

Code of Conduct

Two Rivers Federation Governing Board

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and trustees in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the particular school. 'School' includes academies, and it applies to all level of school governance.

We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life which are aligned with the [Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education](#) outlining principles that support ethical decision-making and challenge unethical behaviour in schools and trusts:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

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

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behavior, wherever it occurs.

The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the 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 progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school 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 individuals we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day to day management.
- We 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.
- We 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.
- 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 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 affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.

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, as lead governors or portfolio holders or on working groups, as appropriate.
- 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, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher/principal.
- We will seriously consider 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 body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

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 and the clerk.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will provide reports on our work, as appropriate, to the clerk to disseminate to the governing body in a timely manner.
- 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/principal, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

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 body'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's 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 by that group to the governing body.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors ('Get Information About Schools'), some of which will be publicly available.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

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 body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

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 body 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.
- We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by the Governing Board of the Two Rivers Federation September 2023