



## **Governors Code of Conduct 2024 to 2025**

(This code of conduct is adopted from the Education People's recommended document 2021 - 2022)

### **Approved and adopted by Stocks Green Primary School**

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Review Date** October 2025

**This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors, in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. The Code should be read in conjunction with the Governance Handbook and relevant law and applies to all governors.**

## **Purpose of the governing body**

The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. The governing body is the key strategic decision-making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. High quality, effective and ethical governance is key to success in our school and for the future of our pupils. Ensuring the best possible outcomes is at the heart of a governing body's strategic role; every child has the right to reach their potential.

### **The governing body has the following core strategic functions:**

#### **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction by:**

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy as appropriate including its priorities and targets
- Being the strategic key decision maker with decisions made in the best interest of pupils and the **school's** purpose
- Delegating operational matters to executive leaders and governance functions to committees as appropriate
- Being connected with, and answerable to, the communities we serve, particularly parents/carers
- Meeting statutory duties

#### **Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff by:**

- Appointing the headteacher
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Robust holding to account for improving pupil and staff performance by asking the right questions
- Workload consideration
- Rigorous analysis of data
- Understanding the curriculum offer, its intent, implementation, and impact
- Monitoring and evaluating progress towards targets
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

#### **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent by:**

- Ensuring financial probity
- Ensuring financial compliance
- Setting the budget

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

### **Collectively as a governing body we agree the following:**

- **Leadership** - our school is headed by an effective governing body that provides strategic leadership in line with the school strategic aims, values and culture and a commitment to fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Our governing body bases our effectiveness on the six key features of effective governance:
  - strategic leadership
  - accountability
  - people with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
  - structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities
  - compliance with statutory and contractual requirement
  - evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance
- **Integrity** - our governing body acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which helps achieve the school's vision. Our governing body is aware of the importance of the public and stakeholder confidence in our school and governors undertake their duties accordingly, abiding by the Seven Principles of Public Life (see appendix 1 - Nolan principles) including avoiding placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions governors must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships, with our governing body managing any risk appropriately.
- **Decision making, risk and control** - our governing body makes sure that its decision making processes which follow our required statutory procedures, which act solely in the interest of pupils, are informed, timely, impartial and fair, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias, and that effective delegation, control and risk assessment, and appropriate management systems are set up and monitored. Further, our governing body assesses the risks attached to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare by abiding and role modelling the schools' culture to encourage pupils to respect other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- **Governing Body effectiveness** - our governing body works as an effective collective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions as informed by the competency framework for governance.
- **Diversity** - our governing body's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and provides sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable robust decision making.
- **Openness and accountability** - our governing body leads the school in being transparent and accountable. Our governing body and school are open in its working-particularly to ensure transparency of decision-making.

## **As individuals on the governing body we agree the following:**

### ***Role & Responsibilities***

- We understand the purpose of the governing body, the skillset required to perform our core, and any individual delegated, functions and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept and abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 1).
- 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 and will report back accordingly to the governing body.
- 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.
- When making decisions we will act objectively, impartially and fairly. We will use the best evidence, and without discrimination or bias, be objective when exercising judgement and analysis solely for the good of the pupils.
- Upon communicating formally within our governing role, we will ensure any comments made reflect the school policy even if they differ from our personal views.
- 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 transparent 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 wider local community will reflect this.
- We will promote and demonstrate tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- We will demonstrate a professional attitude in all our undertakings as a governor.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the policies and procedures established by the governing body, acting without discrimination or bias.
- We will actively support the headteacher and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and hold them to account for school performance.
- We understand, accept, and respect the differences between the strategic governing body role and the staff day to day operational and management role, avoiding actions that may undermine these arrangements.
- We understand, will adhere to, and respect the differences between the strategic governor role and any other which we may undertake within the school as a parent, professional or volunteer.

- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and the policies and procedures we approve as a governing body as set out by the relevant governing documents and law, including complying within the required timeframe to apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS and any subsequent DBS.
- We agree to abide by the school e-safety protocols for social media and when communicating in a private capacity will strive to uphold the reputation of the school. We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal or professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We agree to abide by the requirements of any Service Level Agreement (SLA) contracts procured by the governing body.
- We agree to use our governance portal and school email addresses for all governance communication both within and outside the school organisation. We recognise this will protect the school from any potential breach of data protection.

## **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, panels or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings, including any held virtually, 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 headteacher, undertaken in accordance and abiding with the monitoring visit policy and schedule as established annually by the governing body.
- We will demonstrate commitment to our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training to develop the knowledge and skills required to effectively perform our core and individual delegated functions and keep them up to date.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, 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 until 12 months after our service has ended.
- In the interest of transparency, we will commit to declaring at meetings and updating our pecuniary and business interests as soon as possible.
- In the interest of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged, until 12 months after our service, has ended on the DfE's

national database of governors Get Information About Schools (GIAS) with updates to any changes made as soon as possible.

- In following statutory requirements, we will ensure we are registered with Governor Hub, the Kent County Council maintained school statutory database and keep our contact details up to date.

## **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 body and all school staff.
- We will always support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at and between meetings.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governing body 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 seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the wider community.

## **Confidentiality**

- We will ensure we abide by the protocols of our virtual meeting policy and processes to ensure our attendance enables the confidential conditions required.
- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school.
- We will always exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure all confidential documentation including any held electronically, is securely stored, and disposed of appropriately in accordance with our data protection policy and procedure, mindful of the GDPR legislation requirements.
- We will use school email accounts for all email communication in our governor role, both within and outside of the governing body.

## **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those pertaining to people we are related to, connected with, or governing in other schools) in the Register of Business Interests and declare at all relevant meetings. If any pecuniary, business or relationship conflict perceived or real arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time and accept the governing body's decision

on managing the conflict. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school 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 body. See Appendix 2.

**We recognise 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 school, its pupils, and their role in holding public 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 and report back to the governing body.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice chair or an appointed independent investigator, will investigate.
- In certain circumstances, eg, tainting, it may be more appropriate for another member of the governing body or an appointed independent investigator to undertake the investigation, then report back to the governing body.
- The governing body will only use suspension or removal (ensuring statutory guidance, procedures and regulations are followed) as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways. Removal will be used where serious misconduct has taken place.
- We understand, in maintained schools, we are expected only to exercise the power to remove an elected governor, with a five year disqualification term, in exceptional circumstances where the actions or behaviour of the elected governor warrants removal rather than suspension.

The Governing Body agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and it will be endorsed by the full governing board.

I agree to abide by the above Code of Conduct and know of no reason from the above disqualification criteria for not continuing to hold the office of governor.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Failure by any individual governor to sign this Code of Conduct will be counted as a breach of the Code**

### 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. 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.

## The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

*The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.*

1. Selflessness School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. Integrity School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. Objectivity School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. Accountability School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. Leadership School and college leaders 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. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **Trust:** *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*  
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **Wisdom:** *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*  
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.
- c. **Kindness:** *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*

We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.

- d. **Justice:** *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*

We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.

- e. **Service:** *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*

We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.

- f. **Courage:** *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*

We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.

- g. **Optimism:** *leaders are positive and encouraging*

Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.