

# Brinkworth Earl Danby's

## Code of Conduct for School Governors

**Updated and agreed for 2023/24 on 26 September 2023**

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

**The governing board has the following core strategic functions:**

**Establishing the strategic direction, by:**

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school multi-year strategy and school development plan with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

**Ensuring accountability, by:**

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring against statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and safety
- Monitoring impact in relation to intent
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

**Ensuring financial probity, by:**

- Approving the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

***Draft for approval: Ensuring Stakeholder Engagement, by:***

- *Monitoring school operational stakeholder engagement*
- *Engaging with stakeholders in Governor roles*
- *Ensuring stakeholder voice is considered in strategic decision-making*
- *Providing a stakeholder feedback route to school*

## As an individuals on the board, I agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- I will always be mindful of my responsibility as a Governor to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. My actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- When communicating in my private capacity (including on social media) I will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), I will maintain my underlying responsibility as a Governor.
- When formally speaking or writing in my governing role I will ensure my comments reflect current school policy even if they might be different to my personal views.
- I accept that I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given me delegated authority to do so, and therefore I will only speak on behalf of the governing board when I have been specifically authorised to do so.
- I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that I will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- I will commit to reading the latest version of the DfE Governance Handbook and any subsequent updated versions of the document.

### Commitment

- I acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- I will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where I cannot attend, I will provide apologies and explain in advance why I am unable to attend.
- I will involve myself actively in the work of the governing board, and accept my fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- I will participate in any induction process offered by our governing body.
- I will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in school activities.
- I recognise the importance of my individual skills which I will use in the best interests of the school. I will consider seriously my individual needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.
- I am prepared to take on additional responsibility as required in order to ensure effective succession planning.
- I accept that in the interests of open government, my full name, date of appointment, term of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, category of governor, register of business and pecuniary interests, and the body responsible for appointing me will be published on the school's website and/or the DfE's national database of governors, along with all other information required by law. I accept that this will be publicly available.

## **Respecting Confidentiality**

- I will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school.
- I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- I will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- I will exercise great caution when using electronic communication including social media in relation to governance matters. I will not mention school business or the names of individuals on sites such as Facebook or WhatsApp.

## **Managing Conflicts of interest**

- I will declare any business, personal or other interest that I have in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
- I will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, I will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- I will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

## Collectively as the board, we agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing body as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the headteacher.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.
- We will respect the role of the headteacher and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We always aim to move towards consensus, but there will be occasions where it will be necessary to take a vote. The main arguments on either side will be recorded impersonally. We remember to ask ourselves the question: "How will this decision benefit the safeguarding and education of the pupils of the school?"
- 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We review our Scheme of Delegation annually.
- We will evaluate our organisation and performance as a governing body regularly to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness, including individual skills audits.

### Commitment

- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the headteacher.
- We recognise the importance of our collective skills which we use in the best interests of the school. We will consider seriously our collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training and development.

### Building and Maintaining Relationships – within our board

- 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 will provide constructive feedback to the chair regarding his/her performance of the role and accept feedback on our own performance.

- 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.

### **Building and Maintaining Relationships – outside our board**

- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will collectively maintain awareness of stakeholder perspectives of the school where these come to our attention, whether that be through specific approaches from stakeholders to Governors, or through stakeholders airing their views on public forums such as social media.
- Where this is appropriate to Governor business, we will highlight any relevant trends or observations to the Headteacher, Strategic Steering Group or Full Governing Body.
- We will not use social media to distribute formal or informal communications from the Governing Body to stakeholder groups. We will use formal school communications as a default, ie school email through Parent Pay.
- If, in exceptional circumstances, it is considered that the use of social media by Governors in a formal capacity may be necessary and appropriate for the management of a specific situation, the Headteacher and at least 2 other Governors should agree on the reasons why, and the content to be posted. Formal channels of communication must have been explored before social media is used.

### **Respecting Confidentiality**

- We understand that all Full Governing Board minutes of the governing body are public papers once they are confirmed as an accurate record by FGB members. These minutes are to be made available at the school to anyone wishing to inspect them.

### **Managing Conflicts of interest**

- We will collectively maintain awareness of any business, personal or other interest that our board members have declared in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will manage this by the interested party leaving the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

## Breach of this code of conduct

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

- 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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: 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).

**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.