



# Governing Board Code of Conduct

**Date of Policy: December 2019**

**Policy Review date: December 2022**

**Signed:**

**Headteacher:**

**Signed:**

**Chair of Governors:**

# Code of Conduct for the Governing Board

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

## 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 development strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

## As individuals on the Governing Board we agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the Governing Board and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside Governing Board meetings.
- 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 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 we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.

### 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 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 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, or other member of staff as appropriate, and ensure that visits are undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board. (See Appendix A: 'Governors' Visits to School'.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- 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.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

### 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 will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### Confidentiality

- 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 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.

### Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the Governing Board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's 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 Board.

### 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 Board will only use suspension/removal 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.

### 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.

Adopted by the Governing Board of Clapham Terrace Community Primary School and Nursery on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

#### Monitoring and review

Staff and governors will give their opinions, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, respectively, of the effectiveness and success of the work of the Governing Board and of governor visits to school.

This Code of Conduct will be formally evaluated and reviewed by the Governing Board every 3 years, or sooner if necessary.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Governors' Visits to School**

#### **Introduction**

Governors who know the school first hand and who are known by staff and pupils will find it much easier to connect the strategic issues facing a school to the work of the Governing Board. We consider an overall scarcity of governor visits as symptomatic of weak governance.

Governors need to make visits to school in so far as this will support them in their statutory responsibilities, as stated in the Code of Conduct.

However, in order to avoid any unnecessary misunderstandings or anxiety about governors' visits to the school, an agreed approach is important to clarify the purpose of such visits and the protocols which will be followed. This will enable both staff and governors to make best use of the opportunities provided by visits.

Our overall aim is to promote the effective use of governor visits to support school improvement.

#### **Objectives**

##### **To ensure that:**

- there is a clear protocol for governor visits understood by both staff and governors
- governors and staff have a clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of governors
- members of staff and governors find governor visits supportive and positive
- governor visits to the school are a routine part of school life
- governors are better informed about how the school implements policy
- governors are able to use their knowledge of the school to make appropriate decisions about the school's strategic development and school policy

#### **Governor Visits**

Governors will visit the school, in their governor role, for a number of reasons:

1. As part of their induction, upon appointment, in order to get to know the school
2. For meetings of the Governing Board, committees or working groups
3. To hold regular meetings with key members of staff, related to specific governor responsibilities, e.g.:
  - Chair of Governors (meetings with the headteacher)
  - Health and Safety Governor (meetings and premises visits)
  - SEN/Inclusion Governor (meetings with the SENCO)

- Child Protection Governor (meetings with the designated child protection officer)
  - Performance Management Governor (meetings with the headteacher)
4. Named governors involvement in monitoring improvement priorities in the School Development Plan (SDP) – (meetings with key staff and participation in monitoring activities)
  5. Class link governors making visits, at least termly, to their link class
  6. Attendance at school events by invitation – e.g, concerts, Open Days, assemblies, fund raising events
  7. Governors engaging, incidentally, in work as voluntary helpers – e.g as reading partners or accompanying school trips

### **Visits to Classrooms**

These may happen for the following reasons:

- Link class visits (see 5 above) – such visits are not for monitoring or evaluation purposes, but rather for the governor to gain an understanding of the routine life of the school, through familiarisation with the learning activities for a particular class. Such visits will always and only be by prior arrangement with the classteacher, and at the class teacher’s convenience. The governor will endeavour to participate in, or support, the children’s learning, in so far as the teacher finds this helpful, and will not make notes during the lesson or disrupt the class’s normal learning activities
- In order to monitor and evaluate progress against priorities in the SDP. In this case, the activity will be specified in the monitoring arrangements in the SDP be planned and agreed with senior staff, have a particular clear focus (understood by the class teacher) and be a planned and shared part of the school’s monitoring schedule. Governors will not make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, as they are not qualified, in their role, to do so.
- To work as a voluntary helper, in which case the normal guidance to volunteers will be followed.

### **Arranging Visits**

- Link class visits: these should be arranged in advance with the class teacher concerned. The teacher should be reassured that the visit is not for purposes of monitoring and evaluation, but rather for the governor concerned to gain an understanding of the daily life of the school and their allocated link class in particular.
- Visits for purposes of monitoring and evaluation – e.g. SDP monitoring or in order to fulfil particular governor roles and responsibilities: these visits should be arranged in advance with the headteacher and, where appropriate, correlate to the school’s own monitoring schedule, which the headteacher will have shared with the Governing Board.

- For other incidental visits to the school, governors should observe the same practice as all other visitors.

### **Records of Visits**

Where the governor's visit is for the purpose of monitoring the work of the school or progress against one of the priorities for improvement in the SIP, the governor will complete a 'Governor Monitoring Form' (see Appendix B). A copy of the form will be provided to the headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the relevant governor committee.

All visits by governors to the school, other than for meetings of the Governing Body or committees, should be recorded in the 'Governor Visits' book kept in the school office.

### **Governors' Conduct During Visits**

Governors should strive at all times to:

- Be courteous and polite to members of staff and children
- Do all they can to avoid stress and anxiety to members of staff, (particularly relevant when visiting classrooms)
- Respond willingly to any changes of agreed arrangements requested by school staff
- Maintain high levels of confidentiality, as befits their role
- Avoid any disruption to the smooth running of the school or to classroom activities
- Be at pains to thank members of staff who have accommodated their visit, and to show appreciation for the hard work of staff

### **Safeguarding**

Governors should be familiar with the school's policies for Health and Safety, Child Protection and Safeguarding and abide by the guidance in those policies. They should;

- Have a current Enhanced Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Wear an identification badge, obtainable from the school office on arrival
- Sign in and out of school in the Visitors Book in the school office
- Be familiar with fire and evacuation procedures
- Behave at all times as a responsible adult, in relation to the safety and well-being of the children.



