

Code of Conduct for Windmill Hill Primary School Governing Board

March 2016 Version

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from Windmill Hill governors in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community

The governing 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

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the Headteacher.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 are committed to acting in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (see below)
- 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 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.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the Headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website

As committee members

- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend we will send apologies and explain ASAP in advance of the meeting the reason why we are unable to attend.*
- We will provide any papers or input to committee meetings at least ten working days before the meeting.
- We will use the templates provided for meeting papers and clearly identify the paper's purpose.
- We will read all paperwork provided for meetings prior to the meeting (issued by the clerk five working days before the meeting).*
- We will contribute constructively to meetings, making good use of everyone's time, and focusing on priorities, by questioning appropriately, making balanced and informed decisions, and celebrating positive actions and outcomes.

As Lead governors

- In our lead governor roles we will use (and develop where necessary) the appropriate skills: listening, researching, checking understanding, questioning, absorbing information, analysing, constructive challenge, holding to account.
- We understand that in our lead governor role our governor colleagues are expecting us to be their in-depth assurance for that area, undertaking the training, reading and knowledge gathering to enable us to constructively challenge and hold the school to account on their behalf, referring information/decisions to FGB and committee meetings where appropriate in addition to updating colleagues with termly committee reports.*
- We will be proactive about setting up regular (termly) meetings and learning visits with the relevant staff member to discuss our Lead area(s), and will send a Lead governor meeting agenda (based on the template provided).
- We will each complete our monitoring visits and provide feedback in line with the agreed governor monitoring schedule
- Following attendance at learning visits, Lead Governor meetings, Governor training and other events we will provide timely feedback (within 10 working days) to colleagues via the clerk. This will include a report (based on the template provided) and (3 key points) for the summary of termly monitoring. We will produce and present the reports and key points at committee meetings and answer any questions.
- We will each take proactive responsibility for the strategic review of a number of school policies in line with the agreed policy protocol and timeline, including instigating contacting with the appropriate staff member to commence review and discussion in time to make recommendations at the scheduled meeting.

- We will accept recommendations from the Governor Development Governor about reading and training that would strengthen our knowledge and challenge-ability in our lead area with good grace, and endeavour to undertake the recommendations where possible.*

As Chairs of committees

- We will prepare a draft agenda and send it to the Headteacher for discussion at a meeting three weeks before the meeting date.
- We will finalise the agenda, including timescales for each agenda item, and send it to the clerk at least two weeks before the meeting date.
- We will manage the meetings to make sure we keep a focus on the priorities on the agenda, keep to timings and make best use of everyone's time, allow everyone a chance to contribute their views, ensure decisions are clear and voting choices are minuted (numbers, not names).

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, other schools in the locality, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

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 exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

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 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. 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 group, even if elected to the governing body.

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.

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.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the 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.

Signed

Printed name

Date