



Code of Conduct for School Governors

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Contents:

1. Purpose	3
2. Core strategic roles of the LGB	3
3. Principles and procedures	4
4. Public information about governors	6
5. Breach of the code of conduct	7
6. The Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles)	7
7. Undertaking	8
Appendix 1: Sanctions in the event of a serious breach of the code	9

Code of Conduct for School Governors

1. Purpose

The Code of Conduct for School sets out the expected standards conduct that we expect all governors to follow. It provides a common understanding of the broad principles by which the Local Governing Body (LGB), individual governors and associate members of our academies will operate, in order to effectively carry out its role within the academy and community. Governors have a general duty to act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the academy at all times. Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken.

In a Church of England school, governors have a special responsibility for ensuring that the Christian distinctiveness of the school is preserved and developed and that the school conducts itself in a way that is in accordance with its ethos statement. Mindful of these responsibilities, governors will strive to discharge their duties in a manner that upholds and demonstrates Christian values in the school, the parish, the local community and the wider educational community. Governors' actions should at all times reflect their responsibility to secure the Christian ethos of the school and governors should consider carefully how their actions both corporately and individually will be perceived by all stakeholders.

Every governor will agree to accept the Code of Conduct so that they clearly understand what is expected of them:

- when becoming a governor first – so that they understand what they are taking on and
- when working as part of the Local Governing Body (LGB) – so that they are able to practice good governance.

The Aspire Trust Board has therefore approved the following principles and procedures for adoption and implementation by all LGBs of academies in the Aspire Multi-Academy Trust (the Trust).

2. Core strategic roles of the LGB

1.1. 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.

1.2. Ensuring accountability by:

- Appointing the headteacher in conjunction with the Trust.
- Monitoring progress towards targets.
- Performance managing the headteacher.
- Engaging with stakeholders.
- Contributing to school self-evaluation.

1.3. Ensuring financial probity by:

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

3. Principles and procedures

The LGB accepts the following principles and procedures:

3.1. Roles and responsibilities

- We recognise that we are appointed with the approval of the Trust Board to which we are accountable as both individual governors and corporately as members of the academy's LGB.
- We understand the purpose of the LGB and the role of the headteacher and accept that our role is strategic and will not therefore involve ourselves in the day-to-day management of the academy.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the LGB has given us delegated authority to do so (as detailed in the Trust scheme of delegation or evidenced in full LGB minutes), and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the LGB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the LGB or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the LGB meeting, including by the use of any social media.
- 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 upholding the academy's reputation in our communications.
- 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 academy. Our actions within the academy and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the academy we will follow the procedures established by the Trust.
- We will actively support and appropriately challenge the headteacher.
- We will follow school policies and procedures as well as adhering to regulations applying to school governance including equality legislation.
- We will promote equity and diversity throughout our organisation, including the LGBs operation.
- We accept that all governors have equal status, and although having different skills and/or appointed by different bodies (e.g. parents, staff, church), our overriding concern will be the welfare of the academy as a whole
- Our visits to the school will be undertaken within the framework established by the LGB and agreed with the headteacher
- We recognise the authority of the chair of governors, or the vice chair when appropriate, to act on behalf of the LGB when actions or decisions have to be taken in the interests of the academy.

3.2. Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.

- We will prepare well for our meetings having read the papers presented and be equipped to positively contribute to the meeting.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the LGB, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the academy well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in its activities.
- We will undertake our fair share of our role to monitor by visiting the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework and policies established by the LGB and agreed with the Headteacher. We will complete a monitoring report for each visit we undertake which will be shared with the full LGB.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full development, and names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the LGB, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the academy's website.

3.3. 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 and staff.
- We will support the Chair, Vice Chair and Chair of Committees 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 Headteacher, staff and parents, the Trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

3.4 Use of social media

We will abide by any requirements set out in our school's social media policy.

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the school at all times.
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community.
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available.
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards governors, to the chair of governors and the headteacher.

We will not:

- Accept friend requests from pupils.
- Not join any private parent groups associated with the school.
- Disclose any information that is confidential or would breach data protection principles.

- Make comments online about any members of the governing board or school community.
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute.

3.5 Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school, including by the use of any social media.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote
- We will not use information for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for
- We will ensure confidential papers are securely held and disposed of at all times in line with school procedures.
- We will maintain confidentiality, even when we are no longer a governor at the school.

We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside an LGB meeting.

3.6 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 LGBs 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 academy's website.
- We will declare any conflict of interest at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the academy as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the LGB.

4. Published information about governors.

The following information about each governor/associate member will be published on the school's website:

- Full name, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable) and who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body's instrument of government);
- Business and financial interests relevant to the role of school governor (that a governor could potentially gain from by the position on the governing board);
- 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);
- Attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year;
- Details of the structure and responsibilities of the governing body and its committees and the approved board and committee minutes, and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person;
- The academy is also required to submit personal information about governors to the Department of Education's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools – GIAS) some of which will be publicly available.

- Governor's diversity data to be published on the school website, which could include information on any of the 9 protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 (providing this information is voluntary - governors are able to request it be removed from any reporting).

5. Breach of the code of conduct

- LGBs should ensure that prior to appointment, all new governors agree to the expectations for behaviour and conduct, as set out in this code of conduct, and that the governor understands the circumstances in which the LGB and Trust may suspend or remove a governor. The LGB will provide support to a new governor via good induction, training and mentoring and any potential issues will be addressed promptly.
- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate. The LGB and Trust will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways. The responsibility for the suspension/ removal of a governor can only be undertaken by the Trust Board or the appointing body in accordance with the regulations and cannot be delegated. The chair will seek advice from the Trust CEO or Governor Services should a governor be considered for suspension/removal.
- Serious breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in the removal or suspension of the governor involved – see Appendix 1.

6. The Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles)

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.

7. Undertaking

- I have read this document and understand the expectations of the Nolan Principles and the required conduct of a school governor.
- I understand all the requirements of this policy and agreed to abide by this policy and the Nolan Principles.
- I will endeavour to be an ambassador for the school, supporting its aims, values and ethos and prioritise the wellbeing of the children, staff and parents/carers.
- I understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions that could include suspension or removal as a governor.
- I understand that I must declare business interests and this information will be published on the academy's website along with my name, details of my term of office and responsibilities as a governor. Failure to reveal this information may be judged as bringing the Local Governing Body into disrepute and could lead to my suspension or removal as a governor.

Signed

Printed name

Date

APPENDIX 1

Sanctions in the event of serious breaches of code

This option will only be considered as a last resort, for having understood and agreed a code of conduct it is assumed that governors will not knowingly breach it.

1. Removal of governors

Appointed parent and co-opted governors can be removed by the Trust Board.

In these cases the governor allegedly in serious breach will be notified in writing of the reasons for proposing their removal and given the opportunity to make a statement in response to the allegations before a vote is taken on the resolution to remove them. The Board's decision to remove any appointed parent or co-opted governor in this way will be confirmed after a second meeting not less than 14 days after the first meeting.

Elected parents or staff governors may be removed in this way after consultation with the electing body.

Foundation governors (where appropriate) may be removed by the Board after consultation with, and approval from, the Diocesan Board of Education.

2. Suspension of governors

The Trust Board can, either independently or on a request from the LGB, decide to suspend a governor for six months if they are:

- paid to work at the school and subject to disciplinary proceedings,
- subject to any court or tribunal the outcome of which may mean they would be disqualified under Schedule 6,
- the governor has acted in a way that is against the academy's ethos or has brought or is likely to bring the academy, LGB or his/her office into disrepute,
- the governor is in breach of their duty of confidentiality to the academy staff or to the pupils.

In these cases the Trust Board will vote to suspend a governor and record this in the minutes.

A motion to suspend will be specified as an agenda item and at least seven days' notice given to all members of the Trust Board.

The proposer of a suspension will give the reasons and the governor being proposed for suspension will have the opportunity to make a statement in response.

The governor being proposed for suspension must withdraw from the meeting to allow discussion and voting to take place. The maximum period of time for a suspension is 6 months. The suspension period begins from the date of the meeting making the decision to suspend.

Suspended governors will receive papers during the period of suspension and will not be disqualified for non-attendance.