

## **Essential Governor Guidance**

*for school governors and clerks in Maintained Schools*

**Please note that legislation in this Governor Guidance Note applies to Maintained Schools but the principles may be useful for Academies and Free Schools**

### **A MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNING BODIES**

This model code of conduct details the behaviour and professional standards required from school governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

It recognises that effective governance is the result of strong professional relationships that are based on mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities. Governing bodies should use their code of conduct alongside individual role descriptions to ensure all governors understand what is expected of them.

#### **This Code of Conduct embraces The Nolan Principles of Public Life:**

**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 this.

**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.

## **AS A GOVERNING BODY WE WILL FOCUS ON OUR CORE STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS:**

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

## **AS INDIVIDUALS ON THE GOVERNING BODY WE AGREE TO:**

### **Fulfil our roles & responsibilities**

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on the core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school.
- We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the school and only speak or act on behalf of the governing body if we have the authority to do so.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body and will stand by the decisions that we make.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may put pupils at risk, we will speak up.
- We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- We will publish on the school website the structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and the full names of the chair of each.
- We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

### **Demonstrate our commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, and ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the policy established by the governing body.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent/carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction including safeguarding training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.
- We will confirm our eligibility to be a governor in writing and inform the clerk immediately if there is a change.
- We accept that as governors we need to have an enhanced DBS check and Section 128 check on appointment

## **Build and maintain relationships**

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express our views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the governing body and ensuring appropriate conduct.
- 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.
- We will develop effective working relationships with the school leaders, staff, parents, and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
- We will ensure that an appropriate balance is reached between providing challenge and support to the headteacher.
- We will disclose any relationships with other governors or staff at the school and allow this information to be published on the school website.

## **Respect confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff, pupils or parents (both inside and outside school).
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body discussion or how governors vote, unless agreed.
- We will exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We understand that the requirements of confidentiality will continue to apply after we leave office and will ensure that any information relating to the school is returned to the school.
- We will only use secure emails and ensure that confidential and sensitive data is kept securely, both paper and electronic versions.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## **Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent**

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business and will record these in the Register of Business Interests and accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise, and if a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We will act as a governor in the best interests of the school; not as a representative of any group.
- We will not use the governing body to enhance or influence the education of our own children or those personally known to us or pursue personal agendas.
- We accept that a governor paid to work at the school, other than the headteacher, must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to the pay or performance appraisal of any particular person working at the school.
- We accept that the headteacher must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to their own pay or performance appraisal.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- We will ensure the same information will be published for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed.

- We accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

**BREACH OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

- In the event that there is a serious breach of the code of conduct by a governor behaving in a manner that would be inconsistent with the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the school's ethos and values, the governing body has the right to hold that individual governor to account.
- In this case, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body 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 we believe has breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

**The Governing Body of *(name of school)* adopted this Code of Conduct on *(date)*.**

We agree to review and re-adopt the code of conduct annually at the first full governing body meeting of the year, and for it to be signed by each governor.

Name	Signature	Date