



# **SOLIHULL GOVERNOR SERVICES**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

# Code of Conduct for the Governing Body of Meriden C of E Primary School

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

## The purpose of the governing body

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school, promoting high standards and developing and upholding the Christian ethos of the school. 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.

## The governing body:

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
  - Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
  - Setting targets
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
  - Progress towards targets
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - The budget and the staffing structure
- Ensures accountability by:
  - signing off the school's own self-evaluation report
  - responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
  - holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school
  - ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
  - making available information to the community
- Appoints and performance manages the headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

- Ensures that key stakeholders have a voice that is heard, by:
  - Views of pupils
  - Engaging with 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.

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; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

## **The role of a governor**

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority community, foundation), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

## **General**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher as set out above
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life (see appendix)
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 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 government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 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 affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role, we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy, even if they might be different to our personal views
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing board.

## **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 body, 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 in full why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school 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 body and agreed with the headteacher.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the headteacher.
- We accept that, in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us, membership of committees and attendance records will be published on the school's website.
- We accept that, in the interests of transparency, information relating to governors 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, the clerk to the governing body and school staff both in and outside of meetings. This includes on GovernorHub and other platforms.
- We recognise differences in culture, attitudes, and social signals can be misinterpreted as bullying/harassment and may be perceived by others as offensive.
- We will be sensitive to the feelings and reactions of others and to adjust and/or moderate behaviour as necessary.
- If an issue arises, we will let the *chair/vice chair/ identified governor* know the nature of the complaint and issues promptly, entering into discussions in good faith and with the aim of resolving matters at the earliest opportunity.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times on and offline.
- 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 (see appendix) or which may place pupils at risk.
- 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 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 or outside school, including on any social media sites.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- During virtual meetings we will be mindful of our surroundings and ensure that our usual confidentiality expectations are not compromised.
- We will not copy or take screen shots of any speaker slides or presentations, any messaging or chat activity that takes place.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## 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.
- 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 practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension 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;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We understand that, should an investigation been deemed necessary, access to our governor school-based email address (ending .solihull.sch.uk) will be permissible. This will be conducted under strict guidelines outlined in the school's policy.

### **Ceasing to be a Governor**

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

**The Governing Body of Meriden C of E Primary School adopted this code of practice on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024.** Governors sign the Code electronically on GovernorHub.

**Undertaking:**

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being 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 Christian ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.

### 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.



## 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 judgment 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 to 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.