

Governing Body Code of Conduct

Royton Hall Primary School

2019



Oldham
Council

Code of Conduct for the Governing Board of Royton Hall Primary School.

The Governing Board has adopted the following principles and procedures:

Purpose of the Governing Board

The Governing Board is the key strategic decision making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. Raising achievement is at the heart of a Governing Board's strategic role; every child has the right to attend a good school.

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from School Governors in order for the Governing Board to properly carry out its work within the school/s and the community.

Once approved by the Governing Board, the Code will apply to all Governors.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law and it should be adapted as appropriate depending on the governance setting and level of delegation.

A Competency Framework for Governance - www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook

The Governing Board has the following strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of 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 the educational performance of the school/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the Headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

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

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

The role of a governor:

In law, the Governing Board is a corporate body which means:

- No governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the full Governing Board
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made.
- Although appointed through different routes, the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole. Governing Boards should be alert to the risk of becoming dominated by one particular mind-set or strand of opinion.

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the Headteacher.
- We are aware of and accept the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 1).
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the 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 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. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We will promote tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.
- We will support the Headteacher and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and hold them to account for school performance.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board 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
- We agree to abide by the School's Guidance for Safer Working Practices (Code of Conduct, Safeguarding & Child Protection) and will verify this on an annual basis
- 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

- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation and ensure that our actions do not breach any school policies or procedures
- We agree to advise the Chair of Governors/Clerk to Governors of any change in our personal circumstances that might call into question our suitability to continue as Governors
- We acknowledge, both legally and morally, the duty of care which rests upon the Governing Board to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the health and safety, and welfare of a child or young person for who we are responsible

Commitment

- We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- 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 Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups and undertaking our roles as Link Governors diligently.
- 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 arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board and agreed with the Headteacher.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a Governor.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, 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 members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors "Get Information about Schools" (GIAS)
- We will review and update their skills matrix on an annual basis.

Training

- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development.
- We will undertake relevant training and we will attend training regularly at least annually.
- New Governors will attend induction training within the first 6 months of their term of office.
- We will complete the Governor Annual Self Review.

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, the clerk to the Governing Board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.

- 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 board members 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 leaders, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will ensure new Governors are supported in their role.

Confidentiality

- We will obtain a secure email either from the school or use EGRESS SWITCH
- 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 Board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Governing Board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately
- We will act in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1994 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

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, Pecuniary and Personal 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 Business, Pecuniary and Personal Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting, or throughout the course of the 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 Board.
- We will accept and respect our role as a Governor and maintain appropriate professional boundaries between our role as a Governor with any other involvement in school life

Ceasing to be a Governor/Trustee/Academy Committee Member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a Governor member leaves office.

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, advice from the Clerk to Governors will be sought and alternative arrangements for investigation made e.g. another Governing Board member, such as the Vice Chair or a Governor from another school will investigate.

Adapted from the NGA Code of Conduct for School Governing Bodies 2019

Adopted by the Governing Board of Royton Hall Primary School on 25.02.1019

Signed: _____

Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Board

Revised and updated date:	February 2019
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Useful websites:

- Governor website - www.oldham.gov.uk/governors
- Governor training - www.oldham.gov.uk/governortrainingprogramme
- Chairs Briefing - www.oldham.gov.uk/chairsofgovernors
- Link Governor Network Meeting - www.oldham.gov.uk/linkgovernor
- Egress Switch (Free secure email account) - <https://switch.egress.com>
- Channel General Awareness (Prevent online training) - http://course.ncalt.com/Channel_General_Awareness/01/index.html

Appendix 1

The seven principles of public life

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.

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.

Objectivity

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

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.

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.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

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.

Leadership through personal characteristics of virtues:

Trust	Leaders should be trustworthy and reliable
Wisdom	Leaders use experience, knowledge and insight
Kindness	Leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper
Justice	Leaders should be fair and work for the good of all children
Service	Leaders should be conscientious and dutiful
Courage	Leaders should work courageously in the best interests of children and young people
Optimism	Leaders should be positive and encouraging

Appendix 2

Eight elements of effective governance

There are eight key ingredients to ensure governing bodies fulfil their role well.

1. The right people around the table

Building a successful team is all about achieving balance and diversity in skills and experience and then investing in the development of people.

2. Understanding the role and responsibilities

The role of the governing board is a strategic one with three core responsibilities.

3. Good chairing

The role of the chair of governors or trustees should be viewed in the same light as that of the chair of the board in any other sector. The chair leads the governing board ensuring it fulfils its functions well.

4. Professional clerking

A professional clerk is essential to an effective and efficient governing board and its committees. The enormous value of a good clerk as legal adviser should not be underestimated.

5. Good relationships based on trust

We expect that governing boards and school leaders will jointly develop effective working practices which are mutually supportive and respectful of each other's roles and responsibilities.

6. Knowing the school: data, children, parents, staff & community

Governing boards hold their schools to account and ensure high standards and outcomes for young people. To do this, governors and trustees need to know their school's strengths and weaknesses.

7. Commitment to asking challenging questions

One of the three core responsibilities is holding Headteachers to account for the performance of the school.

8. Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interest of children and young people

A truly courageous conversation is more than just asking challenging questions – it involves following up on the answers and ensuring that changes are made.