

Homewood College Governing Body

Code of Conduct 2020

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that pupils and students are provided with a good education and that the school supports their well-being.

This Code of Conduct sets out the purpose of the governing body and the appropriate relationship between individual governors, the full governing body and the leadership team of the school. It sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors to enable them to carry out their roles and responsibilities within the school and community effectively and efficiently. It is not intended to cover all aspects of the roles and responsibilities of the governing body but rather is concerned with establishing a common understanding of the broad principles by which the governing body will operate.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law.

Once approved by the governing board, the Code will apply to all governors and associate members.

The governing board has the following strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

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

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

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

In addition we ensure that other key players with a stake in the organisation get their voices heard by:

- Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.

- Reaching out to the school's wider community and inviting them to play their part.
- Using the views of stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures.

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Roles & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the executive leaders.
- 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.
- All governors are appointed or elected with equal status. 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 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 executive 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 executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We shall agree to obtain and hold a DBS certificate.
- 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 organisation.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing board.

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 full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school in line with our agreed school visits protocols, agreed in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider as seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- 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, as will any voting rights of any associate members.
- the structure of the governing body and remit of any committees will be shown on the website
- 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). These are: full name, appointing body, date of appointment, date term of office ends or ended if within the last year and whether you are the Chair of Governors. Postcode, date of birth, previous names, nationality and email address for chair will be logged but not published.

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted with all members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and parents and the school community as a whole (including the local authority)
- 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 meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate high standards of conduct both at meetings and at all times. 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 (see annex) or which may place pupils at risk.
- 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.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, parents or prospective pupils or employees, both inside or 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.
- We will ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other 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 Interests and if a 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 Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict, including of loyalty, at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We understand that any governors failing to reveal information to enable the governing body to fulfil its responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute
- If there is a disagreement as to whether a governor should withdraw from the meeting we recognise that the governing body will make the decision on withdrawal
- 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.

Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor member leaves office
- We understand for any governor who has stepped down in the past 12 months their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them will be shown on the website.

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 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.

- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this Code of Conduct by any governors shall be raised at a meeting of the full governing body and if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors it shall be minuted
- We understand that any governor whose conduct is minuted twice in a twelve month period shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute
- Any co-opted, appointed or elected parent or staff governor may be removed by the governing body following such a resolution being passed at a meeting of the governing body providing the governing body has considered the reasons for removal and the governor whom it is proposed to remove has been given an opportunity to make a statement in response. The removal must be confirmed by a resolution passed at a second meeting of the governing body held not less than 14 days after the first meeting. The matter must be a separate agenda item for each meeting.

The seven principles of public life

(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.

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.

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

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.

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.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful

Leadership – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The governing body of Homewood College adopted this up-dated Code of Conduct September 2020