

Warwickshire Governor Services

Model Code of Conduct for Maintained Schools Governing Boards 2023 - 2024

This model code has been updated for 2023

Once this code has been adopted, all governors agree to faithfully abide by it.

We will focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
NGA recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

Ethos Statement as a Church of England school:

Develop and uphold the Christian distinctiveness of the school and promote high standards. Ensuring that pupils are attending a successful school which supports their holistic well-being and provides them with a good education.

As individual board members, we agree to:

FULFIL OUR ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will develop, share, and live the ethos and values of our school.
3. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring or right to work checks.
5. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
7. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
9. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
10. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
11. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
12. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.

13. We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
14. We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

DEMONSTRATE OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ROLE

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

BUILD AND MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS

1. We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents, and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
2. We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities and other schools.
3. We will express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
4. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
5. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Confidential information will never be:
 - Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
 - Used to humiliate, embarrass, or blackmail others
 - Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.
2. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils, or families.
3. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
4. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
5. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Breaches of confidentiality: In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further. Governors understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended or removed.

DECLARE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND BE TRANSPARENT

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the register of business interests.
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
5. We will act as a governor, not as a representative of any group.
6. 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 website.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information about Schools), some of which will be publicly available.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We will:

1. Always uphold the reputation of the school
2. Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community
3. Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
4. Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards governors, to the chair of governors and the headteacher

We will **not**:

5. Accept friend requests from pupils
6. Disclose any information that is confidential or would breach data protection principles
7. Make comments online about any members of the governing board or school community
8. Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute

WE WILL ABIDE BY THE SEVEN NOLAN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We agree that this Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually endorsed by the Full Governing Board.

Adopted by: Cubbington CofE Primary School Governing Board
on 14th September 2023

Signed: (Chair of Governors)

Appendix 1: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If we suspect a governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The chair will investigate
- The chair will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the chair to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the governor
 - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in
- If there is no improvement in the governors' behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Governors may be **suspended** if they:

- Are a staff governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school
- Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the governor being disqualified from holding office
- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos *[and/or religious character]* of the school (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the board)
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the school into disrepute
- Breach confidentiality
- Acted to undermine fundamental British values or the board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent duty

Governors may be **removed** where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- They display repeated and serious incompetence
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school