

Code of Conduct for

Academic Year 2025-26

for School Governors/Members/Trustees in Maintained Schools/Academies

The governing board is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards

This code sets out the expectations and commitment required from school governors, trustees and academy committee members in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school/s and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the particular school. Unless otherwise stated, 'school' includes academies, and it applies to all levels of school governance.

We recommend this Code of Conduct is thoroughly discussed so the full governing board has ownership of it. You can also use elements of this document as a preliminary introduction to each full governing board meeting so the principles are at the forefront of individual minds at all times. Once adopted, governors should be asked to review and sign it on an annual basis, ideally at the first meeting in the autumn term.

The Purpose of the Governing Board

The governing board is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing board 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:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- **Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation 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;
- 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 board is a corporate body, which means:

- No governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing board;
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made;
- 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;
- In law, every governor must hold a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate and a Section 128 check in line with statutory requirements contained within the Department for Education's (DfE) Governance Guides for [Maintained Schools](#) and [Academy Trusts](#), and [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

This Code is built on the [Seven Principles of Public Life – Nolan Committee](#)



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

Roles and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing board and the role of the Head Teacher.
- We will respect the role of executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We will ensure that we work collectively with the Head Teacher, executive leaders and staff for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- In accordance with the DfE Governance Guides [Maintained Schools](#) and [Academy Trusts](#) requirements, we recognise that work/life balance practices must be effectively managed by the Head Teacher, executive leaders and staff to ensure all can realise their full potential and the needs of both school and staff are met.
- We acknowledge that we have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff and should ensure staff wellbeing is routinely considered in setting appraisal objectives and all performance related pay arrangements and decisions
- 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 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 the governing board meeting.
- We undertake to act responsibly, in good faith and within our delegated authority at all times.
- We will actively support and challenge executive leaders.
- We will ensure our conduct underpins the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- 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.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the policy and procedures established by the governing board and as set out by the relevant legislative statutory guidance documents.
- We agree to ensure that our comments, whether formally speaking or in writing, reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- We will endeavour, when communicating in our private capacity, (including the use of social media) to uphold the reputation of the organisation at all times.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee/academy committee member 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 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/Governance Professional with an explanation of our failure to attend.
- We will get to know the school/s 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 board 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 accept that in the interests of open governance, 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.

- We understand that any governor failing to provide information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and, as a result, could bring the governing body into disrepute.
- We acknowledge that failure to attend meetings for a period of six months without the consent of the governing board may lead to disqualification.
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Head Teacher.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors ([Get information about schools](#)).

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/trustees/academy committee members, the Clerk to the Governing Board/Governance Professional and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- 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 "online friends" with pupils on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue. Likewise, caution will be noted regarding "online friends" between governors and staff and the potential for conflict of interest and levels of separation.

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 board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board 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 board unless expressly authorised to do so by the full governing board.
- We will not identify the school on social networking sites, unless authorised to do so by the full governing board, as this could directly link our personal life with the reputation of the school.

"The governing board aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their wellbeing."



Conflicts of Interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to the people we are connected with) that we have, in connection with the governing board'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 the above information will also be published on the school's website to comply with statutory guidance and on the Department for Education's register of educational establishments.
- 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/withdraw whilst the matter is discussed.

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 if this code is breached, the issue will be raised with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing board should only use suspension and/or 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 Governing Board of: _____

Adopted this code of conduct on:

Governors will sign the code at the first governing board meeting of each school year and confirm using GovernorHub confirmation buttons.

Undertaking

As a member of the governing board I will always have the wellbeing 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 board, the Head Teacher or staff.

Signed:

Print name:

Date: