

HSFG Code of Conduct for Governors

The following provides a statement of the broad principles by which the Governors of the High School operate, supported by every Governor.

General

The Headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the High 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 High School operates.

- The main aim of the High School is to raise the educational achievement of all its pupils.
- The Board of Governors will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:
 - To provide a strategic view of where the High School is heading.
 - To act as a critical friend by providing support and advice to the High School.
 - To hold the High School to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides.
- All Governors have equal status. Although Governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the High 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 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 designated specifically to them by the whole Board of Governors.

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 Board of Governors of a school.
- All Governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the Board of Governors and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full Board of Governors and committees is essential.
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities.

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 LEA, (the Diocese), other relevant agencies and the local community.

Confidentiality

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Board of Governors, 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 Board of Governors.

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 Board of Governors 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 Board of Governors and agreed with the Headteacher.
- 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 Board of Governors' business must be recorded in the register of business interests.
- Where an interest is declared, the Governor must leave the meeting while the item is under discussion.

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 Board of Governors and the work of the Board of Governors as a whole.

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 Board of Governors. Governors should be prepared to act as mentors, as required.

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 Board of Governors 'goes live' - in a meeting.

It follows that if a Board of Governors is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Below is a suggested 'Meetings Charter'. If the Chair, the Head, the Secretary and all the Governors subscribe to, and implement, a charter such as this, the Board of Governors will be giving itself the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

Meetings Charter

As a Governor I expect:

- other Governors to attend regularly and be punctual;
- an agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before the meeting when possible;
- 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;

- my 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.

Others Governors can expect me to:

- attend regularly and be punctual;
- read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note on which I wish to comment;
- bring my papers to the meeting;
- make relevant and positive contributions;
- listen to and consider what other people want to say;
- accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with.

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 High School in order to see governors' policies in action and to understand how the High School works.

Governor visits to the High School

- All governors should aim to make one visit to the High School annually.
- The total number of visits per term should be agreed in advance with the Headteacher as to many visits can be disruptive to students' learning.
- The date and timing of a visit should be arranged in advance with the Headteacher 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 is the purpose of their visit and what they are going to do.
- Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the Headteacher. 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 Headteacher.
- After the visit, the Governor should report back to the Board of Governors. How this is to be done should be made clear in the policy of Link Governors. Any written report should be discussed with the head teacher before publication.
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities

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