

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNING BOARD OF HAREWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL

Adopted: February 2020

Review Frequency: February 2022

The attached code of conduct sets out the commitment and expectations required from Governors in order for the Governing Board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. There are high expectations of Governing Boards; they are the strategic leaders of the school and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. This is reflected in the law, which states that the purpose of the school Governing Boards is to '*conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school*'.

Governing Boards should have a strong focus on the following three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

It is important that Governing Boards play a strategic role, and avoid routine involvement in operational matters and the day-to-day running of the school. It should focus strongly on holding the Headteacher to account for exercising his/her professional judgement in these matters and all of their other duties.

The focus of the three core functions includes: Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the schools
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties ensuring accountability, by:
- Appointing the lead 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

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.

It is also imperative that Governors ensure that other key players with a stake in the organisation 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.

"School Governor Services believe that all children and young people should thrive in schools that are 'good' or 'outstanding' and in order to achieve this schools need effective governance"

As individuals on the Governing Board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and its strategic role.
- We understand how the role of the board differs from and works with others including the headteacher.
- 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 governing board when we have been 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 majority decisions outside the governing board 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 governance 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/group of schools. 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 board.
- We will actively support and challenge the school leaders.
- 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.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board 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 to 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 organisation.
- 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 board.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, 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 arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing 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.

- 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 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's website. In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools).

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 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 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 annex) or which may place pupils at risk.
- 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 headteacher, staff, 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 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.

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 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'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 board.

Register of Business Interests

- A Register of Business Interests will be kept in school which includes the following information:
 - Our names.
 - Our Business interests.
 - Our appointment category.
 - Our appointing body.

- Our term of office as a Governor.
- The names of any committees we serve on.
- Details of any position of responsibility held, such as chair or vice-chair of the Governing Board or a committee.
- Details of any other educational establishments we may govern.
- Details of any personal relationships we have with members of staff including spouses, partners and relatives.
- We agree to the Register of Business Interests being published on the school website in line with statutory requirements.

Ceasing to be governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office 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 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 governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate. Confirmation of agreement to abide by this code of conduct, which has been agreed by the Governing Board.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Governing Board I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would bring the school into disrepute.

Annex: 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:

1. *Selflessness* - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. *Integrity* - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. *Objectivity* - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. *Accountability* - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. *Openness* - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. *Honesty* – Holders of public office should be truthful
7. *Leadership* – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.