

VALE FEDERATION CODE OF CONDUCT

**(For all levels of School Governance including Trustees,
Management Committees, Associate and Interim Executive Board Members)**

The Governing Body 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
- Determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures of the school
- Recognising that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- 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 individual governing body members we will support these core functions by following the Seven Principles of Public Life (on page 4), plus:

Commitment

We accept that being a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy and we agree to:

- be active and involved members of the governing body, attend regularly, and share responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups
- get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities
- attend training and take responsibility for our own learning and development as a governor
- prepare for meetings by reading paperwork beforehand

Communication (including social media)

- as governors we owe a duty of mutual trust and confidence to our school, and to each other, which may be breached if unsuitable language and/or material is contained in any communication or correspondence, including all types of electronic communication, social networking sites, personal blogs and websites
- we will gain the agreement of the Chair and Headteacher prior to posting any content (written, vocal or visual) to the internet which identifies us as members of the governing body

Conduct

We agree to work as a member of the team at all times and be loyal to collective decisions; we will:

- uphold the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs
- encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means we will not speak out against majority decisions in public (or private) outside the governing body
- follow the procedures established by the governing body, when making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school
- follow the code of practice for visits established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher when making visits to school
- always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school
- seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies and the community
- recognise we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so
- recognise 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
- only seek to act on behalf of the governing body when we have been specially authorised do so
- encourage open government and act appropriately
- consider carefully how our decisions may affect pupils, the community and other schools

Confidentiality

We recognise the need to observe complete confidentiality when required to do so by the governing body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students and we will:

- not divulge information about members of staff or pupils inappropriately.
- exercise great care if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue of the school arises outside the governing body
- declare an interest if an item under discussion at any full or committee meeting of governors impinges upon our personal, family or financial situation

Conflicts of interest

- we will record any pecuniary business or other interest in the Register of Interests
- we will publish the details required by the statutory guidance on the constitution of governing bodies on our school website.
- if any conflict arises in a meeting we will offer to withdraw while the matter is considered
- we will declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of a meeting or at any time during a meeting should one arise
- we will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any particular group

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 governors
- we will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- we accept that all governors have equal status, and our overriding concern will be the welfare of the school as a whole
- 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 actively support and challenge the Headteacher

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 constructive ways
- should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate

The Governing Body of Vale Federation **ADOPTED** this Code of Conduct for School Governance at their full Governing Body meeting of 20 September 2016 under minute number 5.6

The Seven Principles of Public Life are:

- 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 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 it.
- 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.

Based on the Seven Principles of Public Life and adapted from the NGA's Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards.

Approved by the School Governance Consultative Board and the Buckinghamshire Association of School Governors