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West Berkshire Governor Services has reviewed and adapted the National Governor Association’s Code of Practice, as a model built upon best practice from around the country. Governing Bodies may wish to tailor this recommended code to their own situation.

We recommend that the Code of Conduct should be thoroughly discussed so that the whole governing body has ownership of it. Once it has been adopted, the governors should be asked to review it and sign it on an annual basis, ideally at the first meeting in the autumn term.

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the aims and ethos of the particular school.

The Purpose of the Governing Body

The governing body is the school’s accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education, supports their well-being and guarantees that a strong focus on the three core strategic functions are maintained. These are:

- a. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b. Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

For governing bodies to carry out their role 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; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance;
- Willing and able to undertake regular training

The Role of a Governor

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

- No governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed/elected through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority co-opted, foundation), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

This Code is built on the Nolan Principles of Public Life.



General

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Head Teacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 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 affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We undertake to act responsibly, in good faith and within our delegated authority at all times.

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 body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will read all associated papers, sent ahead of meetings, in good time and be well prepared.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, we will notify the Clerk to Governors with an explanation of our failure to attend.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the Head Teacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We acknowledge that failure to attend meetings for a period of six months without the consent of the governing body could lead to disqualification.
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Head Teacher.



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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.
- 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 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 the Head Teacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will not use our position to gain advantage in other relationships with the school or community (e.g. as a teacher, employee, parent or councillor).
- We will ensure that our other relationships with the school (e.g. parent, employee) are conducted in a proper and ethical manner, and that our standing as a governor is not compromised or open to misinterpretation.
- We will not be “friends” with pupils on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue.

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 business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will not pass any information, or make comment, to the press or other media or respond to social media comments regarding the school or governing body unless expressly authorised to do so by the full governing body.
- We will not identify the school on social networking sites, unless authorised to do so by the full governing body, as this could directly link our personal life with the reputation of the school.

Conflicts of Interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have, in connection with the governing body's business, on the Register of Business Interests document.
- We will declare details of any other educational establishments where we hold position of school governor.
- We will declare our relationships, if any, with other governors, members of school staff, including spouses, partners and relatives.
- We understand this information will also be published on the school's website in relation to statutory guidance.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and leave the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

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 body should 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 this code, another governor, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school governor, Schedule 6 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 and Schedule 4 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, relating to the disqualifications from the role of school governor (held as a separate document).

The Governing Body of: Adopted this code of conduct on:

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

Undertaking

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the 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 as well as upholding and supporting its policies, vision, ambitions and high expectations and demonstrating the highest standards of behaviour in respect thereto. I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Head Teacher or staff.

Signed:

Print name:

Date: