Governor code of conduct

College Road Primary School

College Road
Primary School

Approved by:	**Date:**
Last reviewed on:	
Next review due by:	

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity, and help us to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

Please note, this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the trust and its pupils.

2. The 7 Nolan principles of public life

As governors, we will follow these principles set out by the government, at all times. They apply to anyone who holds public office:

- **Selflessness** – we will act in the public interest
- **Integrity** – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests
- **Objectivity** – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
- **Accountability** – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
- **Openness** – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
- **Honesty** – we will be truthful
- **Leadership** – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens

3. Governors' responsibilities

In schools, the purpose of governance is to provide:

- strategic leadership
- accountability and assurance
- strategic engagement

In order to do this effectively, as individuals we will:

- Understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the board and those of the executive leadership
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the community of the school, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself
- Promote equity and diversity throughout our organisation, including the board's operation
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents/carers, staff, local communities and the local authority)
- Follow the school's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the trust's constitutional documents
- Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our board's performance, constitution and skillset
- Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills we need for effective governance
- Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full board
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation, and our funding agreement, which sets out how we must manage our school's money, and procure goods and services
- Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, and understand that our financial management and decision making will be scrutinised and audited
- We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the school

4. Working with others

We will:

- Support and strengthen trust leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, and holding them to account
- Respect the role of the school leadership team, and avoid routine involvement in operational matters
- Respect each other's views
- Work together as a board to develop effective relationships with stakeholders
- Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders
- Follow the Equality Act 2010, and apply the principles of fairness and equity in everything we do

5. Commitment to governance

We:

- Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice
- Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role
- Understand that work should be shared among members and that all governors are expected to take an active role
- Will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions
- Will participate in regular pre-arranged school visits in accordance with our school policies
- Will attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the board has a wide range of skills and expertise

6. Openness and transparency

Conflicts of interest

To make sure our board takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all governors
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter

Publishing information

To ensure our board is transparent and open to the communities we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.

- We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
    - The structure and remit of the members and local governing bodies (where applicable),
- For each **member** who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
    - Their full name
    - Their date of appointment
    - The date when they stepped down, if applicable
    - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests (including governance roles in other educational institutions)
- For each **local governor** (where applicable) who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
    - Their full name
    - Their date of appointment
    - Their term of office (trustees/local governors and local governors only)
    - The date they stepped down (where applicable)
    - The body that appointed them (trustees/local governors and local governors only)
    - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
    - Their attendance record over the last academic year (only for trustees/local governors at board and committee meetings, and local governors at local governing body meetings)
- We accept that the information about members and local governors will be published on Get Information About Schools

- We accept that the board may collect diversity data to publish on the school website, which could include information on any of the 9 protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010
    - We understand that providing this information is voluntary and that, if we have already provided this information, we are able to request it be removed from any reporting
- We accept that the information about local governors will be published by Companies House
- We accept that the approved board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person

7. Confidentiality

In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. We will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:

- Information about sensitive matters
- Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents/carers)
- Details of individual local governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted

Confidential information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

Breaches of confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Local governors understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended or removed.

8. Data protection

We will follow the trust's information security processes and measures and data protection policy (if applicable) when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Personal data breaches

We will inform the trust's data protection officer immediately if we believe there has been a personal data breach.

9. Social media

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the school at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our school's communities
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards local governors, to the local governing body and the school leadership
- Carefully consider how appropriate it would be to accept any friend requests from parents/carers or to join any parent/carer groups associated with the trust or our school

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the board of governors or school communities
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute

10. Monitoring arrangements

This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the full board of governors.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- E-safety
- Data protection

Appendix 1: breaches of the code of conduct

If we suspect a local governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- Another governor will investigate
- That governor will hold a meeting with the local governor to discuss the issue. The local governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another local governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
    - Further meetings with the trustee to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
    - Support, mentoring or training for the local governor
    - Making sure the local governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in

If there is no improvement in the local governor's behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to ask the members to suspend or remove them in accordance with the trust's articles of association. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances.

Local governors may be **suspended** if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board of governors (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the board) and
- Have brought, or are likely to bring, the school or governing body into disrepute, or
- Acted to undermine fundamental British values or the board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent duty

Local governors may be **removed** where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- They display repeated and serious incompetence
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the board's operation