

# SUTTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL



## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNING BODY

Version 2019:1

Approved by Governors

Date July 2019

**To be reviewed annually**

# SUTTON CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

## A CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNING BODY

### General

- The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievements of all its pupils.
- The Governing Body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:
  1. To provide a strategic view of where the school is heading
  2. To hold it to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides.
  3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.
- Governors have responsibility for determining; monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates. The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and operation of the curriculum.
- All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- In so far as they have, or share, responsibility for the employment of staff, governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- Governors should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.
- Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole Governing Body.

### Commitment

- Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the Governing Body of a school.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the Governing Body and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings is essential. A record of governors' attendance will be published on the school website
- Governors should play an active part in monitoring the work of the school
- Governors will use their existing skills and be committed to developing themselves in the role

### Eligibility

- Governors will confirm their eligibility to be a governor in writing and inform the clerk immediately if there is any change

### Relationships

- Governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff, parents, the LA and their local community.
- Governors will need to disclose any relationships with other governors or staff at the school and that this information will be published

## **Confidentiality**

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the views of individuals or how they voted should remain confidential.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the Governing Body.

## **Conduct**

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- All visits to the school should be undertaken within an agreed policy.
- In responding to a concern, grievance or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer the parent or member of staff to the relevant procedure
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this.
- Any pecuniary interest that a governor may have in connection with the Governing Body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests.
- Governors should withdraw from any item at a meeting in which they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest. This needs to be recorded in the minutes.
- A person who is paid to work at the school is not regarded as having a pecuniary interest if his/her interest is no greater than that of other persons paid to work at the school.
- A governor paid to work at the school, other than the Headteacher, must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to the pay or performance appraisal of any particular person working at the school. This does not affect general discussions about general policy.
- The Headteacher must withdraw and cannot vote in relation to their own pay or performance appraisal.
- All governors must ensure that confidential and sensitive data is kept securely, both paper and electronic versions
- Governors will only use email as agreed by the Governing Body, for example to circulate agendas and reports and not for discussing business.

## **Publication of governor's details and the register of interests**

Governors hold an important public office and their identify should be known to their school and wider communities. In the interests of transparency, this Governing Body will publish on its website up-to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible format. This will include:

- the structure and remit of the Governing Body and any committees, and the full names of the chair of each;
- for each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months: their full names. Date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the Governing Body's instrument of government)
- relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including:
- governance roles in other educational institutions
- any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)
- their attendance record at Governing Body and committee meetings over the last academic year.

The same information will be published for associate members, making clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed.

Any governor failing to provide information to enable the Governing Body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the Governing Body into disrepute. In such cases the Governing Body may consider suspending the governor or removal, in the case of an associate member.

## **Meetings**

Individual governors do not have the authority in a school. It is the decisions of all the governors together that carry authority. The activities that governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the Governing Body 'goes live' – in a meeting.

It follows that if a Governing Body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Below is a suggested 'Meetings Charter'. If the Chair, the Head, the Clerk and all the governors subscribe to and implement a charter such as this, the Governing Body will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

## **Meetings Expectations**

### **As a governor I expect**

- People to attend regularly and be punctual
- An agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before every meeting
- An agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item
- A effective Chair who runs the meeting efficiently but encourages all to contribute
- My contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion
- The decision-making process to be quite clear
- Governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan
- Governors to take collective responsibility for decisions
- Minutes are accurate and concise and reflect the challenge governors provided.

### **Others can expect me to**

- Attend regularly and be punctual
- Come prepared to the meeting and prepared to play an active part in the meeting
- Make relevant and positive contributions
- Listen to and consider what others say
- Accept the majority decision, even if I personally disagree

## **Training and development**

Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors and can help to develop effective teamwork. Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the governing body as a whole.

In its guidance to governors, the DfE emphasises the importance of governor training and support:

*“Good chairs of governance set out clearly what they expect of their governors, particularly when the first join the Governing Body. Good Governing Bodies also carry out regular audits of governors’ skills in the light of the skills and competences they need, and actively seek to address any gaps they identify – either through recruitment or training. They have succession plans in place and develop future leaders by identifying and nurturing talent and sharing responsibility. It is for governing bodies to identify training and development opportunities and select those that meet their needs and budget. The NGA and many Las and other organisations offer induction and other training courses and resources.*

Extract from DfE document: The Governors' Handbook

### **Mentoring**

The link governor or an experienced governor can act as a mentor to new governors providing support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the Governing Body.

### **Review**

This code of practice will be reviewed annually.

