



# Orchard Junior School

Growing together. **Branching out.**

## Governors' Code of Conduct

<b>Last Review Date:</b>	September 2023
<b>Reviewer:</b>	FGB
<b>Review Cycle:</b>	Annually
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	Autumn 1 2024
<b>Notes:</b>	None
<b>Statutory/Published on Website:</b>	No/Yes

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations on and commitment required from Governors in order for the Governing Body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

### **The purpose of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards.

The Governing Body aims to ensure that children are attending an effective school, which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

### **The Governing Body:**

Sets the strategic direction of the school by:

- Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school.
- Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives.
- Setting statutory targets.
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy, which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.

Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:

- The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework.
- Progress towards targets.
- The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy.
- The budget and the staffing structure.

Ensures accountability by:

- Signing off the Self Evaluation Form.
- Responding to School Improvement Partner and Ofsted reports when necessary.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school.
- Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate.
- Making available information to the community.

Appoints and performance manages the Headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the Governing Body.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, Governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task
- Monitor and review their own performance

## **The role of a Governor:**

In law the Governing Body is a corporate body, which means:

- No Governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the Full Governing Body
- All Governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority Community, Foundation), the overriding concern of all Governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

## **General**

- We understand the purpose of the Governing Body and the role of the Headteacher as set out above.
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see Appendix.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 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 government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Body meeting.
- 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. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.

## **Commitment**

### **Time commitments**

Being a Governor involves the commitment of a significant amount of time and energy. Most Governors find this difficult from time to time. For some it is a constant challenge but busy people are often also good Governors.

We recognise that most Governors have work commitments, and/or family commitments, that can restrict their contribution. You may find it difficult to get to the school during school hours, or to attend meetings arranged at short notice, or to go to meetings on certain days. All of these will be willingly accepted. But you should endeavour to accept your fair share of duties within your particular constraints.

We would prefer you to be effective in a limited way, rather than ineffective across the board.

Try to make up for problems in one area by putting in more time where you are able to:

- ALWAYS send your apologies beforehand, even if it is at short notice, if you are not going to be able to attend a meeting where you are expected.
- It is a Governor's responsibility to put meeting dates in his/her diary. You should not expect to be personally reminded of meeting dates. But, you will receive an agenda 7 days before each meeting.
- If the school, or a member of staff, is courteous enough to invite you to a function, you should have the courtesy to reply.
- Try not to miss Full Governing Body meetings. If you do not attend for 6 months without good reason, the law requires you to be removed.
- There are many opportunities for Governors to attend school events, and you don't have to attend all. The Headteacher should indicate which of these are the most important for you to try to attend so as to be seen as supporting the school.

## **Training**

Hampshire has an extensive range of training courses for Governors. We subscribe annually so as to have free access to the Governor training, and we have a Governor who is specifically responsible for Governor training.

- We expect each new Governor to attend the induction training course for new Governors.
- We will provide you with a "mentor" Governor to help in the early months.
- We expect you to recognise your own skills and weaknesses and to put yourself forward for training courses as appropriate.
- "Governance" is very much in the spotlight at present, not least for Ofsted, and we expect you to try to be properly briefed on what this means and how you can play your part in achieving good governance.
- We try to arrange each year one "in-house" evening training session for Governors, tailored to our particular needs, and all Governors are expected to attend this event.
- Governors are also sometimes invited to join the teaching staff at in-service training days if the subject is appropriate to Governors.

## **Visits to the school**

We encourage all Governors to visit the school when they can, whether to attend events, take lunch, "walk around" or observe lessons. You will always be welcome in the school, and the more times you come the more familiar you will become with the layout, the staff and pupils. However, we do ask you to observe a few simple procedures for everyone's benefit.

- Please arrange your visit beforehand with the appropriate staff member (e.g. teacher, Headteacher or Admin officer) depending on the purpose of the visit. Try to avoid encounters with your own children, where applicable.
- Please sign in on arrival, giving the reason for the visit even if it is informal. Please pick up and wear your Governor badge and remember to sign out when you leave. These are important procedures for security and fire safety reasons, and they also help the Governing Body to show that the Governors are being active.

- If sitting in on a lesson, explain to the teacher beforehand why you wish to be there. Do not disrupt the lesson by arriving late, leaving in the middle, interrupting the teacher or undermining their authority etc. The teacher will explain the shape of the lesson and how they would like you to fit in with it. Be prepared to be "hands on" if asked.
- Be sensitive about any feedback on the lesson. Do not go behind people's backs.
- There are forms which can be used for you to record how the visit went. Please try to use them.

### **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; the Governor chairing a meeting is responsible for ensuring appropriate conduct at all times, and the other Governors are responsible for supporting the chair in that role.
- 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 matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff, pupils or parents, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Governing Body vote.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will declare any personal or pecuniary interest in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

### **Implementation of this Code of Conduct**

- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of conduct by any Governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Governing Body and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors, shall be minuted.
- We understand that any Governor whose conduct is minuted twice in twelve months shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute.

- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003 which pertain to qualification and disqualification for the role of school Governor and grounds for suspension (held as a separate document).

All governors will acknowledge and agreed to comply with this Code of Conduct annually in September using Governor Hub declarations.

## **Appendix: The Seven Principles of Public Life**

(originally published by the Nolan Committee)

### **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 material 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 that 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.

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.