

COGS (CLUSTER OF GELL SCHOOLS)

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING TOGETHER

Introduction

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles which underpin the way the CLUSTER OF GELL SCHOOLS (COGS) will work together, including adherence to the seven principles of public life.

The COGS STRATEGIC BOARD accepts the following principles and procedures:

General

- We recognise that individual Headteachers and GOVERNING BOARDS are responsible for the delivery of policy and practice in their schools.
- We accept that all members of COGS have equal status.
- We have no authority to act individually on behalf of the COGS except when the STRATEGIC BOARD has given us delegated authority to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice.
- We will encourage open government and should be seen to be doing so.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect other schools both within and outside the COGS partnership.
- A review of the Code of Conduct will be carried out on an annual basis at the first STRATEGIC BOARD meeting of the academic year.

Commitment

- The frequency of meetings will be termly to ensure that the foundations of COGS are firmly embedded. After which, this will be reviewed annually at the first STRATEGIC BOARD meeting of the academic year.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of COGS, ensure representation at STRATEGIC BOARD meetings, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on working groups. It is therefore key that individual schools commit to sending representatives or a substitute should a STRATEGIC BOARD member not be able to attend a group or board meeting of which they are a member.
- We recognise that membership stability is necessary for the effective operation of COGS. Schools will commit to the partnership for a period of two years and agree to reaffirm commitment or withdraw at the Spring term STRATEGIC BOARD meeting preceding the end of that period.
- Individual GOVERNING BOARDS will make decisions and inform COGS of any changes to their commitment in a strategic and timely matter.
- Any revisions to membership will be considered at the next scheduled meeting of the STRATEGIC BOARD.

Relationships

- We will develop and maintain effective working relationships.
- Membership of COGS will not prevent members pursuing or forming other partnerships or collaborations that will be of benefit to their individual schools.

Confidentiality

- We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the STRATEGIC BOARD.
- We will observe confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the STRATEGIC BOARD, especially regarding matters concerning individual schools or staff.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the schools and/or partnership arises outside the STRATEGIC BOARD. School staff will similarly be expected to act within professional teacher standards.

Conduct

- We will encourage the open expression of views at STRATEGIC BOARD and working group meetings.
- Any decision of the STRATEGIC BOARD which does not carry a financial obligation will carry by a majority vote, unless members expressly require decisions to be considered by individual GOVERNING BOARDS for approval.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the COGS when we have been specifically authorised to do so by the STRATEGIC BOARD.
- As a member of COGS schools agree to adopt and implement in practice a consistent approach to the Local Authority Leave of Absence Policy.
- As a member of COGS schools agree to develop and implement consistent practice which all Headteachers will follow which allows a transparent and seamless approach to requests from parents to transfer children between schools, setting parameters in the best interests of children and their families and allowing the transition process to start as soon as possible.
- The role of chairing the STRATEGIC BOARD meetings will be rotated and at the end of each meeting of the STRATEGIC BOARD a Chair will be appointed for the next meeting.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life, established in 1994 under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, made the following recommendations for standards of conduct in public life, which COGS will uphold.

- **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.

Agreed and signed by the STRATEGIC BOARD of the following schools		
Name of school	Chair of Governors signature	Date adopted by the Governing Body
Anthony Gell School		
Bonsall CE (VA) Primary School		
Brassington Primary School		
Crich Carr CE Primary School		
Cromford CE Primary School		
Middleton Community Primary School		
The Village Federation of Carsington and Hopton and Kirk Ireton Primary Schools		
Turnditch CE Primary School		
Wirksworth Federation of Infant Schools (Wirksworth CE Infant School and Wirksworth Infant School)		
Wirksworth Junior School		