



## CODE OF CONDUCT

The Governing Board of Newcomen Primary School adopted this Code of Conduct on 5 October 2022.

Governors will sign the Code of Conduct at the first governing board meeting of each school year.

Date of last review:

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from all governors, in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the aims and values of the school and extended community.

The Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life underpin the principles of this Code of Conduct.

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

### Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

### Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation
- Ensuring the well-being of students through robust safeguarding arrangements, including protecting them from extremist views and bullying via social media.

### Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

## As individuals on the Governing Board we agree to the following:

### Personal Attributes

We will strive to be:

- **Committed** - Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing ourselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.
- **Confident** - Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express our opinion and to play an active role on the board.
- **Curious** - Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.
- **Challenging** - Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.
- **Collaborative** - Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with senior leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.
- **Critical** - Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.
- **Creative** - Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

## Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the senior leaders;
- We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law;
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the 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 will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so;
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the 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 governance and will act appropriately;
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the local community and other schools;
- We will 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;
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board;
- We will actively support and challenge the senior leaders;
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the senior leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school;
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account;
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

## 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, including service on committees or working groups;
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to;
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol;

- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities;
- We will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol;
- When visiting a school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code;
- We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis;
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (GIAS).

## **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 the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings;
- 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 board members 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 senior leaders, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community;
- We will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.

## **Safeguarding**

- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school and to keep our pupils safe;
- We will ensure that any safeguarding allegations against members of staff, volunteers or governors are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- We will ensure that the governing board complies with safeguarding duties set out in legislation and ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our school are effective; comply with the law at all times and; allow for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.

## Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and 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 board vote;
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time;
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school website;
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise;
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board;
- We will act as a governing board member; not as a representative of any group;
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school website;
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

## Ceasing to be a governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

## Breaches of this code of conduct

- We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions;
- 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 governing board member, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.

## Self-Evaluation

- As a board we believe evaluation is an important element of improving the effectiveness of the board. An annual self-appraisal by means of a questionnaire, along with records of attendance at meetings and visits to school, will provide assurance that individuals serving on the board are complying with this code.

The objective of the appraisal is to enable governors to evaluate their performance, to build upon strengths and address any areas for development.

