Whitehall Primary School Governors' Code of Conduct

September, 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this code is to provide clear guidance on the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of all Governors of Whitehall Primary School.

1.2 Whilst you are a member of the governing body at Whitehall School, you represent the school and you must ensure that your behaviour and conduct are to the highest standard. The code applies at all times whenever a Governor is acting in their official capacity as a Governor, or is carrying out the business of, or representing, the governing body or the school. The code does not relate to activities undertaken by a Governor in a personal capacity except where a Governors personal conduct could reasonably be regarded as bringing his or her role as a Governor, the governing body or the school into disrepute.

1.3 Governors are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the school, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to the Head Teacher and Leadership team and fellow governors with impartiality. Governors will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management (Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or Governor Services), any deficiency in the provision of service.

1.4 Governors should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure they undertake their roles with courtesy, efficiency and impartiality to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the school. All members of the school community have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

2. The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

2.1 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

2.2 Ensuring accountability by:

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

2.3 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

3. Governors have the following individual responsibilities:

- Understand the purpose of the body and the role of the Head teacher.
- Accept that governors have no legal authority to act individually, except when the GB has given individuals delegated authority to do so, and therefore governors will only speak on behalf of the GB when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- Accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the GB or its delegated agents. This means that governors will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- Have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as governors have responsibility for staff, will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- Encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- Consider carefully how governor decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- Always be mindful of governor responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Governors' actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- When making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school governors will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- Actively support and challenge the Head teacher.

4. Commitment

- Governors acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy (ref the Seven Principles of Public Life as identified in Appendix 2).
- Governors will each involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- Governors will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where they cannot attend explain in advance why they are unable to.
- Governors will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve themselves in school activities.
- Governors will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and conduct themselves as per the requirements in this code of conduct at all times.
- Governors will consider seriously their individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training

5. Conflict of Interests

5.1 Your role on the governing body involves you advising on contract awards to outside organisations, these must be awarded on merit and by fair competition. No special favours should be shown and no discrimination should occur. Every year you must

disclose in writing to governor services (via a pecuniary interest form) any relationship you have with a third party involved in contracting with the school or any private or personal interests whether financial or non-financial that either you, your family, partner or anyone that you have a close relationship with have.

5.2 Governors involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for a governor to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, governors should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship with him or her.

5.3 Similarly, governors should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any staff member who is a relative, partner, etc.

5.4 Other conflicts may arise between your private life and your official duties, especially for governors who are members of staff, have children at the school or if you are in a personal relationship with a member of staff or another governor. If you think you might have a conflict you must contact your Head Teacher or Chair of Governors for advice.

5.5 Governors are required to 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.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 Governors will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school

6.2 Governors will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.

6.3 Governors will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.

7. Whistleblowing

7.1 The school is committed to and has adopted a stance of zero tolerance to fraud and corruption. The school has a Whistleblowing Policy to enable you to raise your concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. This policy can be found on the school website or obtained from the Head Teacher.

8. Child Protection and Safeguarding

8.1 The school recognises that all Governors have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is paramount. Governors, along with staff, have a responsibility to safeguard children and this requires that governors appropriately share any concerns they may have about children with the Head Teacher or other staff members with responsibility for safeguarding.

8.2 The school has Safeguarding and Child Protection policies; these outline the roles and responsibilities of governors and should be adhered to.

8.3 Governors must avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct. There will be no personal contact *other than in exempted circumstances* between governors and current / former pupils of school age up until 19 years of age. *Examples of Exempted Circumstances include* membership of sports clubs or uniformed organisations, family or religious family connections, private tutoring, friends of your son/daughter who may visit your house for play, sleep - overs or parties.

8.4 For governors' own security all communication via social networking sites should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore advised that governors adhere to the following procedures:

- Governors must not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment;
- Governors must not accept pupils as friends – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes governors vulnerable to allegations;
- Governors are advised not to be friends with recent pupils. The potential for governors to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking;
- Governors should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space;
- Governors should not post indecent remarks;
- If a governor receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil they must report it to a member of the Leadership team and contact the internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action;
- Governors are advised not to write about their school related work. However, it they choose to do so, they should ensure that the appropriate privacy settings are set and make it clear that the views expressed are theirs only and do not reflect the views of the school/Local Authority. However, all other guidelines in this policy must be adhered to when making any reference to the workplace;
- Governors must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act;
- Governors must not disclose any information about the school/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena;
- Under no circumstances should governor post photographs of pupils unless these are directly related to exempted circumstances;
- Governors should not make defamatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils/ parents/carers or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute;
- Governors should avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive to others.

9. Breach of this code of conduct

9.1 All governors are required to agree to this code of conduct by signing the form at Appendix 1.

9.2 If it is believed this code has been breached, the issue will be raised with the Chair and the Chair will investigate. The Chair will seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes in a constructive ways

9.3 Any investigation that identifies a breach will result in a warning letter being sent to the governor involved by the Chair. Any actions as a result of the beach (such as training requirements or monitoring arrangements) will be put in place.

9.4 If a further breach is proven the governing body will seek advice from Governor Services regarding suspension/removal.

9.4 Should it be the Chair that is believed to have breached this code, another governor, such as the Vice-Chair, will investigate and the process identified in 9.2 and 9.3 above will be followed.

Appendix 1

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

DECLARATION

I confirm I have read and understood the Code of Conduct for Governors and agree to comply with the Code.

Surname:_____

First Name(s):_____

Date of election / appointment:_____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Excerpt from Committee on Standards in Public Life 14th Report. Standards matter: A review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life.

The principles underpinning this Code are drawn from the Seven Principles of Public Life and apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder.

In undertaking their role, Governors are expected to uphold the following principles:

Selflessness
Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity
Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity
Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability
Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness
Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty
Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership
Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.