



Healdswood Infant and Nursery School

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Code of Conduct and Practice for Governors

Introduction

The House of Commons Education and Employment Committee's Report on The Role of School Governors including among its recommendations 'that governing bodies adopt a code of practice outlining the purpose of the governing body which describes the appropriate relationship between individual governors, the whole governing body and the school etc'

The governors' code of conduct and practice:

How it works

Every governor agrees to accept a specific code of behaviour so that they clearly understand what is expected of them:

- A. when becoming a governor first – so that they understand what they are taking on.
and
- B. when working as part of the governing body – so that they are able to practice good governance. It should therefore be approved by the full governing body and included in the school based Induction for New Governors.

Governors' code of conduct

The key principles

Governors should:

- support the aims and objectives of the school in the wider community
- work co-operatively with other governors in the best interest of the school
- attend the meetings of the governing body and its committees
- promote the interest of the school in the wider community
- have an equal right to participate and to state their views whilst respecting the views of others
- be loyal to the decisions made by the governing body
- respect the confidentiality of those items of business that have been designated as confidential, do not disclose what individuals have said or how they have voted
- withdraw from meetings where they have any direct personal interest in the business being discussed
- participate in training.

Code of Practice for Governors

We believe that the ability of our governing body to work together for the good of the school depends essentially on trust and an understanding of our common purpose.

GENERAL

All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their common concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.

Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.

Governors should consider carefully how their own decisions might affect other schools.

Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole governing body.

COMMITMENT

All governors will involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees.

Regular attendance at meetings of both the full governing body and committees is essential.

Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities.

RELATIONSHIPS

Governors will strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.

Governors will develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, parents, Local Authority and local community.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Governors will observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, usually in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.

Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based will be regarded as confidential.

Governors will exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

CONDUCT

Governors will express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.

Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically authorised to do so.

All formal visits to the school will be undertaken within a framework, established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.

In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors will refer to the school's 'Complaints Policy' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.

Governors will record any pecuniary interest they may have in connection with the governing body's business in the register of pecuniary interests.

Governors will withdraw from any meeting, or part of a meeting, when they have a direct or indirect pecuniary or personal interest in the item under discussion. (A person who is paid to work at the school is not regarded as having a pecuniary interest if his/her interest is no greater than that of other persons paid to work at the school.)

MEETINGS

Individual governors do not have authority in the school. It is the decisions of all the governors together that carry authority. The activities governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' – in a meeting.

It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Below is a suggested 'Meetings Charter'. If the Chair, the Head, the Clerk and all the governors subscribe to a charter such as this, the governing body will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

Meetings Charter

As a governor I expect:

- people to attend regularly and be punctual
- an agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before every meeting
- an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item
- a Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point
- my contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion
- the decision-making process to be quite clear
- governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan
- governors to take collective responsibility for decisions
- minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.

Others can expect me to:

- attend regularly and be punctual
- read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about
- bring my papers to the meeting
- make relevant and positive contributions
- listen carefully to what others say
- accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions I do not personally agree with.

Training & Development

Governor training is important. It develops effective teamwork and increases governors' knowledge and understanding of their role.

In the light of this, all governors agree to attend the Local Authority's induction course for new governors and participate in a programme of training and development planned annually by the governing body.

Sanctions in the event of serious breaches of codes

It is hoped that governing bodies will only need to consider this option as a last resort, for having understood and agreed a code of conduct it is assumed that governors would not knowingly breach it.

The suspension of governors

In certain prescribed circumstances the governing body can decide to suspend a governor for a period of up to six months. The governing body can only suspend a governor if one or more of the following grounds apply.

- The governor is paid to work at the school and is the subject of disciplinary proceedings in relation to his or her employment.
- The governor is the subject of any court or tribunal proceedings, the outcome of which may be that he or she is disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor under Schedule 6 of the Constitution Regulations.
- The governor has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the school's ethos or religious character and has brought, or is likely to bring, the school, the governing body or his or her office of governor into disrepute.
- The governor is in breach of his or her duty of confidentiality to the school, the staff or to the pupils.

A governing body can vote to suspend a governor on any of the above grounds but does not have to do so. The governing body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Any motion to suspend must be specified as an agenda item of a meeting for which at least seven clear days' notice must be given. Before the governing body votes to suspend a governor, the governor proposing the suspension must give the reasons for doing so. The governor who is proposed for suspension must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting and a vote then takes place.

A governor who has been suspended must be given notice of any meetings and must be sent agendas, reports and papers for any meetings during his or her suspension.

A governor who has been suspended cannot be disqualified from holding office for failure to attend meetings under Paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 of the Constitution Regulations.

Removal from Office

The governing body may remove from office:

- community governors or partnership governors;
- any parent governor who has been appointed, but not an elected parent governor. (A parent governor is considered to be elected if he or she stood for election for parent governorship. whether or not a ballot took place is not relevant to this issue);
- any sponsor governors. (It may also do so at the request of the nominating body);
- any associate member.

Authority and foundation governors may be removed from office by the person who appointed them. The person who appointed them must give written notice to the clerk to the governing body, and the governor in question, of the governor's removal.

The governing body may not remove any staff governors.

Procedure for Removal

Reasons for proposed removal of any community governor, partnership governor, appointed parent governor or sponsor governor must be given by the governor(s) proposing the removal. The governor in question must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before a vote is taken on a resolution to remove him or her.

In the case of the removal of a community governor nominated by a voluntary organisation, primary care trust, NHS trust, NHS foundation trust, or sponsor governor proposed for removal at the request of the nominating body, the nominating body proposing the removal must inform the clerk to the governing body. The governor in question must also be notified in writing of the reasons for proposing his or her removal. The clerk to the governing body must give the reasons for the proposed removal to the governing body, and the governor proposed for removal must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response, before a vote is taken on a resolution to remove him or her.

The same procedure applies to the removal of an ex officio foundation governor, except that it is the person requesting the removal of the ex officio foundation governor who must inform the clerk and the governor in question.

A governing body's decision to remove any community, partnership, sponsor or appointed parent governor must be confirmed at a second meeting not less than 14 days after the first meeting. At both meetings the removal of the governor in question must be specified as an item of business on the agenda.

The removal of an ex officio foundation governor must follow the procedure outlined in the above paragraph.

Adopted on 05.09.2015

Lucy Peet – Headteacher

John Foster – Chair of Governors