



# Whitehills Primary School

# Code of Conduct

For the school governing body

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

## **The governing body has the following core strategic functions:**

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of the 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 with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, 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

Ensuring that other key players with a stake in the school get their voices heard, by:

- Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results
- Reaching out to 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

As individuals on the governing body we agree to the following:

## **Role & responsibilities**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 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 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, we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the body and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the school.
- We will respect the role of the senior leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the school 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 body 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 from 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 school.
- 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 body.

## **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 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 to school arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- 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 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 government, our full names, dates of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor 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 committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools GIAS)

## **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.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- 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 page 4) 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.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

### **Ceasing to be a governor**

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

### **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 body'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 body.

### **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 governing body 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 governor, such as the vice chair, will investigate.

## **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

Published by the Nolan Committee

### **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 or 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 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 governing body of Whitehills Primary School on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015
- Reviewed and updated by the governing body on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021