

Code of Conduct for Governing Bodies within the Derby Diocesan

The following code provides a statement of the broad principles by which the governors of the schools within the Derby Diocesan should operate.

General

The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:

To provide a strategic view of where the school is heading, in line with the vision, ethos and expectations of Derby Diocesan

To act as a critical friend by providing support and advice to the school.

To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides.

All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the success 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 decision might affect the school.

Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so. All Governors are required to act in accordance with the Nolan principles as follows:

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 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 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.

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

Governors acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee/academy committee member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.

Governors will be involved actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.

Governors will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where they cannot attend will explain in advance why they are unable to.

Governors will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve themselves in school activities.

Governors will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.

Governors will consider seriously their individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.

Governors accept that in the interests of open government, their 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 them will be published on the school's website.

In the interests of transparency, Governors accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

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

Governors will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors/trustees/academy committee members.

Governors will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.

Governors are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and they will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.

Governors will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

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

Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Any decisions made, whether supported individually by you as a Governor, should always be actively supported once the decision has been made collectively by the governing body.

Governors will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.

Governors will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

Conduct

Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions, supporting those decisions at all times in public forums.

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

All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the Trust and agreed with the headteacher.

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

Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community and externally should reflect this.

Any pecuniary interest that a governor may have in connection with the governing body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests.

Where an interest is declared, the governor must leave the meeting while the item is under discussion.

Conflicts of Interest

Governors will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people they are connected with) that they 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 Governors will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time. Governors accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.



Governors will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.

Governors 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.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

If Governors believe this code has been breached, they will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing 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 Governors believe has breached this code, another governing board member or Trust representative, will investigate.

Training and Development

Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork. Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the governing body as a whole.

Mentoring

An experienced governor who acts as a mentor to new governors can provide support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body. Governors should be prepared to act as mentors, as required.

Meetings

Individual governors do not have any authority in school. It is the collective decisions of all the governors together that carry authority. The activities that 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 'Meetings Charter'. If the Chair, the Head, the Clerk and all the governors subscribe to, and implement, the charter, 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 the 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 contributions 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 to and consider what other people want to say;

accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with.

Visiting the School

Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. However, they do need to have the opportunity to arrange visits to the school in order to see governors' policies in action and to understand how the school works.

In order to avoid misunderstandings arising, every governing body is required to abide by the following principles:

All governors should visit the school.

The total number of visits per term should be agreed in advance with the headteacher. Too many visits can be disruptive to pupils' learning.

The date and timing of a visit should be arranged in advance with the head teacher and other staff involved.

Visits should have a clear focus, linked to a school policy, a curriculum area or an aspect of the school development plan.

If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.

Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the headteacher. Governors should not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching that they see.

If governors are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be discussed with the headteacher.

After the visit, the governor should report back, in writing to the governing body. A written report should be discussed with the headteacher before publication.

Monitoring the Performance of the Governing Body

The Trust will monitor the performance of all local governing bodies through the key performance indicators outlined below:

Key Performance Indicator	Evidenced by	Frequency of Checks
The Governing Body acts appropriately in its role as the Admissions Authority for the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admissions documentation and processes in line with the School Admissions Code. - The establishment of an independent appeals panel. - Feedback from parents. - Admission numbers. - Absence of negative judgements by the school adjudicator. 	Annually – Summer Term
The governing body agrees targets for pupil achievement with the headteacher and holds the school to account for performance against targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual performance management of headteacher. - Progress against targets reported termly and recorded in minutes of meetings. 	Annually - Autumn Term Termly
The governing body is effective in managing the school's finances including approving the first formal budget plan of the financial year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checks made on the level of scrutiny provided by the Finance, HR and Premises Committee with reports made to the governing body. - Approval of appropriate budgets and expenditure recorded in minutes of meetings. 	Annually – Spring Term Termly
The governing body ensures that the school provides a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governor visits. - External challenge provided through DDAT School Improvement Team - Ofsted. 	Annually
The governing body monitors staff and pupil discipline, including pupil attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Termly report received from headteacher and curriculum committee. - Annual review of performance and behaviour policies. 	Termly Annually

The governing body oversees pupil safeguarding to ensure it meets requirements and supports well-being.	- Appointed safeguarding governor provides written report to governing body in collaboration with school DSP (Dedicated Safeguarding Person)	Annually
The governing body ensures that the school appoints staff with the relevant skills and qualifications, and considers the recruitment and retention strategy of the school.	- Involvement of governors in appointments to key posts. - Monitoring the implementation of the performance management policy.	Annually
The governing body manages the school premises including health and safety.	- Annual report submitted to governing body by headteacher which includes statements on health and safety, condition and suitability of premises, required capital expenditure.	Annually
The governing body ensures key elements of strategy are communicated.	- Trust appointed governors or Trust representatives report strategy from Board meetings. - Governor input into School Development Plan.	Bi-annually
The governing body appoints the Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk.	- Appointments made. - Performance management of Chair is conducted annually. - Succession planning in place for Chair.	Annually
The governing body manages the delegation of powers to headteacher.	- Scheme of delegation reviewed and any proposed amendments communicated to Trust.	Annually
The governing body establishes and reviews performance of committees.	- Review terms of reference and membership of committees.	Annually – Autumn Term
The governing body receives timely and detailed reports from committees.	- Standard agenda items at full governing body meetings to receive	Termly

