

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR REDNOCK SCHOOL GOVERNORS

### Aims, Scope and Principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity and help us to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The code is based on the Department for Education's [Governance Guide for Maintained School](#) (March 2024). It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our instrument of government, standing orders and any scheme of delegation).

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its students.

### Purpose of the Governing Body

The Governing Body is the School's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The Governing Body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

### The Governing Body

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
  - Setting the values, aims and objectives of the school
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
  - Setting targets
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
  - Progress towards targets
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - The budget and staffing structure.
- Ensures accountability by:
  - Signing off the school's own self-evaluation report
  - Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent
  - Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
  - Holding the Head Teacher to account for the performance of the school
  - Ensuring parents and students are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
  - Making available information to the community.

- Appointing and performance managing the Head Teacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, the implementation of policy and the delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the Governing Body.

For the Governing Body to carry out its role effectively, Governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously
- Able to understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the board and those of the school leaders
- Able to set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself
- Able to take responsibility for self-evaluation, regularly reviewing the board's performance, constitution and skillset
- Able to take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills needed for effective governance
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task, and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

### **The Role of a Governor**

In law the Governing Body is a corporate body, which means:

- No Governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the Full Governing Body
- All Governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority, community, partnership), the overriding concern of all Governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

### **General**

1. We understand the purpose of the Governing Body and the role of the Head Teacher as set out above;
2. We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life (see appendix);
3. 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;
4. We will fulfil our responsibilities to school staff, ensuring a safe working environment, support for their wellbeing and acting fairly and without bias;
5. We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all;
6. We will encourage open government and will act appropriately;
7. 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;
8. We will follow the school's policies and procedures and the procedures of the board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance and the school's constitutional documents;
9. We will ensure there are policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote child welfare;
10. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;
11. 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;
12. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.

### **Commitment**

13. We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy;
14. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Body and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working parties;
15. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, explain in advance in full why we are unable to;
16. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities and events;
17. Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Body and agreed with the Head Teacher;
18. We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas such as safeguarding and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis;
19. We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.

### **Relationships**

20. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted;
21. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other Governors;
22. We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times;
23. 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;
24. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Head Teacher, staff and parents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **Confidentiality**

25. We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or students, both inside or outside school;
26. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Body meeting;
27. We will not reveal the details of any Governing Body vote;
28. We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

29. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the Governing Body's business, and these will be recorded in the register of business interests;
30. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise;
31. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote;
32. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website;
33. We will act as a governor, not as a representative of any group.

### **Breach of this Code of Conduct**

34. If we believe this Code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the Governing Body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;

35. Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another Governor, such as the Vice-Chair, will investigate;
36. We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this Code of Conduct by any Governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Governing Body and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the Governing Body.

### **Publishing Information**

We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school website.

We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information about Schools), some of which will be publicly available.

### **Data Protection**

We will follow the school's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

### **Personal Data Breaches**

We will inform the school's data protection officer immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

We will:

- Uphold the school's reputation in our private communications, including on social media
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience or see towards governors to the Chair of Governors and the Head Teacher.

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from students
- Join any private parent groups associated with the school other than in the capacity of a parent in that group
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the governing body or school community
- Post any inappropriate / offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the governing body into disrepute.

### **Monitoring Arrangements**

This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law or as needed.

It will be ratified by the full governing body.

## **Declaration**

The Governing Body of Rednock School adopted this Code of Conduct on the 25th September 2024.

## **Undertaking**

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the students and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Head Teacher or staff.

I agree to abide by the Governing Body's Code of Conduct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Governors will sign the Code of Conduct annually)

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## **Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- E-safety
- Data Protection

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: The Seven Principles of Public Life

Appendix 2: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

## **Appendix 1: The Seven Principles of Public Life**

*(Originally published by the Nolan Committee)*

### **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.

## Appendix 2: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If we suspect a governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The chair will investigate\*
- The chair will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor may bring a friend to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions.
- If the situation does not improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
  - Further meetings with the chair to reset expectations, based on the code of conduct
  - Support, mentoring or training for the governor
  - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in.
- If there is no improvement in the governor's behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances.

***\* If it is suspected that the Chair of Governors has breached the code of conduct, the Vice Chair will investigate and follow the procedure set out above***

Governors may be suspended if they:

- Are a staff governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school
- Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the governor being disqualified from holding office
- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the school and has brought, or is likely to bring the school into disrepute
- Breach confidentiality.

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited, to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum on social media.

We may remove a governor from office where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- They display repeated and serious incompetence
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school.