

Code of Conduct for Governance Boards Hindhayes Infant School

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from those serving on the governance board/s for Hindhayes Infant School in order for it to properly carry out its work within the school¹.

This code once approved by the board, will apply to all those associated with governance within our setting².

The governance board has the following core 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 lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Engaging 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

We agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the executive leaders.
- 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 board when 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 decisions outside the board meeting;

¹ Unless otherwise stated, 'school' includes academies, and it applies to all levels of school governance including local governance boards/bodies

² Including where applicable, those serving on local governance boards/bodies

- 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;
- 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 governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider and be mindful of how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect the ethos and reputation of our school.
- We will follow the procedures established by the governing board in our complaints policy and procedure.
- 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 recognising our strategic rather than operational role.
- We agree to adhere to the rules, policies and procedures of the board as set out in relevant governance documents and law.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting our volunteering governance role involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups where applicable.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance in line with the framework established by the 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/trustee/academy committee member.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, 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 board (including committee membership), attendance records, relevant declared interests, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors/trustees committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors, Edubase.
- As a Maintained School we accept that governor information will be shared with the Local Authority to fulfil their statutory obligation to maintain a database of governors and kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.
- We accept that as this board purchases a governance advice and support package and training from SSE-Governance Services governor information will be shared with them and kept in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Relationships

- We will 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 board 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 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 executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust, 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.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a 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 in line with expectations within the General Data Protection Regulation, including information held electronically.
- We will manage any information held on personal electronic devices such as laptops, mobile phones in line with expectations of the General Data Protection Regulation.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any declared interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the 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 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.

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 committee member leaves office, will return any papers to the clerk to the board and delete any electronic files.
- We understand that any school based email account will be closed and agree to delete any folders on any personal electronic devices.
- Should the board need to remove a governor or trustee from serving on the board and we are aware that the governor/trustee concerned also serves on another board then we will inform that board that the governor/trustee has been removed.

- If a governor/trustee is disqualified from continuing to serve and has informed the clerk accordingly and we are aware that they serve on another board, we will check with that clerk that the governor/trustee concerned has also informed them.

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; the 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 board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

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.

Adopted by the governance board of Hindhayes Infant School on 11th October 2018.