A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNANCE BOARD

Introduction

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the governing board and individual governors will operate. The governing board accepts the following principles and procedures:

General

1. We are aware of and accept 'The Seven Principles of Public Life' as set out by Lord Nolan (appendix 1).

2. We have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

3. We recognise that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy and internal organisation and management of the school, and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.

4. We accept that all governors have equal status, and although appointed by different groups (i.e., parents, staff, Diocese) and that every governor's role is to govern the school in the best interest of pupils, not to represent the interests of the constituency from which they were elected or appointed.

5. We have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so. However, the Chair may carry out an urgent function of the board that can be delegated to an individual if they believe that not acting immediately would be seriously detrimental to:
   - the school,
   - any pupils or their parents,
   - a staff member,

   The chair must inform the governing board about the urgent action taken at the soonest opportunity.

6. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of, the employer.

7. We will encourage open government and shall be seen to be doing so.

8. We will consider carefully, how our decisions may affect other schools and the community.

9. We will apply for a disclosure and barring service (DBS) check for any governor who does not already hold one within 21 days of appointment or election.

10. The following details for each governor and associate member will be published on the school's website and will be available on the DfE's national governor database 'Get information about schools'
    - name,
    - category of governor and the body responsible for appointing them,
    - date of appointment,
    - term of office,
    - date when stepped down (where applicable within the last 12 months),
    - names of committees the governor serves on and roles/responsibilities on the board,
    - relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests),
    - attendance at governing board and committee meetings over the last academic year.

Commitment

11. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy and we will receive guidance, information and updates via the email address provided.

12. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, endeavour to attend all meetings, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including membership of committees or working groups. In the case of non-attendance, we will provide a reason for apologies to enable the board to decide if those apologies should be accepted or rejected.

13. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.

14. Every member of the governing board will actively contribute relevant skills and experience. When filling vacancies we will do what is in our power to secure a new governor with the ability and experience to fill any skills gaps or, if this is not possible, has the capacity and willingness to develop them.

15. We uphold an ethos of professionalism and have high expectations of the governors' role, including an expectation that they undertake whatever training or development activity is needed to fill any gaps in the skills they have to contribute to effective governance. If a governor fails persistently to do this they will be in breach of the code of conduct.

Relationships

16. We will strive to work as a team and will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct at meetings and at all times.

17. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with our Headteacher, staff, parents, the Local Authority, and other relevant agencies (including the Diocesan Authorities where appropriate), and the community.

Confidentiality

18. We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the governing board in meetings and from our visits to school as governors. In this, we will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

19. We will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the governing board, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.

20. We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the governing board.

Conduct

21. We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing board or its delegated agents.

22. We will only speak or act on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.

23. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.

24. We will visit the school; our visits to school will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing board, in agreement with the Headteacher and staff.

25. In discharging our duties, we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school.

26. We will support our school in the public eye. Social networking applications will not be used for actions that would put the governors in breach of the school code of conduct or school policies or in a way that could bring the school into disrepute. We accept that in such instances suspension or removal would be an option (see below).

Virtual meetings

27. To ensure confidentiality and the smooth running of the meeting, governors attending virtually will:
    - attend the whole meeting
    - attend with the webcam/video switched on where possible
    - focus on the business of the meeting in the same way as if they were attending in person
    - remain on mute unless they are speaking
    - prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations (for example, by using headphones)
    - be mindful of their surroundings – they will consider the privacy of the room, including, but not limited to, who or what is visible or audible in the background
    - not make any recording of the meeting unless this has been explicitly agreed with all governors beforehand. Agreement must also be made as to how the recording will be used and how it will be destroyed.

Suspension

28. If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Removal

29. We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies which have the power to remove those they appoint.

30. If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor or removing the Chair, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

SIGNED

DATE

APPENDIX 1.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

on 31 May 1995

The 7 principles of public life are the basis of the ethical standards expected of public office holders. They apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally… The principles also apply to all those in other sectors that deliver public services. They were first set out by Lord Nolan in 1995, and they are included in the Ministerial code.

1. **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in the terms of public interest.

2. **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. **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.

6. **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. **Leadership**

Holders of public office 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.