

Code of Conduct and Charter for the Governing Body

Code of Conduct

The following is not a definitive statement of the responsibilities of the governing body or of the individual governors, but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which we will operate, and is compatible with the aims of the school.

The Governing body accepts the following principles and procedures: -

- 1 We have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
- 2 We recognise that our headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, management of the school and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.
- 3 We accept that all governors have equal status and, although appointed or elected by different groups, our overriding concern will be the welfare of the school as a whole.
- 4 We have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so.
- 5 We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all of the legal expectations as or on behalf of the employer.
- 6 We will encourage open governance and shall be seen to be doing so.
- 7 We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect other schools.
- 8 We will support the mission and vision of the school.

Commitment

- 9 We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 10 We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, attend regularly and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.

- 11 We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- 12 We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development.
- 13 If we are not able to attend governing body meetings we will notify the Clerk to the Governing Body in advance of the meeting.
- 14 We will check our email account, and the governor pages of the school's online learning platform (FROG), frequently and at least once per week and respond as requested.
- 15 We will review all documents sent to us and respond when requested with comments/queries by any deadline specified (deadlines will normally be not less than 7 calendar days from the issue of the document, but in special circumstances a shorter deadline may be requested).

Relationships

- 16 We will strive to work as a team.
- 17 We will seek to develop effective working relationships with our headteacher, staff, parents, the LEA, other relevant agencies, the local community and other schools (where appropriate).

Confidentiality

- 18 We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the governing body in meetings and in our visits to the school as governors.
- 19 We will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the governing body, especially in matters regarding individual staff or pupils.
- 20 We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the governing body.
- 21 We will be mindful of our responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations, and report any actual or suspected data breach, by ourselves or by others, to the school's Data Protection Officer without delay.

Conduct

- 22 We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means we will not speak out against decisions, in public or in private, outside the governing body.
- 23 We will only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 24 At all times we will follow all of the school procedures and policies.

- 25 In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- 26 Our visits to the school will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing body, in agreement with the headteacher and staff.
- 27 In discharging our duties we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain the ethos and develop the reputation of the school. We will not act in any way which will bring the school, the governing body or the office of governor into disrepute.
- 28 At all times we will treat members of the school staff, pupils, parents and other governors with respect.
- 29 If we have children attending the school, we will use the school's procedures and processes to deal with any issues we may have regarding their well being and education, and will remember that our position as governor does not give us any rights to expect that we will be treated differently than any other parents.

Suspension

- 30 We understand that a governor will be disqualified from office if they fail to attend any meeting of the full governing body for six months (unless given leave of absence).
- 31 If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, we will do so by following the Procedures and Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Removal

- 32 We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies who have the power to remove those they appoint.
- 33 If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor, we will do so following the Constitution Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Governors Charter

Overview

This charter defines the guiding principles and practices that governors and the governing body will follow in carrying out their and its duties. In support of this, some general expectations of school staff are stated.

Introduction

Governors, both individually and collectively, act as a 'critical friend' to the school, setting the strategic direction of the school and providing support and encouragement to school staff in their execution of the agreed strategies. Governors recognise, however, that the school's head teacher is responsible at all times for the implementation of policy, management of the school, and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.

As well as working with the head teacher, and where appropriate other school staff, to set strategy, governors need to hold the school to account for the delivery of the agreed strategies. This is accomplished through:-

- The timely receipt of informative reports from the head teacher and from the governing body's own committees, working parties and members. Documents to be discussed/reviewed at Governing Body meetings should be issued not less than 7 calendar days before the meeting.
- The evaluation of reports from governors of structured visits to the school (in particular to classrooms)
- Meetings of the governing body and its committees and working parties
- The asking of challenging and probing questions of information received through reports and meetings, and what is heard and seen when visiting the school, and in receiving satisfactory answers to these questions.

Governors Expectations

The governing body have the following expectations of the school overall and of its staff:-

- The school's vision and mission will be supported and followed at all times
- All pupils will be developed to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background
- The standard of teaching will be at least 'good'; anything less is not acceptable
- Pupil behaviour must be good; anything less is not acceptable
- Pupils will be actively involved in setting and understanding their own personal goals and targets
- Pupils' parents/carers will be actively encouraged to support their children's learning
- Pupils' parents and carers will be kept fully informed of their child's progress and of school events and activities through regular communications from the school

- All school staff will take ownership of their own professional development, and will be supported as appropriate by the school
- All teaching staff will be able to analyse progress data and to identify where improvements and /or interventions are required
- The recruitment of teaching staff will be a rigorous process ensuring that only 'good' or 'outstanding' teachers are appointed
- Best practice will be shared and celebrated
- Policies and procedures approved by the governing body or its committees will be implemented in full
- Governors will be fully informed as is appropriate on all matters concerned with:-
 - Pupil attainment and progress
 - Pupil behaviour and discipline (including racial incidents)
 - Safeguarding issues
 - Pupil attendance
 - Staff appraisal
 - School finances
 - School buildings and maintenance
 - Community links
 - Progress on initiatives and strategies (including the School Improvement Plan)
 - Events and activities within the school.

Effective Governance

The governors will work together with the head teacher and other school staff (as appropriate) to carry out their duties. In particular we will:-

- Take an active role in the production of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the schools Self Evaluation form (SEF)
- Take part in the monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress and attainment
- Be involved in the short listing and interviewing of teaching staff
- Undertake individual or collective training courses or programmes to allow us to better fulfil our role and duties
- Provide support to the head teacher (allowing her to focus on teaching and learning) in:
 - The preparation of school policies and procedures
 - The management of the school's finances
 - The management of the school's premises including health and safety issues
 - The transition to the school becoming an academy and joining a Multi-Academy Trust

- Carry out a regular skills audit of the governing body and take appropriate action to fill any identified gaps
- Recognise and celebrate staff and pupil achievement
- Annually organise an event for Year 5 and/or Year 6 children
- Ensure that all of the governing body's statutory duties are fulfilled
- Adopt and follow the principles of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People/The Leader In Me.

Holding the School to Account

In the execution of our duties, and in particular when reviewing reports and receiving information at meetings, we will ensure that we always hold the school to account for the performance and wellbeing of pupils at the school. This may require asking searching and challenging questions in order for us to understand what is being discussed and/or presented.

We will consider the data/information being given and ask ourselves the following questions, as appropriate:-

- Is this in line with our agreed strategy, our Mission and Vision?
- Will this lead to an improvement in pupil progress/attainment?
- Are we doing enough or could we/should we do more?
- Are appropriate resources being allocated/committed or are more needed?
- How can we make resources/finance available if these are needed?
- Are these targets 'comfortable' or 'challenging'?
- Does this suggest a weakness that needs to be addressed?
- Do I understand this?
- Is what is proposed reasonable?
- Is this in the best interests of our pupils/parents/the school/the local community?
- Is specific support required from external agencies, or from the governing body?
- Is this a short-term fix, and if so how do we achieve a long term solution?
- Is the information sufficient or lacking in detail or clarity – do we need more?

Questions should then be asked of the head teacher or other staff member/governor presenting the data/information to obtain clarification or additional detail.

All governors are expected to have read all documents circulated prior to meetings, and to raise questions on these and anything stated or presented at governing body meetings.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Chair, vice Chair and/or the head teacher to 'model' questions that the governing body should ask. This may be relevant for:

- The approval of the school's performance targets

- The approval of the SIP, and the periodic reviews of progress against it
- The annual report on staff appraisal
- The approval of the school's budget and the periodic reviews of performance against the budget
- The annual report on Safeguarding
- The approval of the school's annual Schools Financial Value Standard return
- The review of the JARV report and the Herts Improvement Partner meeting reports
- The allocation and use of Pupil Premium Funding
- The periodic reviews of pupil progress.

Clerking

The governing body will appoint a Clerk to minute governing body meetings and to provide guidance and advice to the governing body in respect of its procedures and the law as applicable to school governance.

Governing body meetings will follow an agenda which will be issued not less than ten calendar days before the planned date of the meeting (except where an extraordinary meeting is called at short notice).

All documents required for the meeting will be circulated to the governors (normally via the Clerk) not less than seven calendar days before the meeting.

The minutes will record:

- The date and time of the meeting
- Attendees
- Apologies for absence, and consent (or otherwise) for these
- That the meeting was or was not quorate
- Any pecuniary or other interests declared
- The main points of discussion for each agenda item
- All questions asked and the response given (anonymously)
- The results of any votes taken
- All decisions made
- All actions arising
- The date and time of the next meeting.

Committees of the governing body will also minute their meetings and will appoint a clerk to do this or provide clerking by one of its members present at the meeting.

Working parties will also produce notes of their meetings, but a less formal structure is acceptable for these.

The minutes of governing body meetings will be circulated to governors within two weeks of the meeting.

The signed master of governing body minutes will be retained in a file in the school office, and a copy forwarded to HCC in accordance with their requirements.

Minutes of committee meetings will be issued in accordance with the committee's terms of reference.

Notes from working parties will be circulated to relevant governors and staff.

Review

This Code of Conduct and Charter will be reviewed annually and governors will be required to sign their acceptance of it at the first Governors Meeting in the Autumn Term, or on appointment (for new governors). A register sheet for this is attached at Appendix A.

Distribution

This Code of conduct will be issued to:-

- a) All governors
- b) Members of school staff (as required).

Approved.....Date **11 July 2019**

