

# Code of Conduct for the Governing Board

**SCHOOL NAME:** Great Bardfield Community School

The governing board has adopted the following principles and procedures:

Purpose of the governing board:

The governing board is the key strategic decision-making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. Raising achievement is at the heart of a governing board's strategic role; every child has the right to attend a good school.

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishes the strategic direction by:

- setting the vision, values and objectives for the school
- agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- meeting statutory duties

Ensures accountability by:

- appointing the headteacher
- monitoring progress towards targets
- performance managing the headteacher
- engaging with stakeholders (parents and pupils)
- 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

For governing boards to carry out their roles effectively, governors must be:

- prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously
- acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals
- supported by the appropriate authorities in that task
- willing and able to monitor and review their own performance

## The role of a governor:

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

- No governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the full board.
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made.
- Although appointed through different routes, the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole. Governing boards should be alert to the risk of becoming dominated by one particular mind-set or strand of opinion.

A individuals on the governing board, we agree to the following:

### Role and responsibilities:

- We understand the purpose of the governing board and the role of the headteacher.
- We are aware of and accept the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (see appendix).
- 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.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made y the governing board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- 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.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We will always use social networking site responsibly and ensure that neither our personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation, is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We will promote tolerance of, and respect for, those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability or sexual orientation.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established b y the governing board.
- We will support the headteacher and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and hold them to account for school performance.

### Commitment:

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 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.

- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and, where we cannot attend, explain in advance why we are not able to do so.
- 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 to school arranged in advance with staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will demonstrate commitment to continually developing our knowledge and skills and keeping them up to date. This includes our ability to understand and interpret educational and financial data.
- We accept that in the interests of openness and transparency, our full names, date of appointment, roles on the governing board, 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 accept that personal information will also be published on the DfE EduBase, to help increase transparency on who governs our schools.
- We accept that we are required to hold an Enhanced Criminal Records Certificate (ECRC).

### Relationships:

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in his/her role of ensuring appropriate conduct, both at meetings and at all times.
- 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 seek to develop effective working relationships with our headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority, other relevant agencies and the community.

### Confidentiality:

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside the school.
- We will ensure that we are familiar with, and adhere to, the data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 (see Appendix 1).
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

## Conflicts of interest:

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.; We 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.
- We 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.

## Breach of this Code of Conduct:

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension 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 the code, another governor, such as the vice chair, will investigate.

**Adapted from the NGA Code of Conduct, 2015.**

**Reviewed by EES for Schools Governor Services team, August 2016.**

## APPENDIX

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee)

**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.