



Governors' Code of Conduct

This policy was updated in September and adopted by the Full Governing Body on Thursday 29th September 2022.

Signed (Head teacher)

Signed (Chair of Governors/Committee)

This policy is due for review in September 2023.

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Statement of intent

At St. Stephen's, we recognise and value the effort taken by members of the governing body who contribute towards our school. We encourage your assistance and acknowledge that many school activities and processes would be at risk if it were not for your help. As a result, we want to make sure that your time spent as part of the governing body is productive and enjoyable.

Governing bodies must ensure that they meet the following core strategic functions:

- Certifying the strategic direction of the school by:
 - Setting and ensuring a clear vision, values, and objectives.
 - Establishing the school improvement strategy, determining priorities and setting targets.
 - Complying with all statutory duties.
- Ensuring accountability by:
 - Appointing a headteacher who is fit for purpose.
 - Monitoring the school's educational performance and progress towards set targets.
 - Reviewing the performance of the headteacher.
 - Communicating with stakeholders.
 - Contributing to school self-evaluation.
- Managing financial performance by:
 - Establishing the budget and monitoring spending against this budget.
 - Ensuring money is well spent and represents value for money.
 - Managing risks to the school.
- By following the seven principles of public life:

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. 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.

3. Objectivity

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

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. 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.

This policy outlines what is expected from members of the governing body, including associate governors, and sets out the code of conduct which all members are required to comply with.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- i. The Children Act 1989
- ii. The Children Act 2004
- iii. The Education Act 2011
- iv. The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- v. The Childcare Act 2006
- vi. Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- vii. The Data Protection Act 2018
- viii. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- ix. The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012

1.2 This policy also has due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- i. DfE (2019) 'Governance handbook'
- ii. DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- iii. DfE (2018) 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'
- iv. DfE (2017) 'The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools'

1.3 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- i. Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- ii. Equality Policy
- iii. Health and Safety Policy
- iv. Behaviours Policy
- v. Whistleblowing Policy
- vi. Data Protection Policy
- vii. Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- viii. Complaints Policy
- ix. Governor Visits Policy
- x. Governors' Allowance Policy
- xi. Business and Pecuniary Interests

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 The governing body is responsible for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the policies, plans and procedures of the school.
- 2.2 The governing body has three core strategic functions: to ensure accountability, establish the strategic direction of the school and to ensure financial probity.
- 2.3 Members of the governing body accept that they have no legal authority to act individually, except when they have been given delegated authority to do so.
- 2.4 Governors will only speak on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 2.5 Governors will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 2.6 Members of the governing body will:
- Act fairly and without prejudice.
 - Encourage open governance.
 - Accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the governing body.
 - Be mindful of their responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school.
 - Consider how decisions may affect the community.
 - Actively support and challenge the leadership of the school.
 - Follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- 2.7 Under no circumstances will governors speak about discussions or decisions outside of governing body meetings.
- 2.8 The governing body will fulfil its duty as an employer, acting in a manner that is expected of a good proprietor.
- 2.9 Governors will respect the role of the headteacher and senior leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation, never acting in a way that could undermine such arrangements.
- 2.10 Governors will adhere to the school's rules and policies, and the procedures of the governing body in accordance with the relevant governing documents and law.
- 2.11 When formally speaking or writing in a governing role, governors will ensure their comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to personal views.

3. Confidentiality

- 3.1 When matters discussed between governors are deemed confidential, or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, complete confidentiality will be observed both inside and outside of the school.
- 3.2 Members of the governing body partaking in discussions regarding school business outside of governing body meetings will exercise the greatest prudence at all times
- 3.3 The details of a governing body vote will not be revealed under any circumstances.
- 3.4 Governors accept and consent that in the interests of open and transparent governance, their names, dates of appointment, terms of office, roles, attendance records and any business/pecuniary interests they have, will be published on the school website.
- 3.5 Governors understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.
- 3.6 In the interests of transparency, governors accept and consent to information relating to them, as members of the governing body, being logged on Get information about schools (GIAS) – the DfE’s national database. This information is given by governors on a voluntary basis but in doing so governors should understand that any information provided to the governing body must be shared with the Secretary of State via GIAS.

4. Data protection

- 4.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018, accountability is a data protection principle, which makes governing bodies responsible for complying with the GDPR and states that governors must be able to demonstrate compliance.
- 4.2 To meet this requirement, the governing body will ensure that appropriate technical and organisational measures are in place across the school to protect any data that it holds.
- 4.3 The governing body is responsible for the school’s overall compliance with the data protection regulations.
- 4.4 All governors will receive comprehensive data protection training at least annually.
- 4.5 Governors will be familiar with, and act in accordance with, the school’s Data Protection Policy, conducting reviews with the assistance of the headteacher and the DPO.

5. Commitment

- 5.1 Members of the governing body will access training and support available to fully understand their role and are committed to giving the amount of time and energy the role involves.
- 5.2 Each member of the governing body will be actively involved in the role and accept their fair share of responsibilities within the governing body.
- 5.3 Full effort will be given to attendance at meetings.
- 5.4 Where a governor cannot attend a meeting, they will contact the clerk in advance to give their apologies and the reason for their non-attendance.
- 5.5 All relevant training and inductions will be undertaken in a prompt and efficient manner.
- 5.6 Governors will visit the school to undertake agreed monitoring or participate in school events, with visits being arranged beforehand with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.

6 Behaviour of governors

- 6.1 The chair of the governing body is responsible for ensuring the appropriate conduct and behaviour of governors at all times.
- 6.2 The governing body will seek to develop open, honest and effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff members and parents at the school, as well as any other relevant body, such as the LA.
- 6.3 Members of the governing body will continuously strive to work as a team.
- 6.4 Governors will always express their views openly, in a courteous and respectful manner.
- 6.5 The governing body will acknowledge the time, effort and skills demonstrated in the execution of delegated functions by other members of the body.
- 6.6 Governors will take into account any concerns expressed about their delegated function and will be prepared to answer queries from other governors regarding their role.
- 6.7 When making decisions, governors will carefully consider how their decisions and actions might affect those who are part of the school community and wider locality.

- 6.8 Governors will always act in the best interests of the school and its pupils; governors will not act in a manner that will bring the school into disrepute.

7 Conflicts of interest

- 7.1 Members of the governing body will act in the best interests of the school at all times and will not act in the interest of, or as a representative of, any group or individual.
- 7.2 Governors will record in the Register of Pecuniary Interests Policy any pecuniary interests that they might have in connection to the governing body's business.
- 7.3 Interests of those related or closely connected to a governor will be declared on the Register of Pecuniary Interests Policy.
- 7.4 Members of the governing body will declare any interest they may have in an item of business on the agenda and will immediately remove themselves from the meeting while it is under discussion.
- 7.5 Any conflict of interest will be declared at the start of any meeting, should the situation arise.

8 Access to the school

- 8.1 All members of the governing body will take an active interest in the school and its community.
- 8.2 All governor visits to the school will be undertaken in line with the Governor Visit Policy.
- 8.3 Governors will strive to actively participate in the school community and will respond to opportunities to be involved in school activities and events.

9 Breaching the code

- 9.1 If a member of the governing body breaches this code of conduct, the issue will be raised with the chair of the governing body, who will investigate the concern. In the event that it is believed the chair has breached this code of conduct, another member of the governing body will undertake the investigation.
- 9.2 The governing body will only suspend or remove a governor from their post as a last resort.
- 9.3 The governing body will attempt to resolve any difficulties or disputes in a constructive manner before suspension or removal is considered.
- 9.4 If the need arises to suspend a governor, the governing body will do so by following the established procedures to ensure a fair and objective process.

9.5 In the event of a resolution being made to remove a governor from office, the following procedure will be implemented:

- A resolution to remove a governor from office will be included on an agenda and circulated to all members of the governing body.
- A meeting will be held and the resolution to remove the governor from office will be fully explained.
- Governors will give due and careful consideration to the reasons given to remove the governor from office.
- The governor, whom it has been proposed to remove from the governing body, will be given the opportunity to make a statement in response to the resolution to remove them from office.
- Within 14 days of the first meeting, a second meeting must be held and an item, specifying that the governing body will confirm their decision, included on the agenda.
- Any elected staff or parent governor who has been disqualified from their role and removed from office will be disqualified from serving as a governor and holding office for a period of five years. This period is taken from the date immediately after the day they were disqualified from their elected role. Given the consequence of the five-year disqualification period, the governing body's power to remove an elected parent or staff governor will only be used in exceptional and serious circumstances which may include the following:
 - Serious misconduct
 - Repeated serious incompetence
 - Engagement in conduct which aims to undermine fundamental British values
 - Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the governing body
 - Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the school

9.6 A governor who has been removed from the governing body has the right of appeal. The governor should exercise their right of appeal by writing to the clerk to governors within ten working days of their removal from the governing body, making clear the reasons for their appeal.

9.7 On receipt of an appeal, the governing body will establish an independent appeal panel. The appeal panel will comprise a panel of three governors and membership may include a governor from another school or an appropriate representative from the LA.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the full governing body and any changes made will be communicated to all governors and relevant members of staff.
- 10.2 All governors are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

Code of Conduct Acknowledgement form

I hereby acknowledge the terms detailed within the Governing Body Code of Conduct and agree to abide by this code whilst I am an acting member of the governing body. I understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously.

I understand that the role is of a voluntary nature and, therefore, I will not receive payment for my duties. Any expenses which I claim will be in line with the Governors' Allowances Policy.

Name of governor	Role on governing board	Signature	Date

