

BROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Role of School Governors and Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct sets out the role, commitment, responsibilities, behaviours and actions required from school governors.

Governing Body, General

In order for the governing body to achieve the best possible outcomes for all of the children and to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, the governing body will operate according to the following principles:

- The governing body is a corporate body, therefore no governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the full governing body.
- As part of that corporate body, the responsibility for all decision making is carried equally amongst all governors.
- Governors accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body and therefore do not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- Act within the policies of the governing body and legal requirements.
- He/she has an awareness of and accepts the Nolan principles of public life (See Appendix 1).
- Governors may be appointed by different bodies (parents, staff, local authority community) but the ultimate aim and concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.
- All governors must declare openly and immediately, any conflict of interest arising from a matter before the governing body or from any aspect of governorship.
- Governors should know the school, its needs, strengths and weaknesses.
- Acknowledge that the day to day running of the school and the implementation of plans and policies of the governing body is the responsibility of the head teacher and senior leadership team.
- Act as a critical friend to the head teacher and school. This means supporting and challenging, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating and offering support, constructive advice and a sounding board
- Ensure accountability to all stakeholders – pupils, parents, community, local authority and so on. This accountability relates to safeguarding, standards, school improvement, the budget and making appropriate information available to the stakeholders
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly, respectfully and without prejudice at all times.
- 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 promotes the school's best interests and might affect other schools.

The Role of the Governor

- Set the strategic direction of the school by determining the character, aims, objectives, ethos and values of the school and identify current priorities.
- Alongside the head teacher, develop the policy framework to achieve the aims and objectives.
- Set statutory targets and help the school to provide the best education for each of its pupils to enable them to achieve the highest standards of achievement.
- Through relevant policies and procedures ensure that the school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff.

- Agree strategies for school improvement, including financial oversight, approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.
- Set the school staffing structure within budget constraints and agree and assist in the recruitment of staff as required.
- Regularly monitor and review the performance and activities of the governing body in relation to the SIP and SEF.
- Securing high levels of attendance and good standards of pupil behaviour.
- Ensure a relevant high quality curriculum is in place that meets the needs of all learners.
- Ensure the health and safety of all staff and children including their safeguarding.
- Overseeing community and wider engagement activities.
- Be able to analyse performance data.

All Governors – Commitment

The office of governor involves a commitment of time and energy to the role. All governors will:

- Make every effort to attend meetings and where this is not possible provide apologies in advance of the meeting.
- Accept a fair share of the responsibility of the workings of the governing body and its committees.
- Take or seek opportunities to enhance his/her effectiveness as a governor through participation in training, development programmes and increasing his/her knowledge of the school.
- As a result of self review and areas for development identified, organise training for the governing body as a whole.
- Ensure that governors visit the school every academic year, arranging the visit in advance with staff and following an agreed framework.
- If requested to support the school in exceptional circumstances, including inspection, governors will make every effort to attend including re-arranging schedules where possible.

Key Requirements of Governors

- An interest in securing the best outcomes for children and their education
- Sound communication and literacy skills
- Numerate/able to understand and analyse figures and data presented
- Integrity
- Commitment to equal opportunities
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Respect confidentiality
- Commitment to training and self-evaluation
- Able to be a critical friend

Relationships and Conduct

Governing bodies can succeed or fail on the strength of relationships. The principle working relationships are with each other and the head teacher, but accountability to stakeholders ensures that there are other relationships which need to be cared for. Essentially the governing body:

- Must strive to work as a team, promoting constructive working relationships
- Will encourage the expression of views openly and an environment where every governor feels confident to participate in discussions and feels listened to
- Ensure that the Chair of Governors facilitates good discussions and challenges any governor who becomes aggressive or tries to dominate
- Discuss and review succession planning within the governing body to promote and preserve good relationships and the future effective governance of the school.
- Will support and challenge in equal proportions, the head teacher and senior leadership team in a courteous manner
- Will respect and acknowledge time, effort and skills from all members of the governing body and staff at the school
- Will accept that differences of opinion may arise in discussions, but when a majority decision is made this should then be accepted by all governors
- Follow good practice and procedures in communications, to actively develop effective relationships with the staff, the parents, the community, the local authority and other relevant agencies
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school 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.
- Where an interest is declared, the governor must be prepared to leave the meeting while the item is under discussion if requested to do so.

Confidentiality

The Governing Body must have proper regard for balancing the needs of the:

- **Human Rights Act 1998**

Giving everyone the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence, unless this is overridden: by the pupil interest, for reasons of child protection, for the protection of public safety, pupil order, health or morals or for the rights and freedoms of others.

- **Data Protection Act 1998**

Applies to personal data of living, identified viable individuals, not anonymised data; manual and electronic records. Schools need to be clear, when collecting personal data, what purposes it will be used for and schools should have policies to clarify this to staff, pupils and parents.

- **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Amends the Data Protection Act. Gives everyone the right to request any records a public body, including schools, holds about them. A school may withhold information it has if it is considered the information may damage the recipient, if disclosed. School data or record keeping policy should also cover the requirements of this act.

There are times during governing body meetings where discussions or information given, is confidential. These instances may or may not happen frequently and usually the Chair of Governors or head teacher will remind governors of the need for confidentiality. This is an important area of governance where governors need to:

- Observe complete confidentiality especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents, both during their terms of office and on ceasing to be a Governor.
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.
- Exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.
- Documents no longer needed should be disposed of by shredding or other process rendering them illegible. They can be handed back to the school for safe disposal.
- All communication via e mail should be treated with due care and marked as OFFICIAL if required.
- Confidential information may be restricted to a limited number of Governors – such as for appointments, disciplinary and financial issues.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct

- It is essential that all governors within this governing body are aware of and understand each section of the Code of Conduct. To this end it will be included in the annual pack for governors.
- It is essential that the governing body accept and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. This agreement must be recorded, signed by the chair of governors and dated.
- If any governor breaches the Code then the governing body will discuss the breach and take action as necessary (Action might be a warning, or possibly a suspension)

Governor Expenses

This governing body has decided not to award any expenses to members for the current year. In exceptional circumstances a governor may apply to the full governing body for a one off payment of a particular expense or set of expenses. This will be reviewed regularly.

Signature of Governor.....

Chair of Governors Signature:

Date:

Appendix 1 – The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of 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 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 public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

MEETINGS CHARTER

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 the meeting;
- an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item;
- a Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point;
- 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 that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.

Others can expect me to:

- attend regularly and be punctual;
- read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about;
- bring my papers to the meeting;
- make relevant and positive contributions;
- listen to and consider what other people want to say;
- accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

- All governors should visit the school.
- The dates of the Governor class link visits will be communicated in advance to all governors, they should confirm their intention to visit with the school.
- Visits should have a clear focus, linked to a school policy, a curriculum area, an aspect of the school development plan or to develop links with a class.
- If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.
- Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the headteacher.
- If governors are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be passed to the headteacher.
- After the visit, the governor should report back, either orally or in writing to the governing body. If a written report is to be produced, it is sensible to discuss it with the headteacher before publication.