

Governing Board Code of Conduct

Westhoughton High School



This code, based on the National Governance Association model, sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role and Responsibilities

1. We understand the purpose of the board and the role of senior leaders.
2. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
3. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
4. 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.
5. We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
6. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
7. We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
8. In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
9. We acknowledge that all individuals have fundamental human rights and welcome the diversity of the community living, working and learning in the Borough. We will be committed to promoting equality and tackling social exclusion and as such will integrate equality into all of our activities.
10. We will actively support and challenge the senior leaders.
11. We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
12. We will respect the role of the senior leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
13. We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
14. When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.



15. when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
16. We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing board.
17. We will undertake an enhanced criminal record check (DBS) on appointment and ensure that the Chair (or Head Teacher in the case of the Chair) be informed of any subsequent criminal convictions or cautions received at the earliest opportunity.

Commitment

18. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor or committee member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
19. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
20. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
21. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
22. We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
23. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
24. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
25. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
26. In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools).
27. We will abide by the seven principles of public life recommended in the Nolan Committee's report "Standards in Public Life" as detailed below.

Relationships

28. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
29. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
30. We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.

31. We are prepared to answer queries from other board members 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.
32. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the senior leaders, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

33. 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.
34. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
35. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
36. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflicts of interest

37. 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 governing board's 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.
38. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
39. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
40. We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

Breach of this code of conduct

If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal 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.

As members of the Governing Board we will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; we will do all we can to be ambassadors for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; we will never say or do anything publicly that would bring the School, Governing Board, Senior Leaders or staff into disrepute.

All new governors will be asked to adopt the code on appointment or election and sign the acceptance form to confirm that they have read and accepted the code. Completed forms should be returned to the school and stored securely.

The Governing Board of Westhoughton High School adopted this code of conduct on Wednesday 2nd October 2024.

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.

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