Ely St John's Code of Conduct for Governors
2021-2022

GENERAL

- The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievements of all its pupils and promote pupil welfare (safeguarding). The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:

    1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
    2. Holding educational leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
    3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

- Governors have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates. The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and operation of the curriculum.
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- 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 do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole governing body.
- In so far as they have, or share, responsibility for the employment of staff, governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- Governors should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.

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 of a school.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- Regular attendance at meetings is essential and where governors cannot attend explain in advance why they are unable to. A record of governors' attendance will be published on the school website.
- Governors should play an active part in monitoring the work of the school.
- Governors will use their existing skills and be committed to developing themselves in the role.
- Governors will consider seriously their individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.

ELIGIBILITY

- Governors will confirm their eligibility to be a governor in writing and inform the clerk immediately if there is any change.
- All governors will need to have an enhanced DBS check undertaken on appointment.

RELATIONSHIPS

- Governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, parents, the local authority and their local community.
- Governors will need to disclose any relationships with other governors or staff at the school, this information will be published on the school website.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff, pupils or parents (both inside or outside school).
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the views of individuals or how they voted should remain confidential.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.
- Governors understand that the requirements of confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

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 authorised to do so.
- Governors when communicating in their private capacity (including on social media) will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.
- All visits to the school should be undertaken within an agreed policy.
- In responding to a concern, grievance or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer the parent or member of staff to the relevant procedure.
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school and their actions within the school and the local community should reflect this.
- 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.
- Governors should withdraw from any item at a meeting in which they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest. This needs to be recorded in the minutes.
- A person who is paid to work at the school is not regarded as having a pecuniary interest if his/her interest is no greater than that of other persons paid to work at the school.
- A governor paid to work at the school, other than the headteacher, must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to the pay or performance appraisal of any particular person working at the school. This does not affect general discussions about general policy.
- The headteacher must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to their own pay or performance appraisal.
- All governors must ensure that confidential and sensitive data is kept securely, both paper and electronic versions.
- Governors will only use email as agreed by the governing body, for example, to circulate agendas and reports, and not for discussing business.

PUBLICATION OF GOVERNOR'S DETAILS AND THE REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Governors hold an important public office and their identity should be known to their school and wider communities. In the interests of transparency, this governing body will publish on its website up-to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible format. This will include:

- the structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and the full names of the chair of each;
- for each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months: their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body's instrument of government),
- 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);
- their attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year.

The same information will be published for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed.

Any governor failing to provide information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute. In such cases the governing body may consider suspending the governor or removal, in the case of an associate member.

In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase/GIAS).

MEETINGS

Individual governors do not have the authority in a school. It is the decisions of all the governors together that carry authority. The activities that governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' – in a meeting.

It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. If the chair, the headteacher, the clerk and all the governors subscribe to and follow agreed expectations such as this, the governing body will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

MENTORING

The link governor or an experienced governor can act as a mentor to new governors providing support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body.

MEETINGS EXPECTATIONS

As a governor I expect:

- People to attend regularly and be punctual
- An agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before every meeting
- An agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item
- An effective chair who runs the meeting efficiently but encourages all to contribute
- 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 are accurate and concise and reflect the challenge governors provided

Others can expect me to:

- Attend regularly and be punctual
- Come prepared to the meeting and prepared to play an active part in the meeting
- Make relevant and positive contributions
- Listen to and consider what others say
- Accept the majority decision, even if I personally disagree

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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.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE
(as set out in The Committee on Standards in Public Life chaired by Lord Nolan)

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 this.

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 Governing Body of Ely St Johns primary School adopted this Code of Conduct on 16th September 2021
Please confirm you have read and will abide by the code of conduct by going to your profile on Governor Hub and clicking on declarations and confirming this way. Please contact the clerk if you have difficulties accessing this.