

Cleves School and Weybridge Children's Centre
Code of Practice
For School Governors 2015/16

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. Every governor and associate member will sign it at the start of the school year (or on joining the Governing Body, if mid-year).

The purpose of the governing body

The governing body is the school's and children's centre's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and Children's Centre and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school and Children's Centre that provides all children with an excellent education, encourage high attainment and support their well-being.

For the school, the governing body:

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
 - Determining the values, aims and objectives for the school;
 - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives;
 - Setting targets; and,
 - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.

- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
 - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework;
 - Progress towards targets;
 - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy; and,
 - The budget and the staffing structure.

- Ensures accountability by:
 - Signing off the school's self-evaluation report;
 - Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary;
 - Holding the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school;
 - Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate;
 - Making available information to the community; and,
 - Overseeing and monitoring financial performance.

- Appoints and performance manages the Headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

For the Children's Centre the governing body's role is very similar to its role in the school, namely:

- To ensure the Centre meets its obligations with regard to DfE's core purpose, the LA's SLA and the Ofsted inspection framework;
- To provide challenge and support for the centre in meeting its targets and fulfilling its responsibilities;
- To monitor the Centre's finances and ensure propriety;
- To ensure the Centre is accountable to the school, local authority, its users and all those in its reach area; and,
- To ensure that the Advisory Board is effective and reflects the local community.

For the Children's Centre governors are accountable for ensuring that the Centre and the Centre leaders are:

- Meeting statutory and legal requirements;
- Embedding robust safeguarding and safer recruitment arrangements;
- Ensuring that families most in need of help are able to access good quality and appropriate centre services;
- Using robust data, self-evaluation and monitoring systems to enable the governing body and advisory board to set challenging targets for improvement; and,
- Ensuring that resources are maximised to provide sufficient capacity to meet the needs of target families.

The Governing Body will appoint a link governor who will:

- Attend Children's Centre Advisory Board meetings;
- If appropriate, attend meetings with the Headteacher and Centre Manager;
- Provide background and context at the Children's Achievement and Well-Being Committee; and,
- Ensure the Centre Manager reports effectively to the above committee, in particular on the outcomes of the Advisory Board and performance/target setting and monitoring dialogues with the LA.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and,
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

The role of a governor

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made; and,
- although appointed through different routes (e.g. parents, staff, co-opted), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the children and the school as a whole.

General commitments

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Headteacher as set out above;
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix;
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so;
- We accept 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting;
- 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 school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this; and,
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.

Personal Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy and we are committed to having the highest expectations of ourselves and the Governing Body as a whole;
- We will ensure that the Governing Body focuses on strategic issues of importance to the school;
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups;
- If acting as directors, we will not go beyond our duties or act outside of the powers of authority conveyed on us, and acknowledge that were we to do so we could be held liable to the school and/or third parties;
- If acting as members of the trust body, we accept that we may be held responsible up to the limit in the articles of association, were the school/trust to go bankrupt;
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to;

- We will read papers in advance of meetings and carry out agreed action points;
- We will get to know the school well and find appropriate opportunities to engage in the life of the school, e.g. by attending school events;
- We will arrange visits to school in advance with the staff, and in accordance with the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher;
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake all relevant and necessary training, including ensuring we keep up to date;
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher; and,
- We will ensure that the Governing Body's performance is evaluated objectively and results acted upon.

Relationships

- We will:
 - Do all we can to promote constructive working relationships within the GB;
 - Express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors and will listen and respond respectfully to others' views;
 - Support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times;
 - Make our views known in an appropriate and timely manner, and then abide by collective decisions taken;
 - 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;
 - Seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community; and,
 - Welcome new governors and help them to get up to speed.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school;
- We will maintain confidentiality when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting;
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote; and,
- We will not disclose what other governors have said or how they have voted.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests;

- We will declare any pecuniary interest – or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest – in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time; and,
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

Emergency contact procedures

- We agree to make available emergency contact information for ourselves and, in the case on an emergency, for this to be made available to services such as the police, fire service or the EFA.

Breach of this code of practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body will only use suspension 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;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body; and,
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation Cleves Articles of Association's commitments relating to the disqualifications from the role of school governor.

The Governing Body of Cleves School adopted this code of practice on 24th March 2014.

Going forward, every Governor will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Governing Body of Cleves School I will abide by the above statements. In particular I will always have the best interests and 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 will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.

| <i>Governor</i> | <i>Signature and date</i> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mr Chris Hodges | |
| Mrs Susan Foster | |
| Ms Kathy McGuire | |
| Mrs Kate Jackson | |
| Mrs Doris Neville-Davies | |
| Ms Cecile White | |
| Ms Elaine Jones | |
| Mr Simon Matthews | |
| Mr Martin Tooley | |
| Mr Yaaser Vanderman | |
| Alex Child | |
| Beccy Flaherty | |
| <i>Associate Governor</i> | <i>Signature and date</i> |
| Giles Walsh | |
| Emmanuel Walter | |
| Emma Calow | |

Dated: 14th October 2015

Appendix: 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.