

Fern Hill Primary School

Code of Conduct for the Governing Body

Introduction

This code sets out the expectations on the governors of the school and commitment required for the governing board to carry out its work properly in the school and the community.

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction by:

- setting 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;
- performance managing the headteacher;
- contributing to school self-evaluation;
- monitoring progress with school improvement targets and reviewing the impact of the plan;
- engaging with stakeholders.

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- setting the budget and reviewing the impact of financial decisions;
- monitoring spending against the budget;
- ensuring value for money is obtained;
- ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand that we have responsibility for determining the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates;
- We recognise that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, the day-to-day management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so.
- We accept that all governors have equal status irrespective of what group has nominated them.
- 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, honestly, 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board in this school. These procedures provide for the Headteacher to manage the processes initially.
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher, using and requesting justification and evidence.

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 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 will be 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 staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the Headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We will use all data and information at our disposal to reflect and make informed choices in the best interests of all stakeholders of the school.

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express and listen to views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct in our meetings and at all other times.
- 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 necessary, and with particular emphasis on matters concerning specific members of staff or pupils.
- 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 comply with the Governing Body Data Protection Guidelines (attached at Annex A).
- We will use the school domain email account issued to us for all correspondence in relation to governing body business and to access governance papers held in the school's Google Drive.

Conflicts of interest – Publication of governors' details and the register of interests

- We acknowledge that governors hold an important public office and our identity should be known to our school and wider communities. We will therefore publish on the school website information about ourselves. This information will also be published for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any committee. As a minimum, this information should include:
 - Names
 - Category of governor
 - Name of appointing body
 - Term of office
 - Names of committees we serve on together with any positions of responsibility such as chair/vice chair of the governing body or a committee of the governing body.
- 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 will publish the register of interests on the school website. The register should set out the relevant business interests of governors/associate members and details of any other educational establishments we govern. The register should also set out any relationships between governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives.
- We will publish details of governors' attendance at governing body and Committee meetings for the academic year on the school's website.
- We agree that any governor/associate member failing to reveal information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute. In such cases the governing body should consider suspending the governor/associate member.
- 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 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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

Adopted by the Governing Board of Fern Hill Primary School on 24th September 2019.

Data Protection Guidelines for Governors

The data protection officer (DPO) is: Zara Gallagher

- **Personal data:** is any information relating to an identified, or identifiable person, e.g. name, contact details, email address, attendance and assessment information, financial information. *The definition is extremely wide and includes any references to an identifiable person in emails.*
- **Sensitive personal data:** is special categories of personal data that require a higher level of protection including information that reveals someone's ethnic origin, political opinions, religion, sexuality or health. In schools, it also means safeguarding information, whether a child is looked-after, has SEN, or is eligible for the Pupil Premium Grant
- **As the Data Controller, the Governing Body has a responsibility to manage and safeguard personal data.**

1. Governor Access to Personal Data

- a. Under data protection regulations, personal data should only be shared with those who need that data to perform their roles. Information that is collected and shared should be no wider than that required and held no longer than necessary.
- b. Whilst the school collects a wealth of personal data to perform its functions, governors should only have access to this data if they need the information to carry out their duties. This means that:
 - Data shared with governors for monitoring purposes must always be anonymised.
 - Generally, personal data will only be shared with governors in the following limited circumstances, where:
 - they are sitting on a panel to review the head teacher's decision to exclude a pupil
 - they are sitting on an Admissions Panel
 - they are sitting on an appeal panel (disciplinary, capability, grievance, pay)
 - a complaint has been escalated to the Governing Body (in accordance with the school's complaints procedures)
 - a member of staff or pupil becomes identifiable or is identified during a meeting and this discussion is captured in confidential minutes.

Documents containing personal data must be treated as confidential and held securely.

2. How Personal Data is Shared with Governors

- a. Where documents containing personal data need to be shared with governors, these will be made available by sharing them in a confidential folder in Google Drive. Only governors or members of staff who require that information to carry out their duties will be given access to that folder.
- b. Confidential folders will only be shared with governors' school Google Accounts. These documents must not be downloaded or shared and governors must ensure that any documents that are

inadvertently downloaded from confidential folders are deleted from their own private device without delay.

- c. Governors must use a strong password for their school Google Account and hold this securely.
 - d. Where hard copies of papers are prepared for a hearing or meeting, these will be placed in a secure envelope marked 'Confidential' and either delivered by hand or sent by registered post. These hard copies should be returned to the Clerk at the end of the hearing or meeting to be shredded.

3. Keeping Personal Data secure

- a. Governors must ensure that any hard copy personal data held is stored securely and returned to the Clerk for shredding when no longer required.
- b. When accessing documents containing personal data via Google Drive governors must:
 - ensure personal data on a screen cannot be read by unauthorised persons, for example in a public area;
 - log out of the account when they have finished, if Google Drive is accessed on a shared device or if their private device is not password protected;
 - lock the screen if the device is left unattended whilst logged on to Google Drive;
- c. Private email addresses must not be used to share personal data. If at any time personal data is sent to your personal email address, the email and any downloaded documents should be deleted as soon as possible.

3. Data Protection Breaches

Personal data that has been lost, stolen or wrongly disclosed, must be immediately reported to the DPO so that steps can be taken to mitigate the impact of the breach. In addition, all breaches are required to be logged and in some cases reported to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours.

Governors should also speak to the DPO if they have any concerns at all about keeping personal data safe.

Approved by Fern Hill Governing Body 24th September 2019