



Code of Conduct for the Governing Board

General

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

- The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievement of all its pupils.
- The Governing Board will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its four main objectives:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the lead executive/headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

Monitoring and evaluating school performance

- All Governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- In so far as they have, or share responsibility for the employment of staff, Governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- Governors should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.

- Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual Governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole Governing Board.
- Governors accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that governors will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Board meeting.
- Governors will actively support and challenge the headteacher.

Commitment

- Being a Governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the Governing Board of a school.
- All Governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the Governing Board and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the Full Governing Board and committees is essential.
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities.
- Governors accept that in the interests of open government, full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency Governors accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

- Governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the head teacher, staff, parents, the Local Authority, the Diocese, other relevant agencies and the local community.
- Governors will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- Governors are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.

Confidentiality

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Although decisions reached at Governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.

- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.
- Governors will not reveal the details of any Governing Board vote.

Conduct

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so.
- All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the governing body and agreed with the head teacher.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this.
- Any pecuniary interest that a Governor may have in connection with the Governing Board's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests. Governors accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- Governors will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Governing Board.
- Governors will declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise. Where an interest is declared, the governor will offer to leave the meeting while the item is under discussion.

Training and Development

Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual Governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork. Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the Governing Board as a whole. New Governors should go on New Governor training as soon as possible.

Mentoring

An experienced Governor who acts as a mentor to new Governors can provide support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the Governing Board. Governors should be prepared to act as mentors, as required.

Meetings

Individual Governors do not have any authority in school. It is the collective decisions of all the Governors together that carry authority. The activities that Governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the Governing Board 'goes live' - in a meeting.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If Governors believe this code has been breached, the matter will be raised with the chair and the chair will investigate; the Governing Board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that is believed to have breached this code, another Governing Board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

It follows that if a Governing Board is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Below is a suggested ‘Meetings Charter’. If the Chair, the Head, the Clerk and all the governors subscribe to, and implement, a charter such as this, the governing body will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

Meetings Charter

As a Governor I expect:

- people to attend regularly and be punctual;
- an agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before the meeting;
- an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item;
- a Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point;
- my contributions to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion;
- the decision making process to be quite clear;
- Governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan;
- Governors to take collective responsibility for decisions;
- minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.

Others can expect me to:

- attend regularly and be punctual;
- read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about;
- bring my papers to the meeting;
- make relevant and positive contributions;
- listen to and consider what other people want to say;
- accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with.

Visiting the School

- Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. However, they do need to have the opportunity to arrange visits to the school in order to see Governors’ policies in action and to understand how the school works.
- Governor visits should be carried out in accordance with the Governor Visits to School policy.

The Seven Principles of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty & Leadership. More information regarding these principles can be found on the National Governors’ Association Model Code of Conduct.

Approved at Full Governing Body meeting on 22nd September 2021

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