

Wooden Hill Primary & Nursery School



Code of Conduct for School Governing Board

This code (which is based on the NGA Model code) sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

Once adopted by the governing body, all members agree to faithfully abide by it.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law, articles of association and agreed scheme of delegation.

1. Nolan Principles

We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

Selflessness

- We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

- We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work.
- We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends.
- We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

- We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

- We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

- We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

- We will be truthful.

Leadership

- We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour.
- We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2. Core functions

As governors we will focus on our core governance functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

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

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff.
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets.
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance of the school, by:

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

Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard, by:

- Providing opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback
- Engaging with children at Wooden Hill

3. Individual responsibilities

As individuals on the board we agree to:

Fulfil our roles & 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.
- We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring checks.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.

- 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 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 will fulfil our responsibilities to school staff, ensuring a safe working environment, support for their wellbeing, and acting fairly and without bias.
- When making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality and opportunity for all.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain, develop and share the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the governing board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the school.
- 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.
- 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.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.
- 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.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- 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 where required.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- Where attendance at a meeting is virtual, we will observe the Wooden Hill School Virtual Meeting Protocol.
- 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 arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.

- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor and continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
- 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.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the governing body and ensure appropriate conduct both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work as a team to create an inclusive environment where each governor's contributions are valued equally.
- We will be prepared to answer queries from other governing board members in relation to any delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed. We will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
- 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.
- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
- We will only use our allocated school email address for all electronic correspondence relating to governance and ensure that confidential correspondence are not shared or forwarded to addresses outside of the governing board.
- Other electronic communication channels, such as WhatsApp, shall not be used for any official governance matters (but may be used for communication, for example, to agree meeting dates)
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflicts of interest

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest (including those related to people we are personally connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests.

- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation 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's website.
- 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.
- 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.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools) some of which will be publicly available.

4. Ceasing to be a governor

We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office

5. Breach of this code of conduct

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

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 governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

Adopted by the governing board of Wooden Hill School on 28 September 2023.



Signed:

Gavin Handford (Chair of Governors)

The governing board of Wooden Hill School agrees that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and it will be endorsed by the full governing board.