

Model Code of Conduct for Maintained School Governing Boards

The following Code of Conduct applies to governors at all maintained schools and nurseries and **promotes effective working practices that are mutually supportive and respectful of roles & responsibilities.**

Birmingham City Council (BCC) commends this model Code of Conduct for adoption by maintained school and nursery Governing Boards (GB).

For clarification or queries contact:

governanceoversight@birmingham.gov.uk or
governors@birmingham.gov.uk

September 2024



Code of Conduct for (insert name of school Governing Board)

Standards of Conduct, Behaviour and Practice

Governors make an invaluable contribution to the lives of our children. Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Therefore, as individual governors of (Name of school Governing Board) we will play our part in setting an ethos of professionalism and high expectations of the governor role.

We will:

1) Conduct the Governing Board's business in compliance with governance legislation:

We will fulfil our duties in line with the Department for Education's [Maintained School Governance Guide, governance legislation and other relevant Department for Education \(DfE\) guidance](#) and have due regard for best practice.

2) Abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life:

[The Seven Principles of Public Life](#) outline the ethical standards those working in the public sector are expected to adhere to:

i) Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

ii) Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

iii) Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.



iv) Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

v) Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

vi) Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

vi) Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

3) Remain focused on our three core strategic functions:

- that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined
- that the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school
- the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

4) Support the elimination of discrimination and advance equality of opportunity:

We recognise that Birmingham is one of the UK's super-diverse cities, made up of a wide range of cultural, faith and other communities. The City benefits from positive [community cohesion](#) within this diversity.

We share the [equality objectives of BCC](#) and are mindful of our responsibilities under equality legislation, including recognising and actively promoting equality and diversity.



5) Ensure that the school has in place and follows relevant policies and procedures to ensure that children and young people in our setting are effectively safeguarded:

We will carry out our legislative responsibilities and have strategic oversight for the school's safeguarding arrangements with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

We will have regard to statutory guidance, ensure that we read and follow [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), undertake training and ensure this is regularly updated.

6) Attend meetings and fully participate in the work of the Governing Board:

We will make every effort to attend all meetings and send apologies for our absence if we cannot attend in line with the Governing Board's agreed protocols.

We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.

We will conduct ourselves in a manner that is considerate of both our own wellbeing and that of others, fostering a supportive and respectful environment for the entire school community.

7) Demonstrate a professional attitude:

We will attend meetings regularly, being punctual and reading all relevant paperwork in advance.

We will arrive at meetings and visits prepared to make an informed and positive contribution.

We will observe visit/meeting protocols, including those agreed by the Governing Board where meetings are held virtually.

8) Work as members of a team, and promote effective working relationships that encourage a professional culture:

We will seek to develop effective working relationships and engage with our governor colleagues, the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher, staff, parents/carers, BCC, other relevant agencies and the community.



We will always be mindful of our responsibilities to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.

We will ensure that we will only speak or act on behalf of the whole Governing Board if we have been given authority to do so.

Where we hold alternative roles within the school (ie, parent, carer, other voluntary role, staff member), we will ensure a clear delineation of roles and continue to uphold our commitment to the Board's Code of Conduct. Where there is uncertainty, we will seek appropriate advice and guidance.

9) Express views courteously and be respectful in all communications, both verbal and written:

This includes being mindful of upholding the school's reputation when communicating in a private capacity and avoiding, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role as a governor.

We will ensure we use social media responsibly and will not submit postings on networking sites which may bring the school or Governing Board into disrepute.

We will abide by the school's Acceptable Use Policy (if applicable).

10) Respect lines of demarcation and the role of the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher to manage the school:

As governors we accept that our role is strategic and focused on the three core functions referred to in point 3) of this code.

We will not involve ourselves in the day-to-day operational management of the school or attempt to micro-manage senior leaders.

Any visits that we undertake at the school will be arranged in advance with relevant staff, be agreed by the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher and be within the framework established by the Governing Board.



11) Acknowledge majority decisions, except those that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life, the Governing Board core functions or may fail to ensure the safety of pupils:

We will ensure strategic decisions made by the Governing Board are in the best interests of the school and its pupils, and in accordance with the Maintained School Governance Guide: [Section 2.3 Decision Making](#).

We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or which may place pupils at risk.

12) Respect the duty of confidentiality to the school:

We will maintain complete confidentiality particularly when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils and families.

We understand that approved minutes are the formal record of meetings.

We will ensure that the Governing Board complies with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Should we leave the Governing Board we will continue to uphold the Board's confidentiality and ensure that paperwork relating to the school or Governing Board is returned or disposed of appropriately.

13) Abide by legislation (where applicable) and best practice in respect of governor recruitment and the appointment of governors to key roles:

Where a prospective governor has been or is already a governor at another school, the Chair will speak to the Chair of the other Governing Board to discuss both the skills of the individual and, where appropriate, their capacity to commit sufficient time to serve effectively on another Governing Board.

Note: BCC expects the Governing Board to monitor and account for the circumstances within which it is genuinely appropriate for any individual to be a governor of more than one school, and give careful consideration as to whether it is in the interests of their school(s) to re-appoint governors and office holders for successive terms.



The advice of the National Governance Association (NGA) is that all governors should be restricted to two terms of office (eight years) at the same school. In addition, and to share expertise, the DfE advise that experienced chairs may wish to consider stepping down or moving on to another school after a reasonable time, for example after two terms of office (eight years).

14) Commit to undertake induction training as a minimum and any other training that is required to be effective in the role:

We will request, and attend, induction training as soon as is reasonably practicable following appointment as new governors.

We will continually evaluate our performance as a Governing Board and as individual governors.

We will undertake any training that is required to enable us to fulfil our statutory duties and be effective in our role.

15) Declare conflicts of interest

We recognise that a conflict of interest can arise when an individual's personal or family interests conflict with those of the school.

In line with DfE statutory guidance we will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the Governing Board, and/or the school in general for recording in the register of business interests.

We will withdraw, for an appropriate length of time, from any meeting, discussion or vote of the Governing Board when our governor colleagues agree that there is a conflict of interest.

16) Be transparent

As the Governing Board, our first line of accountability is to parents/carers, the wider school and local community.

The Governing Board will comply with the [Constitution of GBs of maintained schools](#) statutory guidance, and in doing so will demonstrate transparency by publishing on the school website, up-to-date details of the overall governance arrangements in place and the declared business interests register.



We will comply with the requirement to provide details about people involved in governance at our school, via the DfE website “*Get information about schools*” and ensure the information is kept up to date.

We therefore understand our details as governors will be published. Should there be safety/safeguarding concerns regarding this we will seek advice and guidance from School & Governor Support, BCC.

We will keep Birmingham City Council informed of the membership of our Board including those in key roles such as Chair, Vice Chair, SEND Governor and Safeguarding Governor.

We are committed to publishing an Annual Statement setting out the key issues that have been faced and addressed by the Governing Board over the last year, including an assessment of the impact of the Governing Board on the school.

17) Breach of this Code of Conduct:

If, following investigation, it is deemed that this Code of Conduct has been breached by a member of our Governing Board and the matter cannot be resolved in a constructive way, then the Governing Board will consider their suspension or, in some circumstances, removal from the Governing Board.

Adopted by (Name of School Governing Board) on (date)

Signed (Chair of Governors)

