

Interim Code of Conduct for governors of maintained schools and Local Authority governors serving on the governing body of an Academy in Birmingham

1) Introduction

Birmingham City Council is committed to improving educational outcomes for all children in Birmingham and believes that effective partnerships are key to achieving this goal. Governing bodies and trusts are responsible for standards in their organisations, and are held to account for this by the Local Authority (in relation to maintained schools), Ofsted and the Department for Education (“DfE”).

The following Code of Conduct has been developed in consultation with the National Governors’ Association, the Birmingham Governors’ Network and other relevant stakeholders. Birmingham City Council **expects all governors serving at maintained schools and Local Authority governors serving on the governing body of an Academy to adhere to the Code and develop effective working practices with staff, which are mutually supportive and respectful of each other’s roles and responsibilities.**

2) Expectation and commitment required of governors

Birmingham City Council expects all governors serving at maintained schools and Local Authority governors serving on the governing body of an Academy to demonstrate the following competences, which are referred to in the statutory guidance on the constitution of maintained school governing bodies published by the DfE in May 2014;

- a strong commitment to the role and to improving outcomes for children;
- the inquisitiveness to question and analyse;
- the willingness to learn;
- good inter-personal skills;
- appropriate levels of literacy in English (unless a governing body is prepared to make special arrangements);
- sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data.

3) Standards of conduct, behaviour and practice

As a governor serving on the governing body of a maintained school or academy in Birmingham, I agree to adhere to the following standards of conduct, behaviour and practice expected by Birmingham City Council:

3.1) Abide by the Nolan principles of public office

The principles are included as Appendix I to this Code of Conduct.

3.2) Understand and uphold the City Council's Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

Birmingham is, outside of London, the UK's most diverse city, made up of a wide range of cultural, faith and other communities. The city benefits from positive community cohesion within this diversity. Birmingham City Council believes that promoting equality and tackling inequalities are fundamental to building a strong local economy and a fair society. Details of the Council's Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy is available download from <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-governors>.

3.3) Ensure that the school follows all relevant policies and procedures to ensure that young people in the need of protection are effectively safeguarded

The Policy and Procedures for safeguarding children in Birmingham are available to download from the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board website <http://www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/index.php/policies-and-procedures-pro>

3.4) Supporting the three core functions of a governing body: setting vision and strategic direction, holding the Headteacher to account for educational performance and effective management of financial resources

The Department for Education (DfE) Governors' Handbook provides information about the role and legal duties of governing bodies in maintained schools and academies (including free schools). Section 1 of the Handbook outlines the core role and functions of school governing bodies. All governors should read this section. The Handbook is available to download from the DfE's webpages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governors-handbook--2>

3.5) Attending meetings and taking a full part in governing body business

Accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. I will make full efforts to attend all meetings, get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in school activities.

3.6) Working as a team member and promoting effective working relationships

I will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies and the community. I will always be mindful of my responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of my school. My actions within the school and the local community will reflect this. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, I will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.

3.7) Expressing views courteously and being respectful in all communication

I will always have the well being of the children and reputation of the school at heart and ensure that in all communication, including through social media, I will not say anything that brings or is likely to bring the school or the governing body or the office of governor into disrepute.

3.8) Respecting lines of demarcation and the role of the Headteacher to manage the school

As a governor I accept that my role is strategic and that I will concentrate on the three core functions that referred to in 3.4, above. I will not try to involve myself in the day-to-day management of the school or attempt to micromanage school leaders. Any visits that I undertake at the school will be arranged in advance with relevant staff, be agreed by the Headteacher and be within the framework established by the Governing Body.

3.9) Abide by and be loyal to majority decisions

As a governor, I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents. This means that I will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Body meeting.

3.10) Maintain confidentiality

I will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school. I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Body meeting. I will not reveal the details of any Governing Body vote.

3.11) Undertake induction training as a minimum and any other training that is required to be effective in the role

I will request, and expect to receive, induction training as soon as is reasonably practicable following my appointment as a governor. I will continually evaluate my performance as a governor and undertake any training that is required to be effective in the role.

The full programme of governor training and development courses provided by Birmingham City Council is available on request from governors@birmingham.gov.uk

3.12) Declare conflicts of interest

I will declare any business, personal or other interest that I have in connection with the Governing Body or the school in general for recording in the register of business interests. I will withdraw for an appropriate length of time from any meeting or discussion of the Governing Body when I or the majority of my governor colleagues agree that there is a conflict of interest.

4) Breach of this Code of Conduct

I accept that in the event that the Governing Body concludes, following an appropriate investigation, that I am in breach of this Code of Conduct, this is likely to lead to the consideration by the Governing Body of my suspension or, in some circumstances, removal from the Governing Body.

Birmingham City Council accepts that, first and foremost, responsibility for good governance rests with schools themselves – and individual governors should be looking to themselves when it comes to accountability for standards of conduct and behaviour. However, it recognises that, in addition to this, the Council, the DfE and Ofsted have an obligation to ensure that a robust assurance system exists to support and challenge – including intervening in – schools to ensure they fulfil their responsibilities. The Local Authority will not hesitate to exercise its statutory powers in response to those governing bodies who, in its view, have not acted robustly or decisively to address issues of governor conduct or a breach of this Code of Conduct.

I will adhere to standards of conduct, behaviour and practice referred to in this document.

Signed

Print Name

Date:

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. 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.