

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Life in all its fullness

Code of Conduct for School Governors #5

The *Code of Conduct for School Governors* was reviewed during the Autumn Term 2019.
This document is the result of that review.

DATE AGREED BY FULL GOVERNING BODY:	23/09/2019
REVIEW DATE:	September 2021
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SIGNED:	
TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:	<i>Aims of the School Governor's Classroom Visits Policy Scheme of Delegation Induction for Governors Policy.</i>

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Introduction

Research has shown that a Governing Body can make a difference to the overall quality of a school and can help to create the climate for effective teaching and learning to take place. We recognise that, in order to begin to achieve this degree of effectiveness we will need to manage our own affairs competently; this code of conduct, therefore, is written with the aim of improving working practice.

Recognition of the Role

The role of the Governing Body is to:

- ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent.

Each governor is equally important and has an equally important contribution to make to the government of the school. Employees of the school are not permitted to chair the full Governing Body but, in every other respect, all governors have equal power and we are therefore anxious that all governors of this school should enjoy the same esteem and status.

We recognise that governors are elected or appointed by different groups to whom they may feel some loyalty. However, we urge all governors to see themselves as representatives of these groups and not delegates with a mandate to vote as instructed by them.

Our aim is to work as a team in a truly collaborative manner. While we recognise that our individual commitments may be uneven due to personal circumstances, we are particularly anxious that this should never cause us to work as an "A" team (those willing and able to give the time) and a "B" team (those willing to rubber-stamp decisions of the "A" team).

Meetings

- Because all governors' meetings are private, only legally appointed or elected governors or those who are invited to do so by the full governing body, attend meetings.
- The content of meetings is not discussed outside the meeting other than with other members of the governing body.
- Minutes are public property but these only record decisions and indicate action – not how individuals behaved.
- There will be some issues; mostly to do with individual pupils or individual employees – which are minuted separately and confidentially. The full governing body decides which these issues are.

We recognise that a great deal of our time will be spent in preparing for, traveling to, attending and following up meetings. We are therefore committed to making the most effective use of this time by keeping our meeting practice under regular review.

Decisions

- Decisions are collective; we always aim to move towards consensus, but we recognise that there are occasions where it will be necessary to take a vote.
- Having arrived at a decision; whether by vote or by consensus, we recognise that it is vital that we all remain loyal to that decision.
- No governor, including the Chair, speaks for the Governing Body without a mandate to do so.

Who Makes Decisions

Our “Scheme of Delegation” clarifies the responsibilities and powers of Governors and members of staff employed at the school; in respect of key aspects of the management of the school, and to ensure compliance with legal requirements and, where appropriate, LA policies.

The scheme is reviewed annually but in broad terms it aims to clarify

- how day-to-day management of the school is delegated to the Headteacher;
- how the committee structure works at Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School;
- by what process governors inform themselves in order to carry out their statutory responsibilities, for example, monitoring the budget or ensuring the National Curriculum is taught.

Conflicts of Interest

Governors will avoid putting themselves in a position where there is conflict; actual or potential, between their personal interests and their duties to the Governing Body. Examples of a circumstance where a governor should withdraw from a meeting in order to avoid such a conflict are;

- when the behaviour or progress of that governor’s child is being discussed;
- when a personnel issue is being discussed in relation to a post where a governor employed at the school, for example a teacher governor, might directly or indirectly benefit from the outcome;
- when a contract for building work is being discussed and a governor has an interest in, or is employed by, one of the companies quoting.

We do not generally expect such conflicts to be difficult to anticipate or resolve. In the case of any dispute, the full Governing Body adjudicates. A governors’ “Register of Interests” is compiled to anticipate any such conflict. The register also provides a mechanism for identifying professional skills, hobbies and interests which could be a valuable resource for our school.

Commitment to the School

Induction

In order to welcome new governors properly and to enlist their lasting commitment, we recognise the need for a well-planned induction for all new governors. Responsibility for planning and implementing this programme rests with the whole Governing Body and appears as a separate written policy which will be reviewed annually. New governors are encouraged to read this document as part of their induction.

Meetings

Much of our business will be conducted in meetings and we therefore commit ourselves, as very high priority, to attend all Governing Body meetings and as many committee meetings as we can. To facilitate the best possible attendance, we will fix the dates of all Governing Body meetings a year ahead.

To make the most effective use of meetings we will also commit ourselves to proper preparation and prompt starts.

Visits

We also recognise that it is very hard to be an effective school governor without knowing about the school, the staff who run it or the children who learn in it. We are therefore committed to looking for purposeful ways of visiting the school, not as inspectors, but as those given a legitimate role in its strategic development, to monitor and evaluate school improvement. To achieve this, we will try to get to know the school as well as we can.

Training

We are dedicated to the development of the school and of those who work in it. We recognise that the central role we now have in that development will be effective only if we ourselves seek appropriate training and support.

Ceasing to be a 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 Body 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.

Removal of a governor

The Governing Body will only exercise the power to remove an elected governor in exceptional circumstances where the actions or behaviour of the elected governor warrants removal rather than suspension. The power will not be used simply to remove dissenting or challenging voices.

Examples which could give rise to removal are where:

- (a) there have been repeated grounds for suspension
- (b) there has been serious misconduct (the Governing Body will decide what constitutes serious misconduct based on the facts of the case and the Nolan principles (see below))
- (c) a governor displays repeated and serious incompetence (for example where an elected governor is unwilling or unable, despite all appropriate support, to develop the skills to contribute to effective governance; or where attendance is so irregular that the governor is unable to make any meaningful contribution to the work of the board).
- (d) the governor has engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and/or;
- (e) the actions of the governor are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the governing body, distracting it from its core strategic functions; and/or the actions of a governor interferes with the operational efficiency of the school thereby wasting a significant amount of headteacher and /or senior leadership time.

Removal by a Governing Body of a co-opted governor, partnership governor, ex-officio foundation governor, appointed parent governor or elected parent or staff governor is affected by resolution of the Governing Body but only if:

- the removal is confirmed by a resolution passed at a second meeting of the governing body not less than 14 days after the first meeting;

- the removal of the governor has been specified as an item on the agenda of both meetings; and
- the following additional conditions are satisfied.

Where the governor concerned is a co-opted governor, a partnership governor, elected parent or staff governor, or an appointed parent governor, the governor proposing the removal must at the meeting give reasons for the proposal and the governor concerned must have the chance to make a statement in response.

The Governing Body will provide an appeals procedure to enable any removed governor to test the reasonableness of the governing body's decision to remove them. An independent panel will conduct the appeal (which could include a governor from another school, and/or a suitable official from the local authority, or a suitable diocesan representative). The governor subject to removal will be provided with written details of the case against them ahead of any meeting (to include details of how their case is being handled and the timeframes involved). They will then be given sufficient time and support to respond.

The Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan principles)

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life).

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.