



# The Vale Federation

## Governing Board Code of Conduct

Date last reviewed: 11th September 2023

Signed by:



Chair of Governors

Date: 4 January 2024

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## **Aim of this Code of Conduct**

At The Vale Federation, we recognise and value the effort taken by members of the Governing Board to 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 Board is productive and enjoyable.

This Code of Conduct outlines what is expected from members of the Governing Board, including associate members, and sets out the Code of Conduct with which all members are required to comply.

## **1. Core functions of governance**

Members of the Governing Board will focus on the three core functions of governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

The board will ensure it understands and meets the following key features of effective governance:

- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy
- Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
- Structures that reinforce clearly-defined roles and responsibilities
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

All Governors are required to fulfil their duties in line with the law, the 'Governance handbook' and 'A Competency Framework for Governance', and 'The 7 Principles of Public Life'. In addition, all Governors will be expected to be:

- Committed
- Confident
- Curious
- Challenging
- Collaborative
- Critical
- Creative

## **2. Standards for conduct, behaviour and practice**

All Governors will agree to meeting the standards outlined in this section.

### **1. Undertake the roles and responsibilities of a Governor**

All Governors will:

- Accept that their role is strategic and, therefore, focus on the core functions of the Governing Board rather than the day-to-day management of the school.
- Respect the role of the Principal and Senior Leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school, never acting in a way that could undermine such arrangements.
- Accept that they have no legal authority to act individually, except when they have been given delegated authority in writing to do so.
- Act fairly and without prejudice.
- Apply the Equality Act 2010 in all governance matters.

- Ensure the board has a diverse composition which, as far as possible, reflects the composition of the local community.
- Encourage open governance.
- Accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the Governing Board.
- Stand by decisions that the Governing Board makes as a collective.
- Be mindful of their responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school.
- Consider how decisions may affect the community.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with 'The 7 Principles of Public Life' or may place pupils at risk, bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- Actively support and challenge the leadership of the school.
- Follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.
- Only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when they have been specifically authorised in writing to do so.
- When formally speaking or writing in a governing role, ensure their comments reflect current school policy even if that may differ from their personal views.
- Fulfil their duties as an employer, acting in a manner that is expected of a good proprietor.
- Adhere to the school's rules and policies, and the procedures of the Governing Board in accordance with the relevant governing documents and law.
- Provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in the school are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding.

## **2. Demonstrate commitment to the role**

All Governors will:

- Undertake mandatory training and access the additional training and support available to fully understand their role, including safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction.
- Undertake further training appropriate to their area of monitoring or responsibility – this can be online.
- Be committed to the amount of time and energy the role involves.
- Be actively involved in the role and accept their fair share of responsibilities within the Governing Board.
- Give full effort to the attendance of meetings. Where a Governor cannot attend a meeting, they will contact the Clerk to Governors in advance to give their apologies and the reason for their non-attendance.
- Come to meetings prepared, including having accessed and read the paperwork prior to the meeting.
- Visit the school to undertake agreed monitoring or participate in school events, with visits being arranged beforehand with the Principal and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board.
- Be prepared to support and to challenge when needed.

### **3. Behave appropriately**

All Governors will:

- Pay due regard to their position of public office and adhere to 'The 7 Principles of Public Life':
  - Selflessness
  - Integrity
  - Objectivity
  - Accountability
  - Openness
  - Honesty
  - Leadership
- Acknowledge the time, effort and skills demonstrated in the execution of delegated functions by other members of the board.
- Take into account any concerns expressed about their delegated function and be prepared to answer queries from other Governors regarding their role.
- 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.

### **4. Build relationships**

All Governors will:

- Seek to develop open, honest and effective working relationships with the Principal and Senior Leaders, staff and parents at the school, as well as any other relevant body, such as the LA.
- Continuously strive to work as a team.
- Express their views openly, in a courteous and respectful manner.

### **5. Maintain confidentiality**

All Governors will:

- Maintain complete confidentiality both inside and outside the school when matters discussed between Governors are deemed confidential, or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils.
- Not reveal details of a Governing Board vote.
- Operate in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.
- Maintain confidentiality even after they leave the Governing Board.

### **6. Be transparent**

All Governors will:

- 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 conflicts of interest will be published on the school's website.
- Accept and consent to information relating to them, as members of the Governing Board, being logged on Get Information about Schools (GIAS). This information will be

given by Governors on a voluntary basis, but in doing so Governors should understand that any information provided to the Governing Board must be shared with the Secretary of State via GIAS.

## **7. Declare conflicts of interest**

All Governors will:

- Act in the best interests of the school at all times, and not act in the interest of, or as a representative of, any group or individual.
- Declare any business, personal or other interests they have in connection to the Governing Board's interests and record these in the Declared Conflicts of Interest Register.
- Declare any interest they may have in an item of business on the agenda and immediately remove themselves from the meeting while it is under discussion. Any conflict of interest will be declared at the start of any meeting, should the situation arise.

## **3. Breaching the code**

If a member of the Governing Board breaches this Code of Conduct, the issue will be raised with the Chair of Governors, who will investigate the concern. In the event that it is believed the Chair of Governors has breached this Code of Conduct, another member of the Governing Board will undertake the investigation.

The Governing Board will attempt to resolve any difficulties or disputes in a constructive manner before suspension or removal is considered. The Governing Board will only suspend or remove a Governor from their post as a last resort. If the need arises to suspend a Governor, the Governing Board will ensure a fair and objective process by implementing the following procedure:

- A resolution to remove a Governor from office will be included on an agenda and circulated to all members of the Governing Board.
- 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 Board 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 Board 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 Board'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 Board
- Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the school

A Governor who has been removed from the Governing Board has the right of appeal. The Governor should exercise their right of appeal by writing to the Clerk to Governors within 10 working days of their removal from the Governing Board, making clear the reasons for their appeal.

On receipt of an appeal, the Governing Board 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.

#### **4. Monitoring and review**

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually by the Governing Board and any changes made will be communicated to all Governors.

All Governors are required to familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this Code of Conduct is September 2024.



## **Appendix A: The 7 Principles of Public Life**

### **1. Selflessness**

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **2. Integrity**

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **3. Objectivity**

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **4. Accountability**

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **5. Openness**

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **6. Honesty**

We will be truthful.

### **7. Leadership**

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix B: Code of Conduct Individual Acknowledgement Form

<b>Name of Governor</b>	
<b>Role on the Governing Board</b>	

Please tick the appropriate box once you have read and understood the following documents	
Behaviour Policy	
Child Protection Policy	
Health and Safety Policy	
Equality and Cohesion Policy	
GDPR Policy	
Conduct and Discipline Policy and Procedure	
Complaints Policy	
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023	
Governor Visits Policy	
Grievance Policy	
Governors Allowance Policy	
Whistleblowing Policy	

I hereby acknowledge the terms detailed within the Governing Board Code of Conduct and agree to abide by this code whilst I am an acting member of the Governing Board. I understand that the role is of a voluntary nature and, therefore, I will not receive payment for my duties. The Governors' Allowances Policy sets out any pecuniary claims that can be made by Governors whilst acting on behalf of the school in an official capacity.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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