

The Code of Conduct for the Great Bardfield Primary School Governing Board 2021/22

This code sets out the expectations of and commitment required from school governors, in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

The governing board is the key strategic decision making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring the school 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.

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

- prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously
- committed to the key characteristics and behaviours expected of the role, as set out in A Competency Framework for Governance (DfE 2017)
- 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

Once approved by the governing board, this Code will apply to all governors.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law.

The governing board has the following strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders (including parents and pupils)
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

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

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the executive leaders.
- We are aware of and accept the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 1)
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the 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 by the 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 governance 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support the headteacher and senior leadership team, but challenge their expectations and hold them to account for school performance.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will respect the role of the headteacher and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- We will promote tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation.
- We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
- Be cautious and professional in all correspondence, including emails, internally and externally.

- Copy in all governors and the clerk (where appropriate) to maintain transparency within the governing board or use GovernorHub for general communication.
- Check regularly for emails and GovernorHub updates.
- Notify the Clerk of any change to contact details and update on GovernorHub.

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 unable to.
- 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 relevant member of staff or the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer or member of the community), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our 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 us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).
- 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 all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members 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 work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- 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

- 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.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will ensure that we are familiar with, and adhere to, the data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 (see Appendix 2).

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.

Ceasing to be a governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

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/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 board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

Adapted from the NGA Code of Conduct 2021

Governors will sign the Code of Conduct at the first governing board meeting of each school year.

Once approved by the governing board the Code of Conduct will apply to all governors.

The Governing Board of Great Bardfield Primary School adopted this Code of Conduct on

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE
Christopher Barr	
Julia Collins	
Janet Dyson	
Geoff Gardner	
Johanna Goldsmith	
Alison Kerrell	
Julie Lowe	
Susannah Mercer	
Natalie Pitt	
Sheree Reilly	
Vivien Tattersall	
Jane Tillotson	
Emma White	
Christian Young	

16th September 2021.

Undertaking:

As a member of the governing board I will always have the achievement and well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the governing board, the headteacher or the staff.

Appendix 1

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.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix 2

Data Protection and Information Security – Personal Data

The governing board has a collective and individual responsibility regarding confidentiality in respect of school business. In exercising their functions, governors will on occasion, have access to sensitive personal information about staff and pupils. This may, for example, relate to safeguarding, exclusion, health or conduct issues.

In addition, the nature of a governor's role means that they will often receive, access and process information outside of the school premises – at home or at work. Under the Data Protection Act 1998* it is particularly important that personal and sensitive information is held and handled securely.

We will ensure that we are familiar with, and adhere to, the data protection principals set out in the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

We will ensure that personal data:

- is processed fairly and lawfully
- is obtained only for lawful purposes, and is not further used in any manner incompatible with those original purposes
- is accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- is adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which it is processed
- is not kept for longer than is necessary for those purposes;
- is processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the DPA;
- is protected by appropriate technical and organisational measures against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage and
- is not transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection of the personal information

Contact details

We will:

- ensure that our correct contact details (home address, phone number and email address) are held by the school to avoid misdirected communications
- ensure that our email addresses are professional and where possible, personal (ie not shared with family members)
- take appropriate steps to prevent others, including family members, from accessing confidential information.

Electronic personal data

We will:

- use encryption software/strong passwords on all electronic devices which may contain personal data. This includes mobile phones, laptops, tablets and USB devices
- password protect files containing personal data
- take all reasonable steps to keep such devices secure (e.g. not leaving them in cars)
- ensure that family members/work colleagues who share devices, cannot access personal data

Paper-based personal data

We will:

- keep all paper based files securely
- dispose of paper records in a secure manner

Adopted by the governing board of Great Bardfield Primary School on 16th September 2021