pupils, staff and the local community.

- **Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff**

This will take place through:

- A rigorous analysis of pupil progress and attainment.
- Clear processes for overseeing and monitoring school improvement.
- A transparent system for the performance management of the Headteacher / executive leaders.
- Effective oversight of the performance of all other employees.
- A regular cycle of meetings.

- **Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources**

The Governing Board is responsible for making sure the school's money is well spent with effective controls for managing within available resources. They should do this by ensuring they have at least one Governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters, but everyone on the board should have a basic understanding of the financial cycle and legal requirements.

**The Governing Board should play a strategic role and leave the running of the school to the Headteacher they have appointed. The Governing Board must not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.**

## Ways of Working

- The way the Governing Board operates and organises itself should be kept under review.
- The Governing Board should consider how to use their powers to delegate functions and decisions to committees or individual Governors.
- The Governing Board must review the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any committee of the Governing Board annually.
- The Governing Board must meet at least three times a year.

- Headteacher and Chair should work together to ensure that meetings are well planned at appropriate intervals and that agendas are fit for purpose.
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- The Governing Board must appoint a Clerk to Governors to advise them on the nature of their functions and duties and ensure the Governing Board operates efficiently and effectively.

## **The Headteacher**

- The Headteacher's responsibilities include the internal organisation, management and control of the school and the educational performance of the school.
- The Headteacher will deliver the aims of the Governing Board through the day-to-day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy and the delivery of the curriculum.
- It is the Headteacher's legal duty to provide the Governing Board with all the information they need to do their job well. This means they should help the Governing Board access the data published by the DfE and Ofsted. They should also provide regularly a wide range of other management information so that the Governing Board can monitor different aspects of life in the school throughout the year.
- The Headteacher / SEL must comply with any reasonable direction of the Governing Board.
- The Headteacher / SEL is accountable to the Governing Board for the performance of all his or her responsibilities.

## **The Chair**

- The Governing Board must appoint a Chair to lead and manage the Governing Board.
- The Chair plays a crucial role in setting the culture of the Governing Board and is first among equals, but has no individual power.
- The Chair may only make decisions or act on behalf of the Governing Board if:
  - The Governing Board have delegated that decision to the Chair of Governors
  - The Chair is of the opinion that a delay in exercising a function would be detrimental to the school, anyone who works at the school or any pupil at the school or their parent.
- The Chair is the principle link between the Governing Board and the Headteacher. The Headteacher and Chair should meet regularly at mutually convenient times to discuss school matters and the Chair should be a critical friend by offering support, challenge and encouragement.
- The Chair works with the clerk to set Governing Board agendas and approves draft minutes of Governing Board meetings.

## **The Vice-Chair**

In the absence of a Chair of Governors, the Vice-Chair will take on that role.

## **Chairs of Committees**

Chairs of committees work with the Clerk to set committee meeting agendas and approve draft minutes for those meetings. They have responsibility for ensuring that if a function of the Governing Board has been delegated to the committee or a function of the Governing Board has otherwise been exercised by the committee, it is reported to the Governing Board.

## **Governors**

In law, the Governing Board is a corporate body, which means that no Governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the Governing Board. All Governors carry equal responsibility for decisions. If a function of the Governing Board has been delegated to an individual, the individual must report to the Governing Board in respect of any action taken or decision made.

The overriding concern of all Governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole, regardless of the route by which they were appointed and the type of Governor they are i.e. Staff, Parent, Community, Local Authority, Foundation, Co-opted.

For Governing Boards to carry out their role effectively, Governors must be prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously. They should:

- Be committed to improving education and welfare for all pupils.
- Prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand.
- Ask questions to clarify understanding and gain assurances.
- Make every effort to attend meetings promptly, regularly and for the full time.
- Take responsibility for their own learning, training and development as a Governor.

In addition, they should:

- Work as a member of a team at all times and be loyal to collective decisions made by the Governing Board.
- Recognise that all Governors have the same rights.
- Act in the best interests of the school at all times.
- Not do anything that might undermine the Governing Board's statutory requirement to promote community cohesion.
- Promote British Values with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- Respect confidentiality.
- Listen to and respect the views of others.
- Express their own views clearly and succinctly.
- Declare any conflicts of interest.
- Take their fair share of work/positions of responsibility.
- Know, understand and work within the prescribed regulatory framework.
- Report any evidence of fraud, corruption or misconduct to an appropriate person or Authority.
- Adhere to the seven principles of public life (below) originally published by the Nolan Committee.
- Ensure that communication undertaken via social networking sites is comparable to one to one interaction, meaning that all aspects of this code of conduct are taken account of when posting information, messages, pictures or video footage on-line.
- [Schools to add in any specific expectations with regard to their own organisation here]

## The Seven Principles of Public Life

As recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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.

**7. Leadership** - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **The Agreement**

### **In General**

- a) We understand the purpose of the Governing Board and the role of the Headteacher, Chair, Vice, Chair and Chairs of Committees as set out above.
- b) We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life.
- c) We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- d) We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- e) We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- f) We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Board meeting.
  
- g) We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- h) We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school and to promote community cohesion. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- i) In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.
- k) We understand that communication via social networking sites in a variety of formats is deemed comparable to one to one interaction for the purposes of this code of conduct.

### **Commitment**

- a) We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves the commitment of time and energy.
- b) We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups or as nominated Governors.
- c) We will prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand.
- d) We will make every effort to attend all meetings promptly, regularly and for the full time. Where we cannot, we will endeavour to explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- e) We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- f) Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board and agreed with the Headteacher.
- g) We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- h) We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Headteacher.

### **Relationships**

- a) We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- b) We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully. The Governor chairing a meeting is responsible for ensuring appropriate conduct at all times, and the other Governors are responsible for supporting the Chair in that role.
- c) We are prepared to answer queries from other Governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- d) We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **Confidentiality**

- a) We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- b) We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Board meeting.
- c) We will not reveal the details of any Governing Board vote.
- d) We will not reveal the details of discussions in Governing Board meetings or comments made by individual Governors at those meetings.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- a) We will record any pecuniary interest that we have in connection with the Governing Board's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- b) We will declare any personal or pecuniary interest in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

### **Implementation of this Code of Conduct**

- a) We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of conduct by any Governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Governing Board and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors, shall be minuted.
- b) We understand that any Governor whose conduct is minuted twice in twelve months shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute.
- c) We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations which pertain to qualification and disqualification for the role of school Governor and grounds for suspension and the 2017 amendment regarding parent and staff governors.
- d) We understand that no Governor/Associate member can refuse a DBS check and that all Governors must hold an Enhanced DBS certificate.

### **Publication on Website**

The following information about each Governor / Associate member will be published on the school's website:

- Name.
- Category of Governor.
- Which body appoints them.
- Term of office.
- The names of any committees the Governor serves on.
- Details of any positions of responsibility such as Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governing Board or a committee.
- Attendance at meetings.

*Governing Boards have a duty to publish on their website their register of interests. The register should set out the relevant business interests of Governors and details of any other educational establishments they Govern. The register should also set out any relationships between Governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives.*

### **Edubase**

The following additional Governor information will be held, but not published, on Edubase – a Government National database with effect from September 2016:

- Post Code.
- Date of Birth.
- Previous names.
- Nationality.
- Direct email address for Chair.

