

NGA Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards

2016 Version

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from Directors and School Governors and Trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the particular school. "School" includes academies, and it applies to all level of school governance.

The Board of Directors and Governing Board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction by:

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

Ensuring accountability by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board and as governors we agree the following:

Role & Responsibilities

We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the lead executive/headteacher.

We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when The Board of Directors and Governing Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on

behalf of The Board of Directors and Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.

We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by The Board of Directors and Governing Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Board of Directors and 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 government 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/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by The Board of Directors and Governing Board and to act at all times in accordance with the approved policies and procedures of the Trust.

We will actively support and challenge the lead executive/headteacher.

Commitment

We acknowledge that accepting office as a director or governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.

We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of The Board of Directors and 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, with all visits to school arranged in advanced with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the The Board of Directors and Governing Board and agreed with the lead executive/headteacher.

We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.

We accept that in the interests of open government, 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.

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 for governors (Edubase).

Relationships

We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.

We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other Directors/Governors and the clerk to the governing board.

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 directors/governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concern 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 trust, 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 the school.

We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a directors/governing body meeting.

We will not reveal the details of any Director or Governing body vote.

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 board'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/trust'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 not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

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 Director/Governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

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 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.

Adopted by the Board of Directors/Governing Body of Hummersknott Academy Trust

Date: