

# FOXTON PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT AND COMMUNICATION POLICY

This Code of Conduct and Communication Policy sets out the expectations on and commitment required from Foxtton Primary School governors for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

This policy embraces The Nolan Principles of Public Life:

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

(as set out in The Committee on Standards in Public Life chaired by Lord Nolan)

**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 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 the public interest.

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

The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievements of all its pupils, and to this end, the governing body has the following core strategic functions:

### **Establishing the strategic direction, by:**

- Setting the vision, values and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

### **Ensuring accountability, by:**

- Appointing the Headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the Headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

### **Ensuring financial probity, by:**

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

Governors have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and operation of the curriculum.

## **AS INDIVIDUALS ON THE GOVERNING BODY WE AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING:**

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Headteacher.
- 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 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships, as appropriate, with the Headteacher, staff, parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will ensure that an appropriate balance is reached between providing challenge and support to the Headteacher.
- We will confirm our eligibility to be a governor in writing and inform the clerk immediately if there is a change.

### **Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant time and energy.
- 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.
- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in any/all school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all observational/formal visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the policy established by the governing body.
- We will regularly review our individual and collective training needs and access induction and other relevant training to address them. An experienced governor can act as a mentor to new governors providing support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body.
- We accept that as governors we need to have an enhanced DBS check and Section 128 check on appointment.

### **Meetings**

- We acknowledge that governor meetings are crucial for coming to informed, collective decisions and that activities undertaken outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' – in a meeting.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will express our views openly within meetings but should ensure they relate to relevant matters. Discussion will be conducted in a respectful manner with opposing views being expressed in a constructive way.

- We will support the Chairs (of Committee and Full Governing Body meetings) in their role of running the meeting efficiently, encouraging all to contribute, making the decision-making process clear and ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will circulate accurate, concise minutes of Committee and Full Governing Body meetings to all governors via email and these will also be uploaded to the secure governor area of the website in advance of each FGB meeting.
- Further to these minutes, we are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and consider any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- An agenda and relevant documents will be provided by the Chair at least seven days before each meeting.
- We will come prepared to meetings, ready to play an active part, make relevant and positive contributions, listen to and consider what others say and accept the majority decision.
- We will try to ensure that meetings do not last longer than two hours.

### **Communication and Confidentiality**

- We will only use secure emails for governor communication and the secure governor area of the school website to share documents and ensure that confidential and sensitive data is kept securely, both paper and electronic versions. For matters of urgency, text will be used.
- We will check and respond as appropriate to governor emails at least 3 times a week, on weekdays, during term times.
- 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 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.
- If any communication is made on behalf of the governing body, a draft response will be circulated to all governors for comments or amendments before the final version is sent.
- In the interests of open government, we will publish on the school website the structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and the full names of the Chair of each, including details of how to contact the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Full Governing Body, the Business Committee and the Strategy Committee.
- We will also publish on the website our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor, relationships with other governors or staff at the school and the body responsible for appointing us.
- We will ensure the same information will be published for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed.
- 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.
- We will publish on the website and distribute to parents an annual report, and we will include a paragraph in the school newsletters/school Laurentian article.
- At least one governor will provide a regular presence in the playground before and after school, will attend the Friends of Foxton School meetings and will hold regular drop-in sessions for parents.
- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential by the Chair of the relevant committee.
- We will observe complete confidentiality, both inside and outside school, where matters concern specific members of staff, governors, pupils or parents.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body discussion or how governors vote, unless agreed. We will publish summaries of discussions in governor meeting minutes, unless matters are confidential.

- If asked about any specific matter by anyone outside the governing body, we will complete a Communication Form, held in the school office, and we will refer them, or speak on their behalf, to the Headteacher or relevant member of staff.
- Formal complaints need to follow the complaints procedure as published on the school website. They need to be submitted to the Headteacher/Chair of Governors as appropriate and referred to the complaints committee and appeals committee as appropriate.
- We will exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussions between governors regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We understand that the requirements of confidentiality will continue to apply after we leave office and will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that any information relating to the school is returned to the school and erased from any electronic device and the Headteacher informed when this is done.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

- 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 body'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 appropriate length of time. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any specific group, even if elected to the governing body.
- We will not use the governing body to enhance or influence the education of our own children or those personally known to us or pursue personal agendas.
- We accept that a governor paid to work at the school, other than the Headteacher, must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to the pay or performance appraisal of any particular person working at the school.
- We accept that the Headteacher must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to their own pay or performance appraisal.

### **BREACH OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

- In the event that there is a serious breach of the code of conduct by a governor behaving in a manner that would be inconsistent with the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the school's ethos and values, the governing body has the right to hold that individual governor to account.

In this case, we will raise the issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body 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 governing body member, such as the Vice Chair will investigate, or the investigation can be referred to the Chair of Governors of a Cluster School.

