

## The Whitleigh Primary and Sir John Hunt CSC Federation



### Code of Conduct for Governors and Role Descriptions

#### The governing board accepts its core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the schools
- Agreeing the school improvement strategies with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the Headteacher and Principal
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the Headteacher and Principal
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to each school's self-evaluation

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

#### As governors....

- ✓ We understand the purpose of the governing board and the role of the Headteacher and Principal.
- ✓ We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- ✓ We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- ✓ We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.

- ✓ We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community, The Trust and other schools.
- ✓ We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our schools. Our actions within the schools and the local community will reflect this. This includes our use of any social networking sites where we will ensure that neither our personal or professional reputation, or the school's/college's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- ✓ In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the schools we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- ✓ We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher and Principal
- ✓ We will undertake a DBS check within 4 weeks of being appointed as a governor.

### **Commitment**

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ We will make full efforts to attend at least 7 of the 9 governing board meetings, and where we cannot, explain in advance why we are unable to.
- ✓ We will get to know the schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in activities.
- ✓ We will visit the schools at least once a term, with all visits arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the Headteacher and Principal.
- ✓ We will attend at least 2 governor afternoons.
- ✓ We acknowledge our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- ✓ We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing board, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- ✓ We agree that we will declare all business interests – including any relationships between governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives and will offer information about other governorships of other schools so that it can be published on the website. We accept that any governor failing to reveal information to enable the governing board to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of this Code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing board into disrepute. In such cases we accept that the governing board should consider suspending the governor.
- ✓ We will ensure we treat safeguarding as our prime priority and will adhere to all school safeguarding policies, particularly in relation to mobile phone usage.

### **Relationships**

- ✓ We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.

- ✓ We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- ✓ We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- ✓ We will be prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- ✓ We will seek to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the Headteacher, Principal Trustees, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- ✓ We will ensure that we do not intervene in parental or staff concerns, at the earliest stage, but will advise the relevant headteacher or Principal in order that due process can be followed.

### **Confidentiality**

- ✓ We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside of the schools.
- ✓ 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.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- ✓ We will declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- ✓ We will act in the best interests of the schools as one whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

### **Breach of this Code of conduct**

- ✓ 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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

## **Description of the role of governors holding specific offices**

### **Chair of Governors**

- i. Facilitate the effective functioning of the governing board.
- ii. Maintain a focus on the strategic role of the governing board and establish and promote a clear understanding of the different roles of governors and staff
- iii. Build a team by recognising and using people's strengths: delegate and communicate effectively and recognise effort.
- iv. Work closely with the vice-chairs, Headteacher, Principal and Clerk to plan an effective annual cycle of governing board meetings.
- v. Ensure, supported by the Clerk, that governors receive relevant information and materials well in advance of meetings.
- vi. Chair governing board meetings effectively and efficiently: ensure meetings start and end on time, that agenda items are properly introduced, and that people are encouraged to contribute.
- vii. Ensure all decisions taken at meetings are minuted and that the necessary action is taken.
- viii. Meet regularly with the Headteacher and Principal and encourage other governors to do so, to act as a critical friend and sounding board and discuss issues related to the management of their area of responsibility.
- ix. Encourage commitment, loyalty and high standards of behaviour by governors through personal example and adherence to the Code of Conduct.
- x. Act on behalf of the governing board in emergencies and report any urgent action taken, ensuring it is fully explained and supported.
- xi. Attend along with the Headteacher and Principal regular meetings with the Chair and Headteacher of Woodlands, reporting back to all governors
- xii. Keep abreast of educational developments both locally and nationally.
- xiii. Develop working relationships with the Trust, the Local Authority and other key partners.
- xiv. Support school functions whenever possible.

### **Vice Chairs of Governors**

- i. Support the work of the Chair
- ii. Support the Chair in the conduct of meetings – occasionally chairing the meeting as a way of gaining experience.
- iii. Attend regular meetings with the Chair, the other Vice Chair and the Headteacher and Principal.
- iv. Take the lead in co-ordinating the work of the Ofsted Committee including chairing meetings, and ensuring that the terms of reference and delegated powers are clear, the meetings are clerked effectively and accurate minutes are published promptly.
- v. Promote effective teamwork and good working relationships within the committee ensuring that governors' and associate members' strengths and interests are utilised.
- vi. Support school functions whenever possible.

## **Headteachers as Governors**

The Headteacher/Principal is automatically a member of the governing board and counts as a staff governor. If the Headteacher/Principal decides not to be a governor he/she must let the Clerk know in writing, and the place must remain reserved.

- i. Support the governing board in delivering its role in school development and improvement.
- ii. Provide information to the governing board and its committees on the progress of the school development plan, academic standards and other necessary reporting data.
- iii. Promote partnership between staff and governors.
- iv. Demonstrate respect for and value the role of the governing board
- v. Help governors with the challenge aspect of critical friendship by encouraging relevant questions and by providing clear and accurate explanations.
- vi. Share any reports written about the schools by external advisors

## **Role of others**

### **Clerk to the Governing board**

The law requires that the governing board appoint a Clerk to the governing board.

- i. Convene meetings of the governing board, including calling emergency meetings, producing, collating and distributing the agenda and papers so that recipients receive them at least seven clear days, and preferably ten days, before the meeting.
- ii. Encourage the Headteacher, the Principal and others to produce agenda papers on time.
- iii. Record the attendance of governors at meetings and take appropriate action on absences. Record governors arriving late for meetings or leaving early.
- iv. Advise the governing board on governance legislation and procedural matters where required before, during and after the meeting.
- v. Prepare minutes, including indicating who is responsible for agreed action. Record all decisions accurately and objectively with timescales for actions. Send draft minutes to the chair for amendment/approval
- vi. Copy and circulate the approved draft minutes to all governors and the Governor Development Team within 10 days. Subsequently keep a file of signed minutes.
- vii. Clerk additional governing board committees and meetings as required.
- viii. Set up governors' panels for appointments, hearings and appeals.
- ix. Liaise with the Chair prior to the next meeting to receive an update on the progress of actions agreed previously by the governing board.
- x. Maintain on file a copy of the governing board's Instrument of Government.
- xi. Maintain a database of name, address and category of governing board members and their terms of office – including associate members. Advise governors and appointing bodies well before the end of governors' terms of office so that elections or appointments can be made in good time. Arrange the elections of parent and staff governors and inform the Governor Development Team.
- xii. Send a welcome letter and information to newly-appointed governors and associate members, including details of their terms of office and meeting dates

- xiii. Maintain copies of current terms of reference and membership of the Ofsted committee, and of governors nominated to specific roles
- xiv. Maintain and annually update a register of governing board pecuniary and business interests and the attendance record of governors.
- xv. Ensure DBS checks have been successfully carried out on all new appointees and re-appointments.
- xvi. Ensure Google Drive/Governor's Virtual office is kept up to date with key documents.
- xix. Ensure that statutory and other federation policies are kept in each school.
- xx Process and maintain records of governing board correspondence.
- xxi. Maintain archived materials.
- xxii Have access to appropriate legal advice, support and guidance and keep up-to-date with current educational developments and legislation affecting school governance, and participating in professional development opportunities

**Associate Members**

The governing board can benefit from being able to draw on expertise and experience from outside our formal governor membership. The governing board can appoint associate members to serve on the Ofsted committee. Associate members are not governors but people interested in contributing to the work of the governing board and the definition of associate member is wide and can include pupils, school staff and people with a particular area of expertise. Associate members will be one year appointments and can be extended by mutual agreement. Associate members will be expected to sign the Code of conduct.

**Annual Declaration**

I \_\_\_\_\_ agree to all the terms of this Code of Conduct and will consider my future, before any formal meetings to consider suspension, if I do breach the terms contained within the Code.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_