

# GOVERNING BODY OF OLD PALACE PRIMARY SCHOOL – CODE OF CONDUCT

## 1. GOVERNOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 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
  - To act as a critical friend by providing support and challenge to the school
  - To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides
- Governors will respect the role of the school's senior leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements
- All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Governors accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- Governors have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given them delegated authority to do so, and therefore they will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times. They will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints, Governors will follow the procedures established by the governing board
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.
- Governors should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- Governors will always be mindful of their responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Their actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- When formally speaking or writing in their governing role they will ensure their comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to their own personal views;
- When communicating in a private capacity (including on social media) they will act with integrity and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation
- 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.
- Governors 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

## 2. COMMITMENT

- Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the governing body.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including serving as a link governor and on committees.

- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full governing body and committees is essential.
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it as part of their link governor role, and become involved in school activities.
- Governors should consider their individual and collective development needs and undertake relevant training. Each governor should commit to attending at least one training session each academic year and to disseminate any key learning from this.
- Governors should complete online safeguarding training annually, including reading at least Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Governors accept that in the interests of open governance, 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 will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).
- In the interests of safeguarding, all governors will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check.

### 3 RELATIONSHIPS

- Governors should strive to operate 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, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff, parents, the LEA and their local community.
- Should a governor need to raise a complaint regarding the conduct of another member of the board, in the first instance details of the complaint should be communicated privately to the Chair of Governors. Where the complaint refers to the Chair of Governors, this should be communicated privately to the Vice-Chair.

### 4 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.

- All governors should visit the school.
- Visits should be arranged in advance with the headteacher.
- 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 not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching that they see. If they are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be passed to the headteacher.
- After the visit, the governor should report back, either orally or in writing to the governing body. If a written report is to be produced, out of courtesy this should be discussed with the headteacher before publication.
- When visiting the school in a person capacity (i.e as a parent) governors do not speak on behalf of the governing body unless prior authorisation has been given.

## 5 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 both inside and outside of school.
- Governors will not identify the views expressed by individual named governors or disclose the details of any governing body vote
- Confidential papers will be held or disposed of appropriately
- Governors will exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- Governors understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office

## 6 CONDUCT

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- 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 governing body and agreed with the Headteacher.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's '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 should reflect this.

## 7 MEETINGS

It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Below is a suggested 'Meetings Charter'. If the Chair, the Head, the Clerk and all the governors subscribe to, and implement, a charter such as this, the governing body will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

## MEETINGS CHARTER

As a governor I expect:

- To attend regularly and be punctual;
- An agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item;
- The agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before the meeting;
- The 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 contribution 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;
- 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.

## 8. 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.