



CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE FOR GOVERNORS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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FEDERATION OF WESTMINSTER SPECIAL SCHOOLS TRAINING AND OUTREACH

Code of Conduct and Practice for Governors and Associate Members

Introduction

The purpose of this Code is to clarify roles, responsibilities and appropriate relationships between individual governors/associate members, the whole Governing Board and the Federation leadership team. The Code sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors/associate members. It reflects and reinforces the provisions of the 2012 School Governance Roles Procedures and Allowances Regulations (2013) and the DfE Governors Handbook [March 2019].

The Code should be read in conjunction with the [Federation Standing Orders](#) which sets out the procedures by which the Governing Board, and its committees will operate

Overriding Principles

- The Governing Board is the Federation schools' accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the schools, services and for promoting high standards. The Governing Board aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being. In addition the Governing Board aims for the Training and Outreach Service to be a well - managed highly specialised service that supports the inclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in mainstream schools.
- The Governing Board role is largely strategic, through:
 1. Setting the values, vision and priorities for the Federation schools and services
 2. Agreeing the policy framework for achieving the vision and priorities
 3. Setting targets
 4. Agreeing the Federation schools improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure
 5. Holding the Executive Headteacher / Headteachers to account for the performance of the schools
 6. Ensuring that the Training and Outreach Service is effective and meeting the needs of mainstream schools and pupils.
- The Governing Board will act in a corporate, collective and responsible way and conduct its business properly with the best interests of the Federation at the core of its activities and decisions
- The Governing Board will act in accordance with the Federation's ethos, aims and objectives and work collectively to promote the same. Individual governors/associate members will also be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with these principles.

- All governors have equal status and although appointed by different groups [e.g. parents, staff, LA or co-opted by the Governing Board] our overriding concern is the standards and welfare of the schools and services as a whole.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and particularly to ensure that there is no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion, age, or disability. We have a duty to promote community cohesion and inclusive practice. In so far as we have responsibility for staff, we shall fulfil all that is reasonably expected of a good employer.
- We shall ensure that our activities are open to interested parties, except where confidentiality applies, and our decisions will be open to scrutiny.
- We recognise that we have statutory responsibilities as governors/associate members and that we must meet these requirements.
- We recognise that it is the governors'/associate members responsibility to challenge and support the leaders and managers of the schools and services. Also to hold them to account for tackling weaknesses, further improving pupil performance and welfare and sound financial management.
- To this end we aim to provide excellent advice to the Federation and LA, thoughtful support and constructive challenge to the Executive Headteacher / Headteachers / Service managers, encouragement to staff and fair decisions.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Chair/Co-Chairs and Vice Chair of Governors will be elected in accordance with the Governing Board's Standing Orders.
- In the interests of maintaining an active and effective partnership, the Chair/Co-Chairs shall seek to ensure that the division of roles and responsibilities between the Governing Board and the Federation management is clearly understood and respected.
- The Chair/Co-Chairs will ensure that all Governing Board business is conducted openly and that all members are given equal opportunities to participate fully in all discussions and decision making and to express their views at meetings while ensuring that contributions are relevant and that time is effectively used
- The conduct and management of meetings will be the sole responsibility of the Chair of the meeting. The Chair may deny discussion on any matter not relevant to the agenda for which due notice has not been given
- The Chair/Co-Chair of Governors will use sparingly and only in cases of necessity, her/his additional powers to act individually under Chair's action. This is outlined in the Standing Orders. Any use of this power will be reported to the Full Governing Board

- The Governing Board will appoint a clerk and must have regard to the advice of the clerk in the exercise of its functions.
- The main purpose of the clerk's role is to:
 - Provide advice to the Governing Board on governance and constitutional matters
 - Provide effective administration support to the Governing Board and its committees.
 - Ensure that the Governing Board is properly constituted.
 - Manage information effectively in accordance with legal requirements.

For further information about the role of the clerk please contact [Chair/Co- Chair of Governors](#).

- The day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher / Headteachers. The Executive Head / Headteachers will be responsible for the fulfilment of those duties allocated in her/his conditions of employment, any duties stated in her/his job description, and any functions, tasks or responsibilities delegated to her/him by the Governing Board.
- The Executive Headteacher / Headteachers may determine any policies and procedures other than those required by statute which will assist her/him in the day to day management of the Federation schools , and will ensure that any such policies take the statutory policies of the Governing Board into account where appropriate
- The Governing Board may request information from the Executive Headteacher/ Headteachers or any other body to enable them to discharge their duties effectively. Individual governors may only request information from the Executive Headteacher/ Headteachers or from other staff with the agreement of the whole Governing Board, a delegated committee or Chair/Co-Chair of Governors
- The Executive Headteacher/ Headteachers will provide the Governing Board and its committees with termly written reports. The report will cover matters related to the curriculum, pupils, staff, finance and other matters considered to be of significance to the Governing Board. The Executive Headteacher/ Headteachers may also present other information to governors as they think fit.
- The Executive Headteacher /Headteachers have the right to attend any meeting of the Governing Board and its committees and working parties other than meetings of the Staff Dismissal Committee, Pupil Discipline Committee, Staff Dismissal Appeals Committee or meetings where they may have a personal interest apart from presenting a case, providing evidence or information.

Conduct of Governors

- We understand that the role of a governor/associate member is a significant public responsibility; we are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life and we understand that governors'/associate members Register of Interests will be published on the Federation website: The Nolan principles are at the end of this document
- In discharging our duties, we shall be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Federation.
- In debate, we are committed to respecting the views of others, affording them an equal right to be heard, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, ability or experience. We shall be courteous to any who attend our meetings and will try to ensure that discussions are clear and comprehensible.
- In meetings, we shall all respect the Chair and respond to his/her reasonable requests and requirements.
- If problems arise in any governors' meeting which cannot be effectively dealt with at the time, the Chair of that meeting may refer the problem to the Chair/Co-chair of Governors.
- Individual governors/associate members do not speak for the Governing Board and should not purport to do so. The governors' power to act or to make decisions is collective. Only the Chair of Governors/Co-Chair (or others specifically designated by the Governing Board) may speak on behalf of the Governing Board.
- Decisions are taken collectively and are binding on all governors/associate members. We have a duty to be mindful of the best interests of the Federation and to exercise the greatest prudence in discussing problems or dissent. Actions in violation of any collective decision may result in the Governor/associate member concerned being subject to disciplinary action
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we shall follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.
- Our visits to the schools will be undertaken within the framework outlined in the visits policy and the visits to schools programme. It is essential that governors/associate members visit both schools and write reports as outlined by the programme This is part of the required commitment of all governors/associate members and will be monitored by the Leadership Group. Failure to undertake this part of the role could be considered a breach of the Code of Practice.
- Any governor/associate member may attend any meeting of the full Governing Board and committees, save for those meetings convened for a specific and formal purpose, such as disciplinary matters, head teacher performance reviews, complaints, exclusions and appointments. Governors/associate members may only attend such meetings if they have been delegated to do so.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/associate member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We shall attend governors' meetings regularly and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including serving on committees and visiting the schools. We acknowledge that failure to do so could be considered as a breach of the Governors' Code of Conduct and Practice
- We shall take all reasonable opportunities to develop our skills and knowledge to match the needs of the Federation and will make full use of training opportunities in relevant areas.
- We shall get to know the Federation well, including understanding performance data, and take opportunities to become involved in Federation activities, so that we can draw on our experience to evaluate the performance of the schools and the health, safety and well-being of staff and pupils.

Confidentiality

- Only governors, associate members and observers authorised by the Governing Board are entitled to attend meetings of the Governing Board. Associate members and observers will withdraw if the Governing Board has to deal with confidential matters. When there is a need for confidentiality, it will be clearly stated and governors and associate members will observe it completely.
- Many matters may, however, require governors and associate members to be discreet. If a matter is being discussed at an early stage, we may consider courses of action that could be contentious. We need to feel comfortable in sharing our thoughts and concerns freely. Accurate, summarised minutes of meetings are kept, but these are not an exact account of what is said. It is not therefore, advisable to quote individual governors/associate members. It is easy for remarks to be taken out of context, so governors/associate members should exercise a sensible restraint in taking up a public position.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct and Practice

- If individual governors/associate members do not behave in accordance with the above principles and practices, the Chair/Co-Chair of Governors should discuss with the individual the relevant conduct and attempt to reach an agreement with the individual to respect the Code.
- If an individual governor/associate member is in breach of the Code in a meeting, the Chair should request that the individual desist and may need to ask them to withdraw from the meeting. If this is not done, the Chair may suspend the meeting. If the individual makes no subsequent undertaking to respect the Code, then the Chair may, upon reconvening the meeting, propose a motion to exclude or censure the individual, as appropriate.
- In the unlikely event that a governor/associate member were to resist all reasonable requests to comply with the Code of Conduct and Practice; or in the case of a serious breach of confidentiality; or where a governor/associate member has acted in a way which is inconsistent with the ethos of the school or which would be likely to bring the

Federation or the Governing Board into disrepute, the Governing Board may use its powers under the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances Regulations 2013 to suspend the governor/associate member for a period of up to six months or to remove or request the removal of appointed and co-opted governors/associate members

The Seven Principles of Public Life

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.

Undertaking:

Governors will sign the Code on appointment or at the Summer term Governing Board meeting of each school year.

As a Governor/Associate member I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos. I have read the Code of Practice and I undertake to comply with it.

Signed

Print Name

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Date: