

Code of Conduct for Governing Boards



Code of Conduct for Governors
Approved Autumn Term 2016

Introduction

The Governance of schools is now a function of considerable importance and the work of the Governing Board of a school matters more than ever before. Authority is vested almost entirely in people who are essentially volunteers, whether elected, co-opted or appointed and whose ranges of experience, expertise and interests are likely to be very diverse.

Various pieces of legislation define the duties, powers and responsibilities of Governing Board and the procedures to be followed. The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 define the general duties of Governing Board and require Governors to act with *integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school*. The Regulations also require the Governing Board to *be open about their decisions and to be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to others*, within the bounds of reasonable confidentiality. These same regulations define in law the relationship between Governing Boards and the Headteacher. However, legislation does not define how Governors will relate to each other nor the accepted way in which a Governing Board carries out its business, beyond the few ideals mentioned above.

This model Code of Conduct is designed to assist members of Governing Boards and Headteachers in the normal conduct of their general responsibilities so that a balanced view of Governance is maintained, harmony is achieved and unnecessary conflict avoided. It is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which Governors will operate and can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the school. 'School' includes academies, and it applies to all level of school Governance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Name of School **Hearsall Community Primary School**

Name of Chair **Stella Bailey**

Name of Headteacher **Bryony Harrison**

Date **16th November 2016**

The Governors of this school accept the following Code of Conduct:

General

- The authority with which the *Governing Board* operates is held corporately. All Governors have equal status and their central concern should be the welfare of the school as a whole. Although governors are elected or appointed by different groups, they should not act as delegates. Each Governor is a Governor in their own right, but each brings an individual perspective to the *Governing Board*, whether as parent, member of staff or from outside the school itself.
- Governors have responsibility for:
 - a. Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined
 - b. Ensuring that the headteacher performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
 - c. Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

In the exercise of its delegated powers and functions, the governors of the LGB shall:

- ensure that the Academy is conducted in accordance with the objectives of the Trust, the terms of any trust governing the use of the land which is used for the purposes of the Academy, any agreement entered into with the Secretary of State for the funding of the Academy and these terms of reference;
- promptly implement and comply with any policies or procedures communicated to the LGB by the Directors from time to time;
- review its own policies and practices on a regular basis, in view of any advice or recommendations made by the Directors;
- work closely with the Directors and act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the Trust and the Academy;
- be open about decisions and be prepared to justify those decisions;
- keep confidential all information of a confidential nature obtained by them relating to the Academy and the Trust; and
- adopt financial prudence in managing the financial affairs of the Trust in so far as these relate to the Academy and are delegated to them.

the Headteacher is responsible for:

- a. The internal organisation, management and control of the school
- b. The educational performance of the school
- c. Presenting aims and objectives, policies and targets for consideration by the Governing Board;
- d. Reporting to the Governing Board on progress on meeting these aims and objectives.

Governors and the Headteacher will each recognise and respect the roles of the other.

- Governors are required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check within 21 days of appointment.
- Governors have a general duty to act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school at all times.
- Governors and the Headteacher will seek to work together as a team and to develop effective working relationships with staff and parents, directors, other relevant agencies and the community.
- Governors will actively support and challenge the Headteacher.
- Governors have or share the responsibility for the employment of staff and will fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- Governors will consider carefully how their own decisions might affect the community and other schools.
- Governors will be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and be prepared to explain their actions and decisions as far as reasonable confidentiality allows.

Commitment

- School Governance requires significant amounts of time and energy from every Governor.
- All Governors will involve themselves actively in the work of the Governing Board and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees and working groups. It is recommended that each Governor serves on at least one committee.

- Governors know the school well and take all possible opportunities for involvement in school activities.
- Regular attendance at meetings of the Full Governing Board, committees and working groups is essential. Apologies are given to the Clerk to Governors in advance of a meeting if they are unable to attend.
- Governors will consider their individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.

Confidentiality

- Governors will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- Governors will exercise the highest degree of prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside of a Governing Board meeting. Governors will encourage issues to be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or Governing Board (depending on the nature of the issue) through the proper channels.
- Governors will not speak against majority decisions of the Governing Board, even if they have not themselves agreed with them.
- Governors will not reveal the details of any Governing Board vote including committee.

Conflicts of interest

- Publication of Governor's Details and Register of Interests on the school website is required. The detail to be published for each Governor and Associate Member as a minimum includes:
 - their name
 - their category of governor
 - which body appoints them
 - their term of office
 - the names of any committees the Governor serves on; and

- details of any positions of responsibility such as chair or vice-chair of the Governing Board or a committee of the Governing Board
 - relevant business interests and details of any other educational establishments governed. The register should also set out any relationships between Governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives
 - Attendance at Governing Board Meetings and Committee meetings in the previous year
- From 1 September 2016 schools are required to populate Edubase with information regarding their Governors which will form a National Database of Governors. The data to be collected by Edubase that will be publically available is:
 - Full name
 - Appointing Body
 - Date of Appointment
 - Date term of office ends
 - If a Governor is a Chair, Member of the Governing Board, a Trust Member or a Local Governor on a Local Governing Board

In addition the following will be collected but not published: postcode, date of birth, previous names, nationality and email address for the Chair. This information will be encrypted. The email address for the Chair will be made available to Regional Schools Commissioner Offices on request.

- Governors and Associate Members are required to complete a declaration of business interest form on an annual basis
- Individual Governors will declare any potential conflict of interest and withdraw from the meeting before the particular item is discussed.
- Governors will resist the temptation of outside pressure to use the position of Governor to benefit him or herself or other outside parties.
- 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.

Conduct

- *Governors will express their views openly, courteously and respectfully within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.*
- *Governors will support the Chair to ensure appropriate conduct at all times.*
- *Visits by Governors to the school will be undertaken and arranged in advance within a framework which has been established by the Governing Board and agreed with the Headteacher.*
- *In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, Governors will follow procedures established by the Governing Board.*
- *Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Board when they have been specifically authorised to do so.*
- *Governors will follow agreed procedures when wishing to make critical comment on any aspect of the school.*
- *Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school and their actions within the school community should reflect this.*

Breach of the Code

- *If there is a belief that the code is breached the issue should be raised with the Chair of Governors and they will investigate. Suspension/ removal would only be used as a last resort if the issue is not resolved in a more constructive way. Should the Chair be the subject of the breach, ideally the Vice Chair (or another Governor) should investigate.*

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).

Governors should accept the Seven Principles of Public Life as follows:

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 of Conduct is based upon the Model Code of Conduct from Coventry Local Authority Governor Support Team distributed to schools Autumn 2016