



## Background

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

In addition, this code reflects our six school values



We are also aware of and accept the Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life as set out at the end of this code.

*The 3 functions of our governing body are to:*

- *Ensure the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school.*
- *Hold executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the school, and the performance management of staff.*
- *Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent.*

In order to do this effectively, individual governors will:

## 1. Responsibilities

- I. Understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the governing body and those of the school leaders
- II. Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the governing body itself.
- III. Promote equality and diversity throughout our school, including the governing body's operation.

- IV. Develop the reputation of our school, and preserve its character, religious ethos and values.
- V. Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- VI. Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders.
- VII. Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the governing body as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full governing body.
- VIII. Accept that, excluding the need for Chair's Actions, we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- IX. Will work to actively identify and manage risks to the school.
- X. 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.

## 2. Commitment to Good Governance

- I. Acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time.
- II. Involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees, working groups or monitoring visits.
- III. Prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions.
- IV. Make full efforts to attend and participate actively in all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to. Our individual annual attendance rate at meetings should be not less than 60%, unless due to long term illness or maternity/paternity leave.
- V. Recognise that a governor may be removed from office on the passing of a resolution following their continuous absence for a period of six months without acceptance of their apologies (taken from the first day of their first absence).
- VI. Follow the school's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the governing body as set out in relevant legislation, regulatory and statutory guidance, and the school's constitutional documents.
- VII. Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our governing body's performance, constitution and skillset.
- VIII. Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills we need for effective governance and in ensuring compliance.
- IX. Comply with relevant guidance and legislation that sets out how we must manage our school's money and procure goods and services.
- X. Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited.

- XI. Ensure that our visits to school are pre-arranged and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.

### **3. Relationships and Working with Others**

- I. Support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders and holding them to account.
- II. Strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- III. Express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- IV. Support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both during meetings and at all times.
- V. Be 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.
- VI. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the staff, parents, local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **4. Confidentiality**

We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when involved in discussions regarding school business outside of a governing body meeting.

In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. We will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:

- Information about sensitive matters.
- Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents).
- Details of individual governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted.

Confidential information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority.
- Disclosed to anyone outside of the governing body when advised not to.
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

### **5. Openness and Transparency**

#### **Conflicts of interest**

To make sure our governing body takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all governors including associate members.
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter in line with the advice from the Clerk.

### **Breaches of confidentiality**

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Governors understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended or removed.

### **Publishing information**

To ensure our governing body is transparent and open to the community we serve, we will

- Publish information on the school's website in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements, and in line with government guidance.
- Accept that the information relating to governors will be published on Get Information About Schools.
- Accept that the approved governing body and committee minutes, and any non-confidential agenda papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person.
- Declare all gifts worth more than £50 and record them on the gifts and hospitality register. We will not accept bribes.

### **Social media**

We will abide by any requirements set out in our school's social media policy and will:

- Uphold the reputation of the school at all times.
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community.
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available.
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards governors, to the chair of governors and the headteacher.

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils.
- Disclose any information that is confidential or would breach data protection principles.
- Make comments online about any members of the governing body or school community.
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute

## 6. Breach of this code of practice

If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this with the Chair and the Chair will investigate. Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the Vice Chair will investigate;

- The investigating governor will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor can bring a colleague to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions.
- If the investigation establishes that there has been a breach of the code the following actions can be taken. This may involve:
  - a) Further meetings to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct.
  - b) Support, mentoring or training for the governor.
  - c) Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in.
  - d) Formal proposal to a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension or removal from the governing body.
- The investigating governor will advise all those involved and the Clerk of their decision and of any timeframe, if applicable, to the agreed actions.
- The governing body should only use removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways. In the event of removal, the governing body shall follow due process set out in regulations 20-25 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

Governors may, but not exclusively, be **suspended** if they:

- Are a staff governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school.
- Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the governor being disqualified from holding office.
- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos and religious character values of the school (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the governing body)
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the school, the governing body, a governor or any member of staff into disrepute,
- Breach confidentiality
- Acted to undermine fundamental British values or the governing body's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty

Governors may but not exclusively be **removed** where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension.
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 Nolan principles of public life.
- They display repeated and serious incompetence.
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the governing body, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school.

## **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

*(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was 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, and to make recommendations).*

### **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.

This code will be confirmed by the governing body on an annual basis.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date .....