**Code of Conduct**

**GOVERNING BODY**

**Harlow Fields School & College**

***Adopted JuniperEducation Model Document November 2020***

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

**Purpose of the governing board:**

The governing board is the key strategic decision-making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. Raising achievement is at the heart of a governing board’s strategic role; every child has the right to attend a good school.

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

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

* Setting and ensuring clarity of 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 and progress towards agreed targets
* Performance managing the Headteacher
* Engaging and consulting 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

For governing boards to carry out their roles effectively, governors must be:

* Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously
* Committed to the key characteristics and behaviours of the role, as set out in A Competency Framework for Governance (DfE 2017)
* 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

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

**Role & Responsibilities**

* We are aware of the Seven Principles of Public Life (see below).
* We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the 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 board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
* We understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the board as a whole remains accountable, and therefore will ensure that important decisions are made by the Full Governing Board.
* We understand that 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 always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
* We will promote tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation.
* In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
* We understand the distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the board and those of executive leaders and will avoid involvement in operational issues.
* We will support the headteacher and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and hold them to account for school performance.

**Commitment**

* We understand how much time is involved in the role that we are carrying out.
* 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 attend meetings fully prepared having read and considered any information received relating to the meeting.
* We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher 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 committee member.
* We will demonstrate commitment to continually developing our knowledge and skills and keeping them up to date.

**Data sharing**

* We accept that in the interests of openness and transparency, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor, the body responsible for appointing us, brief biographies and photograph will be published on the school’s website.
* We consent to information relating to our position as governors being collected and logged on the DfE’s national database of governors (Get information about schools).
* We accept that the school is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check within 21 days of our appointment.
* We will strive to ensure the school’s overall compliance with the data protection regulations.

**Communication**

* We will strive to uphold the reputation of the school at all times in our private communications (including on social media).
* We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings and ensure we respond to communications as appropriate.
* 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.
* We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
* We will maintain a professional presence online and consider the impact that any personal views that we post online could have on the school.
* We will carefully consider the impact of joining any parent groups associated with the school or any memberships that we already have of such groups when we become governors.
* If we know or become aware of any private parent, staff or student groups bearing the school’s name, we will report this to the governing board.

**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.
* We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
* We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

**Conflicts of interest**

* We will declare and 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 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 under the school’s procedure for dealing with complaints about governors.
* 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 governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.
* Where a governor’s conduct has been investigated and a panel has found the complaint to be so serious that the person should not longer serve as a governor, the expectation is that the person should resign from their post.

**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.

**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 other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

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

**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.

**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 should be truthful

**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.