

## Policy & Procedure



**Newcroft Primary School**  
*Learning together, achieving together*

# Governors' Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct was agreed by the Governing Body of Newcroft Primary School in June 2015 **and will be reviewed periodically**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Newcroft Primary School

## Code of conduct for the Governing Body



### Background

The purpose of the code of conduct is to help promote best practice in school governance. A governing body working as a team can make a significant contribution to a school's performance, whereas, a governing body that does not work together effectively has lesser impact.

There is no legislation to enforce a code of conduct for dealing with unacceptable behaviour of governors. However, if governors are to contribute effectively to their schools and communities there is a general standard of behaviour that is acceptable. The code of conduct seeks to express those expectations in a framework for governing bodies to adopt.

Some of the principles underlining the code of conduct are based on the Nolan Report and these are outlined in the code.

By adopting this code of conduct governing bodies are setting their own standard of behaviour and expectations from governors. It is important that new governors are made aware of the code.

The code of conduct should be reviewed from time to time.

### Aims and standards

- The purpose of each governing body is to help the school provide the best possible education for each of its pupils, and to enable them to reach the highest standards of achievement.
- The governing body is expected to contribute to the development of the school. They do this by helping to develop the strategic framework within which the school operates and determining the character, aims, ethos and values of the school. Governors govern their school through developing its policies.
- Governors are expected to behave as "critical friends" to the school at all times. This includes monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, offering support, constructive advice, a sounding board for ideas, a second opinion on proposals and help where needed. This will also include challenging and asking questions of the head teacher.
- The governing body is accountable to the community: to those who established and fund the school and to parents and the wider community for the way it carries out its functions. In the longer term the governing body is also accountable to the pupils of the school.

- The governing body acts at all times in accordance with the requirements laid down in Acts of Parliament and Regulations.
- The governing body acts at all times fairly, without prejudice, and in accordance with the principles laid down by the Committee on Standard in Public Life ("Nolan Committee"), which are set out later in this Code of Conduct.

### **Roles and responsibilities: individual governors**

- Governors acknowledge that the office of governor involves a commitment of time and energy to the role.
- Governors should become actively involved in the work of the governing body, attending meetings regularly and accepting a fair share of responsibility, including serving on committees and working groups, and visiting the school where possible.
- Governors are elected or appointed by different groups - including parents, teachers, staff and the LA. Although chosen by different groups each governor has a responsibility to make up his/her own mind about issues that are considered by the governing body. Once decisions are made by the governing body (or under the delegated authority of the governing body), individual governors are bound by them and are expected to support and abide by them.
- It is important for individual governors to be able to express their ideas and have them heard. Governors should accept that others may not share their views and may even strongly disagree with them. However, governors respect each other and are courteous when there are differences in opinions. (Please see "Ensuring active participation").
- Governors should accept the necessity of addressing individual and collective needs for training and development, and should corporately monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the governing body on a regular basis.

### **Roles and responsibilities: governing body**

- The governing body is a corporate entity and acts as a group. No one category of governor has any right to act individually, except when the governing body has given delegated authority to do so (or when the Chair [or Vice-Chair] has to take urgent action).
- The strength of a governing body lies in the talents and commitment of its members, and in their ability to work together as a team for the good of the school. Every governor has an equal right to participate and to state his or her own views. No governor has the right to expect preferential treatment because of his or her status on this or any other body or group.

- Governors should recognise and support the headteacher with his/her responsibilities for the day-to-day internal organisation, management and control of the school and for advising on, and implementing, the governing body's strategic framework.
- Governors have a responsibility to act fairly and without prejudice at all times, and in so far as they have responsibilities for staff, will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer. Concerns about individual members of staff will be dealt with through the headteacher and not aired publicly.
- Governors have a duty to get to know the school and are encouraged to involve themselves in school activities. Visits to the school will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- Governors are accountable to the community in the way they carry out their functions.
- Governors are inclusive in their approach to school governance. All groups within the community are made welcome and encouraged to participate on the governing body. Needs of governors who require extra support to fulfil their role are addressed.
- The governing body will decide how to deal with breaches of this code of conduct.

### **Confidentiality**

- The governing body encourages open governance, and should be seen to be doing so.
- The governing body decides if an item for discussion is confidential and all governors are expected to abide by that decision. Individual governors are expected to respect that confidentiality and not disclose information deemed as confidential in any other forum. All discussion in reaching decisions should remain confidential to those present at the meeting.
- All reports to the governing body and its committees are public documents after the meeting has considered them and must be available at the school to anyone wishing to view them unless the governing body specifically decides they are confidential.
- Only those specifically authorised will speak or act on behalf of the governing body.

### **Principles of Public Life (from the Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life or "Nolan Committee")**

Governors hold a public office and are expected to abide at all times by the principles governing those in public life. These principles apply at all times and should also guide the work and operation of the governing body. These principles are:

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take all decisions 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 friends.

- In the case of school governors this means not seeking to pursue a policy or course of action solely because it benefits family or friends and recognising that the reason for holding office is for the benefit of all the children at the school not one particular group in isolation. In cases where a governor has a pecuniary or direct interest they should declare this, withdraw from the meeting and not take part in the decision making process.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

- For example, Parent Governors should not commit themselves to resolving a problem on behalf of another parent when this may not fit with the aims and ethos of the school.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

- It is important that the governing body and individual governors receive adequate information and training to do this effectively.

### **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.

- In the case of school governors this means being prepared to give an answer for how they govern the school and ready to take collective responsibility for this.

### **Openness**

Holders of the 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.

- Governing bodies should be mindful of the reasons for determining information as confidential in cases other than when individuals are named or directly affected.

## **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.

## **Ensuring active participation on the governing body**

### **Support**

Governing bodies work best when there is an ethos of mutual support, where different ideas and viewpoints are encouraged. Relationships within the governing body are not undermined by differences in opinions.

Governors esteem each other and have relationships of mutual support and respect. Colleagues are supported when expressing their ideas, viewpoints or challenging the governing body. Conversely, governors are also sensitive when challenging others.

### **Behaviour**

It is important governors behave in ways that will help the governing body to work as a team. To do this some of the behaviour governors will need to address include the following:

- There will be no personal attacks, including intimidating body language and facial expressions. It is not acceptable to undermine the contribution of others.
- Hostility closes down the free flow of ideas and information. Governors will always be courteous and sensitive to the needs of others to minimise hostility.
- Governors will be demanding and challenging rather than attacking and crushing by being tolerant of different points of view.
- Governors do not have to take things seriously all the time and have permission to have fun. Allowing the child in us to be expressed enhances creativity and helps develop good relationships.

### **Responsibility**

Individual governors are responsible for informing others if they find behaviour of others inappropriate and need support.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is not to be confused with secrecy. There are circumstances when matters discussed during meetings will need to be discussed with others. Some situations where discussions with others may take place include:

- In order to form policies or procedures
- Legislation and duty of care
- Individual or team learning and development
- Service development

The important issues that will be considered in these circumstances are sensitivity, honesty, clarity and ensuring that if confidentiality is to be breached people understand how that decision has been made.

## **Publication of Information (New from Sept 2015)**

Governors hold an important public office and their identity should be known to their school and wider communities. At Newcroft, we will, therefore **publish on our website** information about our governors members. The information we should publish should, as a minimum include for each governor:

- their name;
- their category of governor;
- which body appoints them;
- their term of office;
- the names of any committees the governor serves on; and
- details of any positions of responsibility such as chair or vice-chair of the governing body or a committee of the governing body.

We should **also publish this information for associate members**, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees they serve on.

From 1 September 2015, governing bodies are under a duty to publish on their website their **register of interests\***. The register should set out the relevant business interests of governors and details of any other educational establishments they govern. The register should also set out any relationships between governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives.

Any governor failing to reveal information to enable the governing body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of this code of conduct and, as a result, be bringing the governing body into disrepute. In such cases the governing body would consider suspending the governor.

*\*the requirement for the "keeping of a register of any business interests of the governors and the head teacher" is within [Schedule 5 of The School Finance \(England\) Regulations 2011 – financial schemes](#) published by the LA.*