

# Sarisbury Church of England Junior School

## Code of Conduct and Organisation of the Governing Body

### A) Code of Conduct of the Governing Body

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and associate members in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

#### **The governing body 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 head teacher;
- Monitoring progress towards targets;
- Performance managing the head teacher;
- Engaging with stakeholders;
- Contributing to school self-evaluation.

##### ***Ensuring financial probity***, by:

- Setting the budgets;
- Monitoring spending against the budgets;
- Ensuring value for money is obtained;
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

#### **As individuals on the body we agree to the following:**

##### **Role & Responsibilities**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the head teacher
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the GB 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the GB or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 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 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 schools. Our actions within the schools and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the schools we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the head teacher.

## **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 body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings on time, having read all documents in advance and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are 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 to monitor aspects of the school improvement plan, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the head teacher
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development. We will undertake relevant training and development according to our committee membership and link governor roles.
- We will undertake continuing governor training and development.
- We will review and complete an annual skills matrix with the Development and Training Governor.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

## **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 in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all 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 head teacher, 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 or pupils, 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 use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote

## **Conflicts of interest**

- 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 body'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 accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- 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 board.

### **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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

### **Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life:-**

(As Outlined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, October 1994).

**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.

## **B) Organisation of the Governing Body.**

### **1. Membership**

- The GB will ensure it has sufficient governors to undertake its duties effectively and to maintain the quorum for a full GB meeting of not less than 4.
- All governors will be appointed for a 4 year term of office.
- The GB will ensure that it creates an environment which enables it to recruit and retain effective governors and which encourages the participation of all groups and sections of the community.
- The GB will be proactive in recruiting governors whose appointment is its responsibility.
- The GB will seek to recruit people with the relevant skills and experience needed to deliver good governance.

- The GB will publish on the school's website all of the information relating to its structure and membership as required by the Constitution Regulations Guidance, August 2015, section 25.

## **2. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Any changes to the GB's arrangements for elections in these standing orders will be made in advance of any election.

- The chair and vice chair will be elected for one year and their term of office will end on the day of the first full GB meeting following the anniversary of their appointment.
- Candidates should self-nominate and do so in time to have their name included on the agenda for the meeting at which the election of officers will take place.  
Self-nomination at the meeting will only be accepted if no one has put them self forward on the agenda.
- If they wish to, candidates will be able to make a personal statement to the meeting before the vote.
- Where an election is contested voting will be by secret ballot.

## **3. Appointment of the Clerk to the GB**

- The clerk will have a contract of employment that includes specific provisions in relation to their work as clerk. This will show their hours, rate of pay, method of payment, overtime pay and period of notice.
- The GB will arrange for the clerk to discuss their role with the chair of governors on an annual basis.
- The GB will support the clerk in the process of their continuing professional development, by enabling them to participate in the Clerks' Accreditation programme, the Clerks' Development Programme, Clerks' Support meetings and inviting them to attend their whole GB training sessions.

## **4. Meetings**

- The governing body will set the dates for its meetings for the next school year at the final whole GB meeting of the school year.
- The GB will plan its business across the year to take account of the school's internal management cycle and the availability of information and reports that are needed for it to effectively hold senior leaders to account.
- The GB will hold the minimum number of meetings necessary to ensure the strategic business of the school is properly addressed.
- Meetings will focus the work of the GB on its three core functions and meeting its statutory responsibilities. They will demonstrate that the GB is monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes across the school and that it is ensuring that the school improvement plan is being successfully implemented.
- Governors will receive relevant information sufficiently in advance of meetings for them to be able to review it, leading to informed discussions and sound decision making.
- Governors will read all relevant information forwarded to them so that they can effectively contribute during the meeting by providing support, and appropriate challenge through the questions they ask.
- The submission of apologies should not be taken as the GB giving consent to the absence with regard to the disqualification regulations for non-attendance, each case will be considered on its own merits.
  - Consent for absence may be granted by the GB on request from governors who know they will be unable to attend meetings for an extended period.
  - Where a governor's pattern of attendance is causing concern they will be alerted to this by the clerk or chair.
- The GB will aim to complete full GB and committee meetings within two hours.

- Any additions to the agenda (any other business) will only be dealt with if agreed by governors at the beginning of the meeting.

## 5. Committees

### a) Structure

- The GB will operate a four sub-committee structure:
  - Child and Curriculum;
  - Finance and Resources;
  - Personnel, Performance and Pay;
  - Strategic Planning.
- Subject to regulations, the GB will set up staff dismissal and appeal, pupil discipline and admissions committees.
- The GB is required, on an annual basis to:
  - review the constitution and membership of its committees;
  - review the terms of reference of its committees – this task will be undertaken by the committees at their first meeting of the academic year and brought to the GB for agreement;
  - set the quorum for its committees.
- Foundation Governors shall be included as members of the Strategic Committee when items relating to Section 48 inspections, RE Policy or Collective Worship Policy are agenda items and shall receive full agendas and documentation. They shall have voting rights on this committee only relating to Section 48 inspections, RE Policy and Collective Worship.
- Terms of Reference must be reviewed annually by each committee at their first meeting of the academic year for subsequent ratification by the Governing Body. Terms of Reference must show the date of the meeting at which they were agreed and be signed by the committee chair.
- The chair of each committee will be elected annually at the first Governing Body meeting of the academic year. Chairs of committees will not be members of staff or, in the case of the Finance & Resources committee, an associate member.
- Committees will be clerked by a trained individual who is not a member of the committee.
- The overall effectiveness of the committee structure and the way it works to support the core functions of the GB will be reviewed annually.

### b) Delegation

- In addition to responsibilities retained at GB level by regulations, the GB will **not** delegate:
  - Approval of the school strategic plan or school improvement plan.
  - Approval of the first annual budget in each financial year
  - Approval of statutory and other key policies – these policies will be identified in the GB policy review planner

### c) General

- The GB will ensure that there are opportunities for parents to engage with governors so that their views can be considered by governors.

## 6. School Improvement

The GB:

- will focus on gaining a shared understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the school;
- will be actively engaged with the completion and updating of the school's Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) and consider its contents;
- will continuously self-evaluate its own performance;
- will be involved in setting the agenda for school improvement and contribute to setting the strategic direction for the school;
- will use a variety of internal and external information / data to hold the school to account and, where required, take appropriate action to drive up standards;
- will consider the need to seek a view from the LEA (and/or the Diocese where relevant) as part of preparation for the Head Teacher's performance management review;
- will require written information from the Head Teacher covering:
  - pupil achievement and progress;
  - an analysis of the school's performance data, including vulnerable groups, with details on how pupil premium has been used and the impact it has had;
  - progress regarding the implementation of the school improvement plan;
  - budget monitoring and forward financial planning;
  - the effectiveness of performance management in the school;
    - how it impacts on the quality of teaching and standards;
    - the link between pupil outcomes and pay progression.
  - strategic staffing issues;
  - behaviour and exclusions;
  - attendance data.
- will require the Head Teacher to provide a written report, once a term, to a meeting of the full Governing Body;
- will receive and make use of external reports from the Local Authority, where appropriate (except those naming individual staff);
- will receive and make use of external inspection reports from Diocesan advisers and Section 48 inspections;
- understand the requirements of the Ofsted Leadership and Management criteria, especially those relating to governance (as outlined in the Ofsted section in the A –Z index of the Hampshire GS Website);
- will ensure that the school has in place all relevant statutory policies and meets all other statutory requirements – (Ref. for further information on these Policies and other statutory requirements HCC guidance' on the Governor Services website, under 'P' in the A- Z index).

## 7. Governor relationships

The GB and Head Teacher will respect each other's roles and maintain a professional and open relationship, acknowledging the skills and contributions of all.

The Governing Body:

- will use staff and governor time appropriately, sensitively and effectively;
- will, in the way that it conducts its business, have regard to the need for the Head Teacher and staff to maintain a reasonable work / life balance;
- will have regard to equality of opportunity for both current and future governors in planning the frequency and times of meetings;
- believes that conflict is best resolved openly through discussion, corporate decision-making and acceptance of the majority view. Where this cannot be achieved & where there is a matter of significant importance, eg broken confidence, it will be necessary to refer to the current Regulations if suspension of a governor is an issue;
- will be welcoming to new governors and ensure they receive appropriate induction and training;

All governors will:

- adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Governing Body (outlined above);
- share the workload and take on additional responsibilities as and when required to ensure the GB fulfils its core functions;
- undertake a focused school visit at least twice a year (for example as a link governor, class room visits, health and safety inspections, etc;)
- undertake training relevant to their role;
- contribute to discussions, and support the corporate decision-making process, maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality and discretion;
- always act in the best interests of the pupils of the school;
- conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the ethos or the religious character of the school;
- uphold 'The Seven Principles of Public Life' (as described above);
- be mindful of internet security if e-mailing sensitive information and consider if it is appropriate to use a work e-mail address for governor business;
- will only act within the delegated powers granted to them by the GB;
- be respectful of the view of others and help to foster open and honest debate;
- refer anyone with issues or concerns about the school to its Complaints Policy;
- provide information regarding relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including, governance roles in other educational institutions, any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives).

**Adopted by the Governing Body of Sarisbury Church of England Junior School on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017**