

**George Tomlinson Primary School  
Code of Practice and Conduct for School Governors**

The governing body is the school's accountable body. This document sets out the role of the governing body and the level of expectations of all governors of the school. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of instructions, but is to be a guide for all governors to abide by. This document is to be reviewed annually by the governing body, at the first meeting of the autumn term. An in year review of this document may take place at any time to ensure the governing body continues to offer the highest standard of professional conduct.

Approved for adoption by the governing body on (date)	
Name of Governor	
Signature	
Date of next review	Autumn 2018

**As a governing body, our three core functions are:**

- To set the vision and strategic direction of school;
- To hold the Headteacher to account for its educational performance; and
- To ensure financial resources are well spent.

**The governing body:**

Sets the strategic direction of the school by:

- Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school;
- Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives;
- Setting targets;
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.

Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:

- The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework;
- Progress towards targets;
- The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy;
- The budget and the staffing structure;

Ensures accountability by:

- Reviewing and signing off the school's own self-evaluation report;
- responding to Ofsted reports when necessary;
- holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school;
- ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate;
- making information available to the school community.

The Governing Body is also responsible for the appointment and performance management of the Headteacher who will deliver the school aims and report appropriately to the governing body. The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum.

**For governing body to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:**

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Be willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

**The role of a governor:**

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- No governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents & staff elections, Local Authority nomination, community members, and foundation appointments), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the achievement and welfare of the school as a whole.

**The governing body will:**

- Understand its purpose and the role of the headteacher as set out above;
- Operate at a strategic level, leaving the headteacher and senior school leaders responsible and accountable to it for the operational day-to-day running of the school;
- Accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so;
- Accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting;
- Fulfil its 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;
- Encourage open government and will act appropriately;
- Consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;
- Always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this;
- and in making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.

**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 body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.

- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake an annual skills review and attend relevant training.
- We each will attend a governor induction training programme and any other training deemed necessary to fulfil our roles effectively.
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the headteacher.

### **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 are 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 effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **Governors' Code of Conduct**

Governors are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and behaviour towards each other and to the Headteacher and other members of staff. Governors should not act in a way which would be detrimental to the reputation or effective operation of the school.

Governors have agreed to abide by the following Code of Conduct during meetings and when carrying out their role as a governor:

- Governors will not use their mobile phones during meetings to conduct business other than that of the Governing Body, except in exceptional circumstances when the chair should be informed in advance
- Governors will not conduct separate conversations/discussions during meetings and will ideally address the Governing Body or Committee via the chair
- Governors will arrive punctually for meetings unless unavoidably detained and will attempt to notify the school or the chair if they are going to be late
- Governors will give their apologies in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting, giving a reason for their non-attendance whenever possible
- Governors will treat each other with respect and courtesy at all times while expressing their views openly and honestly
- Governors will abide by the Governing Body's email protocol which also forms part of the Governing Body's Code of Practice.

## Governors' Email Protocol

The main advantage of email is that it enables information and documents to be circulated quickly and efficiently and it should be used for that purpose rather than to exchange opinions.

It is important to remember that only decisions reached by the governing body in properly convened meetings have any legal standing. The use of email as an open forum for reaching decisions is not provided for in current legislation which covers the procedures and protocols of governing bodies.

This protocol aims to support Governors by:

- Coordinating the flow of emails (messages and attachments).
- Minimising ad hoc messages.
- Ensuring the quality of email and avoiding unnecessary messages.
- Ensuring that messages are only sent to governors on the relevant committee, working group or panel, as appropriate

Principles to follow regarding email communication in connection with governor business:

- It should be considerate
- It should take into account the demands it may place on other people's time.
- It should avoid intemperate language
- It should be borne in mind that the indiscriminate and sometimes careless use of email can have unforeseen consequences
- Email is not a secure medium therefore care should be taken in relation to Data Protection, eg. names removed where appropriate.

Protocols to be observed:

- Being professional and careful about what you say or imply about others.
- Avoid writing in CAPITAL LETTERS this is the equivalent of electronic shouting.
- Avoid sending unnecessary e-mails; please especially remember the headteacher and chair of governors already receive numerous emails daily.
- Never e-mail in haste - consider the facts and the potential consequences of a message before you send it.
- Being polite goes a long way.
- Don't e-mail or respond when angry or upset.
- Only chairs of committees should address their members via email on a particular issue.
- Only the chair of governors or clerk to governors, should address the whole governing body via email. If an individual governor wishes to raise an issue for discussion, they should contact the chair of governors or committee with a request to add this to the relevant meeting agenda.
- Should a governor need to send an email either in the early morning or late at night, there should be no expectation of a response until normal working hours.
- If an email is marked 'confidential' or sent in confidence to a governor, it should be treated as such and not forwarded to any other individual without the originator's consent.

## 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 school
- 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 body vote.

## Conflicts of interest

- We will record any personal, pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We will declare if we are a relative to any individual or organisation that is connected to a member or trustee of the academy trust of which we govern
- The governing body will abide by the council's model process for maintaining the register of interests.
- We acknowledge that failure to complete or comply with the requirements to return statutory documents i.e. Declarations of Interest may result in my removal.

## Delegation

The Governing Body agrees to delegate some of its functions to committees and individual link governors; terms of reference for each established committee will be reviewed annually and approved by the governing body. Each committees and/or individuals must report back to the governing body on any activities they have carried out on its behalf. The governing body understand that it always acts as a 'corporate body' and remains accountable in law and to Ofsted for the performance of all its duties and functions.

In reviewing delegation, the governing body notes that the chair of governors must not exercise as an individual any of the functions of the governing body except where this has been sanctioned by the governing body or in the specific circumstances permitted within regulations - The chair of governors is permitted to act in cases of urgency where a delay in exercising the function would be likely to be seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, a pupil, parent or member of staff.

## Governors' allowances:

Payments can only be paid for expenditure necessarily incurred to enable the person to perform any duty as a governor. This does not include payments to cover loss of earnings for attending meetings. Travel expenses must be at a rate not exceeding the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) approved mileage rates which are changed annually and are on HMRC website. Other expenses should be paid on provision of a receipt and be limited to the amount shown on the receipt.<sup>1</sup>

## Breach of this code of practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair of governors and the Chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;

---

<sup>1</sup> The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 (January 2014) Departmental advice.

- Should it be the chair of governors that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 17 of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2013, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school governor.