

Enfield Grammar School
Academy Trust



Governing Body

Code of Conduct for Governors/Trustees

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Committee	FGB
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Introduction

This policy sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors and trustees in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

The governing body has the following strategic functions:

Establishing the **strategic** direction (see appendix 1), by:

- Setting the vision, aims and values for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring **accountability**, by:

- Hold leaders to account for the educational performance of the school
- Appointing the Headteacher and ongoing performance management of the Headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring **financial probity**, by:

- Hold leaders to account for the financial performance of the school
- Setting the budget and monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the school are managed

As individuals on the board, we agree to the following:

The 7 Nolan principles of public life

We will follow these principles set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

- **Selflessness** – we will act in the public interest
- **Integrity** – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests
- **Objectivity** – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
- **Accountability** – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
- **Openness** – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
- **Honesty** – we will be truthful
- **Leadership** – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens

Role/Responsibilities and Conduct

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Headteacher.
- 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.

- 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 and committee meetings.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the governors and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- 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.
- 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.
- We will make use of e-communication and social networking sites as agreed by the governing body and will ensure that our individual use of electronic media (including social media) is responsible, supports the ethos of the school and may not bring the school or the governing body into disrepute.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors and school staff both inside and outside of meetings.

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 body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, we will give adequate notice and explain in advance of our apologies.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the

school's website.

- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will, upon ceasing to be a governor, continue to work to the principles in this Code of Conduct, particularly those relating to confidentiality.
- We will ensure that all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- All email communications must be via the Enfield Grammar School allocated email account only.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such 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 Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- 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 body.

Training & Development

- Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.

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.

Publishing of Information

- We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
 - The structure and remit of the Members, board of trustees, committees and governing bodies (where applicable), and the full name of the chair of each one (where applicable)
- For each **trustee / governor** (where applicable) who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - Their term of office (trustees/local governors and local governors only)
 - The date they stepped down (where applicable)
 - The body that appointed them (trustees/local governors and local governors only)
 - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
 - Their attendance record over the last academic year (only for trustees/local governors at board and committee meetings and local governors at local governing body meetings)
- We accept that the information about Members, trustees and local governors will be published on Get information about schools (GIAS)
- We accept that the information about trustees and local governors will be published on Companies House
- We accept that the approved board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person

Social media

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the trust at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our schools' communities
- 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 trustees/governors to the chair of governors and/or the Governance Professional Clerk

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the trust or any of our schools
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any trustees/ governors or school communities
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the trust into disrepute

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 body 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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

See appendix 2

Links with other policies

This policy links with our school policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Governors Allowances Policy
- Data protection
- Online Safety
- Visitor Behaviour Policy

APPENDIX 1 – A Governors Role is Strategic NOT Operational - some *examples*:

POLICIES

Your role (strategic NOT operational)

As governors, you have an important role in contributing to the strategic direction of many policies, and in checking and approving some policies once they've been written.

As a governing board your role is to ask challenging questions so that you can satisfy yourself that the policy is robust. In particular you want to know that the policy is:

- Up-to-date with relevant requirements
- Fit for purpose and tailored to your school
- Aligned with your school's improvement strategies and ethos

It's not your role to:

- Write or revise policies
- Search for other policies to compare your current policy to
- Seek stakeholder feedback on policies

The actual policy-making is operational and should be left to senior leaders. Don't insert yourself into the policy-making process.

You also can hold the senior leadership team (SLT) to account for how policies have been implemented, and whether they've been successful.

School leaders' role (operational) The SLT will actually write and implement the policies.

PUPIL PREMIUM

Your role (strategic NOT operational)

Hold the school accountable for how it spends its pupil premium funding (extra money for disadvantaged pupils). Make sure it's being used in accordance with the rules and is having an impact.

School leaders' role (operational) The SLT decides what to spend pupil premium funding on and implement the chosen strategies and initiatives.

SCHOOL BUDGET

Your role (strategic NOT operational)

You should scrutinise the school budget, approve it, and monitor it throughout the year. This helps you meet your core responsibility to oversee financial performance and ensure public money is spent well. It also means you can make sure resources are distributed in accordance with your strategic priorities and the school's ethos and values.

School leaders' role (operational) The school business manager (SBM) or other school leader should set and present the budget to the relevant governing board committee for approval.

STAFF SURVEYS

Staff surveys can be used to collect staff members' feedback on everything from job satisfaction to wellbeing.

Your role (strategic NOT operational) You might:

- Decide to carry out a survey to find out the staff's opinions on a strategically important issue - a specific policy, wellbeing or overall job satisfaction
- Have an input into shaping the questions to make sure you end up with the information you need
- Work with the SLT to identify strategic priorities based on the results of the survey, once it's been conducted
- Hold the SLT to account for the success of any new plans or strategies put in place to correct the issues revealed by the survey

School leaders' role (operational) Someone on the SLT should do the leg work, essentially. This'll include:

- Carrying out the survey
- Collating the results
- Implementing actions or plans to address any issues raised by the survey. For example, the survey might say that staff don't feel they're involved in the decisions that affect them, so the headteacher might work on a new way of gathering staff feedback to inform decisions and present this to you
- Reporting back to you on how the new initiatives have gone

PARENT COMPLAINTS

As a governor, you should steer clear of getting involved in any parent complaints. This is so you can remain objective if that complaint should ever be brought before the board. If a parent complains to you, you should refer that parent to your school's complaints procedure.

Your role (strategic NOT operational) You might:

- Review your complaints procedures
- Help to investigate if the complaint escalates from the informal school stage to stage 2 of the school complaints policy
- Sit on the panel that hears complaints and makes a judgement

School leaders' role (operational) The SLT will:

- Develop your school's complaint's policy
- Handle the investigation and try to resolve the issue before it reaches the formal and panel stages

DEPARTMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

This is a plan that's put in place to help an underperforming department improve.

Your role (strategic NOT operational) You should have a monitoring role, to:

- Check on the department's progress
- Hold the SLT to account for how they're leading/supporting the performance and progress of the department

The SLT should report back to your full board or the most relevant committee on a regular basis. They can update on the progress being made and provide you with any data you request. This'll help you scrutinise the school's work effectively, and check the plan is being implemented properly.

If the department isn't making progress, you can ask the SLT to review the improvement plan and take steps to amend it.

School leaders' role (operational) The SLT should review the precise details of a departmental plan, and effectively monitor it day-to-day to make sure the department is making progress. They'll have the relevant professional experience to do this and are best placed to decide where amendments or improvements can be made.

HEALTH & SAFETY INSPECTIONS

Your role (strategic NOT operational) The governing board needs to make sure that the school meets health and safety requirements, including that health and safety inspections are carried out regularly and efficiently. Boards don't organise or carry out inspections themselves.

School leaders' role (operational) SLT will organise the inspections.

MONITORING THE SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD:

Your role (strategic NOT operational) The governor with responsibility for safeguarding should make sure the school's keeping up with its statutory duties by asking:

- How complete the record is
- How frequently it's reviewed and updated
- How the information is stored

School leaders' role (operational) Carries out the task of physically checking the SCR and making sure all of the relevant boxes are complete and that the document as a whole is up to date

REMOTE LEARNING:

Your role (strategic NOT operational) Make sure there's a contingency plan for remote learning in place

- Ask why senior leaders have adopted their chosen approach
- Monitor the school's approach – for example, you'll want to check that teachers are still able to monitor safeguarding and progress
- Approve your school's remote learning policy (if it has one)

School leaders' role (operational) The senior leadership team (SLT) will organise the nuts and bolts of how remote learning will work. They'll cover every detail, from what platform the school should use, to what work to set and how often, to who'll set and mark the work.

APPENDIX 2 – Breaches of the code of conduct

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

- A trustee will investigate
- A trustee will hold a meeting with the local governor to discuss the issue. The local governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another local governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the trustee to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the local governor
 - Making sure the local 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 ask the Members to remove them in accordance with the trust's articles of association. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Trustees may be **removed** if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board of trustees/local governors (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the board)
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the academy trust or the office of the trustee into disrepute
- Have acted to undermine fundamental British values or the board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty
- Have been involved in 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
- Have displayed repeated and serious incompetence
- Have acted in a way that is significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions have interfered with the operational efficiency of the school

'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, such as a PTA meeting or on social media
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the board's operation

APPENDIX 3 – Board Etiquette - for the efficient running of the GB and committee meetings

Papers for the meetings to be provided on time for the scheduled meeting – 7 days in advance. This is to allow all governors time to go through these papers in advance of the meeting so that the discussion can be efficient. Governors should prep their questions in advance, where possible.

Timings: Meeting and Items on the Agenda – should be kept to, to avoid the meeting from over-running.

Discussions should be strategic and not operational.

Committee meetings should be no longer than 2 hrs.

FGB meetings should last no more than 2.5 hrs.

If any item is running over the time allocated time, the Meetings Clerk will advise and the Chair must endeavour to bring the meeting back to schedule.

Action Points – An update on the last set of action points should be advised to the Clerk before the next scheduled meeting and in advance of the agenda and papers being circulated. These action points may become an agenda item. This will reduce unnecessary discussion time when going through the minutes and matters arising.

Presenting Your Item On The Agenda – including KS Governor Reports, Link Reports, Policy reviews. As paper have been circulated in advance, there is no need to go through these, line by line. To enable meetings to be efficient, authors should highlight the main points and then allow for a streamlined discussion and questions.

KS Governor Reports – If you are unable to collect all the information from HoDs to complete all of the commentary, please ensure you send the reports to the Clerk in time containing ‘headlines’ and the data.

Transcription of Minutes / Draft Minutes – the transcription of minutes should be completed within 14 days of the meeting and sent to the committee chair to review and sign off.

Draft Minutes – If there are any typos or obvious mistakes (that do not need discussion or clarification) that have been made in the transcribing of the Minutes that are circulated to governors, please advise the clerk in advance of the meeting so no time is wasted on minor amendments as these can be done ahead of time.

Acceptance of Draft Minutes by Committee Chair – committee chairs to check and respond to the clerk/s within 2 weeks of receipt so that the clerking team can prepare the next meeting and chase action points on time.

SLT Attendance – Unless the member of SLT is an Associate Member of the Sub-Committee, they are entitled to leave the meeting once their agenda item has been discussed.

Apologies – if you are unable to attend a meeting, please send your apologies as early as possible so we can ensure the meeting will not be inquorate. **Apologies should be sent directly to the Clerk** and not via another member of school or the GB.

Governors Visiting the School – All governors must sign in at the school office upon arrival and wear an identity lanyard. Governors should not walk around the school or interact with students and staff unless they have a specific duty on site. If attending a meeting during the school day, please do not arrive too far in advance and do not ask to see staff if it has not been prearranged.

On signing in, please ensure you mark down who you are seeing. The office must be aware of who is on the school premises at all times, this is particularly important for Safeguarding and Health & Safety.

Communications/Emails – When communicating, please do not ‘cc’ in the whole Board or numerous governors & school staff unless it specifically for them/directly concerns them. If it is deemed that others should be informed, then that can be actioned by the clerk in due course. We need to limit the amount of unnecessary emails landing in peoples already clogged up inboxes where we can.