



# DEANESFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL Governing Board Code of Conduct

## 1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity and help us to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The code is based on the Governance Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools> which replaces the Governance Handbook 2019. It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our instrument of government, standing orders and any scheme of delegation).

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix. Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

## 2. The 7 Nolan principles of public life

As governors, we will follow these [principles](#) set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

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

## 2. Governors' responsibilities

The core governance 3 functions of our governing board are to:

- > Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school
- > Hold executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- > Oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- > Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard (the NGA recognises this as the fourth core function of governance)



Article 29 - You have the right to education which tries to develop your personality and abilities as much as possible and encourages you to respect other people's rights and values and to respect the environment.



In order to do this effectively, as individuals we will:

### 3. Fulfil our role and responsibilities

- › Understand and respect that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management
- › Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself
- › Preserve and develop the character of the school
- › Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- › Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, the local community and the local authority)
- › Follow the school's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the school's constitutional documents
- › Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our board's performance, constitution and skillset
- › Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills we need for effective governance
- › Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full board
- › Comply with relevant guidance and legislation that sets out how we must manage our school's money, and procure goods and services
- › Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited
- › Declare all gifts worth more than £25.00 and record them on the gifts and hospitality register. We will not accept bribes
- › We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the school
- › When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
- › We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

### 4. Working with others

- › We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
- › We will support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders and holding them to account.
- › We will respect the role of the school leaders and avoid routine involvement in operational matters.
- › We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff. Respect each other's views.
- › We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- › We will engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders.



## 5. Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- > We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
- > We will make every effort to attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice.
- > Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role.
- > We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- > We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- > We will participate in regular pre-arranged school visits in accordance with school policy.
- > When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitment made in this code.
- > We will attend any training or development activity needed and prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) to ensure the board has a wide range of skills and expertise and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

## 6. Openness and transparency

### Conflicts of interest

To make sure our board takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- > Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all governors/trustees including associate members
- > Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter

### Publishing information

To ensure our board is transparent and open to the community we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.

- > We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
  - The structure and remit of the board and any committees, and the full name of the chair of each one
  - For each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
    - Their full name
    - Their date of appointment
    - Their term of office
    - The date when they stepped down (where applicable)
    - The body which appointed them
    - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
    - Their attendance record at board and committee meetings over the last academic year
- > We accept that the information relating to governors will be published on Get Information about Schools.
- > We accept that the approved board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person.



## 7. Confidentiality

In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. We will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:

- › Information about sensitive matters
- › Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents)
- › Details of individual governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted.

Confidential information will never be:

- › Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- › Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- › Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

### **Breaches of confidentiality**

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Governors understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended.

## 8. Data protection

We will follow the school's information security processes and measures and data protection policy (if applicable) when [using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data](#).

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

### **Personal data breaches**

We will inform the school's Data Protection Officer immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

## 9. Social media

We will:

- › Strive to uphold the reputation of the school at all times
- › Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community
- › Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- › Report any incidents of harassment we experience or see towards governors, to the chair of governors and the headteacher



We will **not**:

- > Accept friend requests from pupils
- > Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- > Make comments online about any members of the governing board or school community
- > Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute

## 10. Monitoring arrangements

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed and agreed regularly, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the full governing board.

## 11. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- > Safeguarding
- > E-safety
- > Data protection



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## Appendix 1: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If we suspect a governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- > The chair will investigate
- > The chair will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- > If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
  - Further meetings with the chair to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
  - Support, mentoring or training for the governor
  - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in
- > If there is no improvement in the governors' behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Governors may be suspended if they:

- > Are a staff governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school
- > Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the governor being disqualified from holding office
- > Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the school and has brought, or is likely to bring the school into disrepute
- > Breach confidentiality

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- > Speaking out publicly against the school
- > Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- > Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media

We may remove a governor from office where:

- > There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- > There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- > They display repeated and serious incompetence
- > They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values
- > Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school