

Heart of the Forest Community Special School

Code of Conduct for the Governing Body Policy



Approved by:	HoF Governing Body	Date:	
Signed by Chair of Governors:		Date:	
Last reviewed on:	May 2023	Next review date:	May 2024
Website:	Yes	Type:	Statutory

The following code provides a statement of the broad principles by which the governors of the school will operate. It has been thoroughly discussed and supported by every governor before being formally agreed.

1.0 General

The head teacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievement of all its pupils. The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

2.0 Rights and Responsibilities

- Governors should accept that their role is strategic and so will focus on core functions rather than involves themselves in day to day management.
- All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- In so far as they have, or share responsibility for the employment of staff, governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- Governors should adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- Governors should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.
- Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is delegated specifically to them by the whole governing body.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, governors will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- When making or responding to complaints governors will follow the established procedures.
- Governors will strive to uphold the school's reputation in their private communications (including on social media).

3.0 Commitment

- Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the governing body of a school.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full governing body and committees is essential.
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities.

4.0 Relationships

- Governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the head teacher, staff, parents, the Local Authority, other relevant agencies and the local community.
- Governors should express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- Governors should work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- Governors should support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

5.0 Confidentiality

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.
- Governors will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- Governors will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- Governors will maintain confidentiality even after leaving office.

6.0 Conduct

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so.
- All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the governing body and agreed with the head teacher.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this.
- Any pecuniary interest that a governor may have in connection with the governing body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests.
- Where an interest is declared, the governor must leave the meeting while the item is under discussion.

7.0 Training and Development

Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork. Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the governing body as a whole.

8.0 Mentoring

An experienced governor who acts as a mentor to new governors can provide support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body. Governors should be prepared to act as mentors, as required.

9.0 Meetings

Individual governors do not have any authority in school. It is the collective decisions of all the governors together that carry authority. The activities that governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' - in a meeting.

It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Governors expect:

- people to attend regularly and be punctual;
- an agenda and relevant documents to reach them at least seven days before the meeting;
- an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item;
- a Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point;
- contributions to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion;
- the decision making process to be quite clear;
- governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan;
- governors to take collective responsibility for decisions;
- minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.

10.0 Visiting the School

Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. However, they do need to have the opportunity to arrange visits to the school in order to see governors' policies in action and to understand how the school works.

It is expected that all governors should visit the school. The total number of visits per term should be agreed in advance with the head teacher. Too many visits can be disruptive to pupils' learning. The date and timing of a visit should be arranged in advance with the head teacher and other staff involved.

Visits should have a clear focus, linked to a school policy, a curriculum area or an aspect of the school development plan. If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.

Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the head teacher. Governors should not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching that they see.

If governors are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be discussed with the head teacher. After the visit, the governor should report back, in writing to the governing body.