

Code of conduct for school governing boards

September 2020 Version

Introduction

This model code is based on the updated 2020 NGA template with recommended best practice additions from AfC annotated in blue. The code sets out the expectations and commitment required from everyone involved in school governance, to ensure its work within the school and the community are conducted in an effective manner. The code is aimed at school governors, trustees, academy committee members, associate members and clerks and can be amended to reflect the structure and ethos of each school setting.

AfC Governor Support recommends:

- Boards annually review and ratify the Code to ensure it remains fit for purpose; • All members of the board annually sign the Code to evidence their commitment to the expectations placed upon them;
- Boards utilise the Code when recruiting and inducting new governors;
- All newly appointed governors sign the code in line with their appointment; • Chairs utilise the Code to reinforce expected conduct and expectations, when necessary; • Clerk facilitates all members signing the Code and files the document in order to evidence this process.

Code of Conduct – Grand Avenue Nursery and Primary School - Academic Year 2020-21

As governors / trustees, we will focus on our strategic functions:

- ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individuals on the board we agree to:

Fulfill our roles and responsibilities

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve

ourselves in day to day management.

- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school/s.
- We agree to adhere to school/trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the school/s.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the school/s and local community. ● We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities. ● We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so. ● We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice. ● When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures. ● We will strive to uphold the school's / trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required. ● We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend we will explain in advance, where possible, why we are unable to do so.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis and committing to refreshing our training every 3 years.
- We commit to work collectively to embed a culture of effective succession planning. This will be achieved by identifying successors, nurturing and mentoring talent to ensure smooth transition of leadership roles i.e. chair, vice chair, chairs of committees and link governor positions. As individuals we will complete an annual evaluation audit to identify strengths or areas for leadership development within the board.
- To ensure our safeguarding responsibilities are adhered to we commit to read the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance. We collectively acknowledge the requirement for two designated safeguarding link governors to be in place at all times. The expectation placed on the safeguarding link governors is to familiarise themselves with the whole guidance document and commit to Level 1 safeguarding training – (pre-course e learning safeguarding awareness programme, followed by face to face AfC Role of the Safeguarding Governor'). We acknowledge that best practice would be for all governors to commit to address this training.
- We will comply with the school to instigate the application of an enhanced Disclosure and

Barring Service (DBS) check within 21 days of appointment to the Board.

Build and maintain relationships

- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/ communities.
 - We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
 - We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct
- We will acknowledge that as governors we are representatives of our category of governorship, opposed to representatives for parents or staff stakeholder groups and are primarily appointed based on the skills and experience that we bring to the board.

Proceedings of the governing board

- As a corporate body, we agree the principles and protocol of adapting to virtual meetings where deemed necessary (as demonstrated during COVID-19).
- As a corporate body, we agree to make quorate decisions by email, if deemed necessary/urgent and such decisions will subsequently be ratified and minuted at the next scheduled meeting.

Respect confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality with all governance matters.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests. ● We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise. ● If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- We will act in the best interests of the school/trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
- 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.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.
- As governors we consent to our data being used and shared for the purpose of and in conjunction with, our role as governors at this school. (*insert this paragraph if this is not covered in a separate privacy notice)

By signing this code of conduct I declare I am not disqualified* from holding a governorship position and I agree to abide by all the expectations outlined. I understand that any potential or perceived breach of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions

Signed (Governor/trustee/associate member)

Date

(*Current disqualification criteria is listed within The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, Regulation 17, Schedule 4).

Last reviewed: September 2020

