



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards

Adopted by the governing board of:	Eccleston Mere Primary School
Date Adopted:	Sep 2023
Date to be Reviewed:	Sep 2023
The governing board 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	

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

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 and supports their well-being.

Once approved and adopted by the governing board, the Code will apply to all governors and any associate members who agree to faithfully abide by it.

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

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the 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/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- 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

The National Governance Association recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:

Ensure that other key players with a stake in the organisation get their voices heard by:

- Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.
- Reaching out to the school's wider community and inviting them to play their part.
- Using the views of stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures.

### **As individuals on the board we agree to the following:**

#### **Fulfil our role & responsibilities**

- We understand the purpose of the board and its strategic role so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school.
- We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.

- We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
- We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
- We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

### **Demonstrate our commitment to the role**

- 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 arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- 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 relevant staff 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), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor and continue to honour the commitments made in this code
- We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

### **Build and maintain relationships**

- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/ communities.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.
- We will create an inclusive environment where each member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors and the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities' any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or which may place pupils at risk.
- 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.

## Respect confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside or outside school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff, pupils or families`.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school 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 maintain confidentiality even after we leave office

## Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
- 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.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We will act as a governor; and not as a representative of any group, and always in the best interests of the school as a whole.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, 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 board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools) some of which will be publicly available.

## Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/academy committee member leaves office.

## Breach of this code of conduct

- We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.
- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair / vice chair and this would be investigated; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

## The procedure for removal is as follows:

Under the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 (Regulation 25)

- The matter of removal of the governor must be specified as an item on the agenda
- The governor(s) proposing the resolution to remove the governor must give reasons for removal at the meeting
- The governing body must consider the reasons for removal and the governor whom it is proposed to remove must be given an opportunity to make a statement in response

- A second meeting has to be held not less than fourteen days after the first meeting where the removal is confirmed by passing the resolution. Again, the removal has to be specified as an item on the agenda of this second meeting

#### Things to consider:

- Removal of any governor is a serious matter and should not be treated lightly. It must be the last resort and only done if it is in the best interest of the governing body
- Ideally, any potential problems should try to be resolved before the situation gets to a point where removal is necessary.
- The code of practice should not be a paper or box ticking exercise. Governors should review the code annually and re-affirm their commitment to upholding the code and the Nolan principles of public life
- When a vacancy arises then the governing body should ensure that the information which is sent out inviting people to stand for elections includes the fact that removal as a governor disqualifies a person from becoming a governor for five years after the date of his/her removal

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life outline the ethical standards those working in the public sector are expected to adhere to.

**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. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**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 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 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.

## FORM OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF CODE OF CONDUCT

I have received and read the Code of Conduct.

I understand the standards and policies contained in the Code of Conduct and understand that there are additional policies or laws specific to my role.

I further agree to follow the values in all that I do and comply with the Code of Conduct.

If I have questions concerning the meaning or application of the Code of Conduct, any policies, or the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to my role, I know I can consult the Chair, the Head Teacher, or the Local Authority, knowing that my questions or reports to these sources will be maintained in confidence.

Name	Type of Governor	Signature	Date
All	All	Agreed electronically	Sep 23