



Code of Conduct

For Governors and Associate Members

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Federation of Westminster Special Schools and Bi-Borough Inclusion Service

Aims, scope and principles

- This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors and associate members to follow.
- By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors and associate members carry out their role with honesty and integrity and help us to ensure our federation is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect
- The Code is based on the Maintained School Governance Guide 2024 and on the school governance regulations 2013.
- The purpose of this Code is to clarify roles, responsibilities and appropriate relationships between individual governors/associate members, committees, the whole Federation Governing Board (the Governing Board) and the Federation Leadership Team.
- The Code sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors/associate members.
- Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken as set out in the Appendix
- Please note that the Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this Code governors and associate members should consult the Chair/Co-Chair of Governors and in exceptional circumstances use their own judgement based on these principles.

The 7 Nolan principles of public life

Selflessness - We will act in the public interest

Integrity - We will not act or make decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests

Objectivity - We will act and make decisions impartially, fairly and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias

Accountability - We understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this we will be scrutinised where necessary.

Openness – We will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty- We will be truthful

Leadership – We will actively promote and support the Nolan principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

Federation Principles

- The Federation Governing Board (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 Bi-Borough Inclusion Service to be a well-managed highly specialised service that supports the inclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in mainstream schools and colleges
- 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 /Head of the Bi-Borough Inclusion Service and other service managers, encouragement to staff and fair decisions.

Governor's responsibilities

The main functions of the Governing Board are

- Ensure Clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Federation schools and services
- Holding the Executive Headteacher / Headteachers and the Head of the Bi-Borough Inclusion Service to account for the educational and financial performance of the Federation and the performance management of staff
- Oversee the financial performance of the Federation schools and services and make sure the money is well spent
- Ensure the voices of stakeholders are heard

In order to do this effectively, as individuals we will

- Understand and respect the distinction between role and responsibilities of the Board and those of the Federation Leadership Team, school and service leaders
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the Federation community, including the conduct and the professionalism of itself
- Preserve and develop the character of the Federation
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, informed by, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, the local community and the Local Authority)
- Follow the Federation's policies and procedures, of the Board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the Federation's constitutional documents
- Fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance such as disclosure and barring checks
- Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing the Board's performance, constitution and skillset
- Participate in induction training and prioritise training and development in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis
- Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the Board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full board.
- 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
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation that sets out how we must manage our funding, and procure goods and services
- Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions and understand that our financial management and decision - making will be scrutinised and audited

- Declare all gifts. We do not accept bribes
- We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the Federation

Working with Others

We will

- Support and strengthen federation leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, and holding them to account
- Respect the role of the Federation Leadership Team and avoid routine involvement in operational matters
- Respect each other's views
- Work together as a board to develop effective relationships with stakeholders
- Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders
- Follow the Equality Act 2010 and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything we do

Commitment to Governance

We

- Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend we will explain our valid reason and give notice prior to the meeting by contacting the chair/clerk
- Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of this role
- Understand that work should be shared among members and that all governors are expected to take an active role
- Will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure that we make informed contributions
- Will participate in pre-arranged school and service visits in accordance with the Federation visits policy
- Will attend any training and development activity needed to ensure the Board has a wide range of skills and expertise

Openness and Transparency

Conflicts of Interests

To make sure our board takes impartial decisions without bias. We will

- Publish an up to date register of business and pecuniary interests of all governors/associate members
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter

Publishing Information

To ensure our federation board is transparent and open to the community we serve, we will make certain information publicly available

We accept that the following information will be published on the Federation website to ensure transparency

- The structure and remit of the Federation Board and committees, and the full name of the chair /co-chairs of each one
- For each governor who has served at any point over the last twelve months
- Their full name
- Date of appointment
- Their term of office
- The date when they stepped down (if applicable)
- The body which appointed them
- Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
- Their attendance record at board and committee meetings over the last academic year
- We accept that the information relating to governors will be published on Get information about schools
- We accept that the approved Federation board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person

Confidentiality

In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. We will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose.

- Information about sensitive matters
- Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents)
- Details of individual governors' contributions in meetings or how they have voted

Confidential information will never be

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for the purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm

We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office

Breaches of Confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the Chair/Co-Chair of Governors as soon as possible who will investigate this matter further, Governors and associate members understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended

GDPR

We will follow the Federation's information security processes, measures and related policies.

Our commitment to GDPR does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate authority where we believe a child is at risk of harm

Personal data breaches

We will inform the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/FBM immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

Social media

We will:

- Abide by any requirements set out in the Federation social media policy

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the Federation at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the Federation 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 and associate members to the Chair/Co-Chair of Governors and the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher of the school

We will not:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the Federation. Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach GDPR and data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the Governing Board or federation community
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the Federation into disrepute

Monitoring arrangements

This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the Governing Board.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If we suspect a governor has breached the Code of Conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The chair/co-chair will investigate
- The chair/**co-chair** will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the chair/**co-chair** to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the governor
 - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in
- If there is no improvement in the governors' behaviour, the Board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Governors may be suspended if they:

- Are a staff governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school
- Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the governor being disqualified from holding office
- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the Federation and has brought, or is likely to bring the Federation into disrepute
- Breach confidentiality

Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to

- Speaking out publicly against the Federation
- Being disrespectful to members of the Federation community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media
- There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- They display repeated and serious incompetence
- They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the Federation

Undertaking:

Governors/associate members 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 Federation at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the Federation publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos. I have read the Code of Conduct and I undertake to comply with it.