

Original Date Written	Latest Review	Date Adopted	Date for Review
September 2016		September 2016	January 2018

Marlborough St Mary's CE VC Primary School



MARLBOROUGH
ST MARY'S
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Code of Conduct for School Governors

Wiltshire Code of Conduct for School Governors

Revised Oct 2013

It is now generally accepted that being an effective school governor is a demanding task that requires significant commitment from individuals and which offers an equally significant challenge to the governing body to work well together.

This code offers some guidance on how that collaborative endeavour might be most effective both for individual governors and for the school as a whole. It may be that you would wish to modify this document before adopting it as your code of practice, even to rewrite it radically. However, we hope that it will at least serve to bring some of the key issues on to the agenda for that debate to take place in your school.

Introduction

Research has shown that a governing body can make a difference to the overall quality of a school and can help to create the climate for effective teaching and learning to take place. We recognise that, in order to begin to achieve this degree of effectiveness we will need to manage our own affairs competently; this code of conduct, therefore, is written with the aim of improving our working practice. It incorporates some key paragraphs from *Guidance on Good Governance* (DfEE 1995).

Aims and standards

The purpose of the governing body is to help the school provide the best possible education for its pupils. We are accountable to those who established and fund the school and also to parents and the wider local community for the way it carries out its functions. We act at all times in accordance with the requirements laid down

in Acts of Parliament and the *Guide to the Law for School Governors*.

We also act at all times fairly, without prejudice, and in accordance with the principles laid down by the Committee on Standards in Public Life:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions 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 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 this.

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.

The Seven Principles of Public Life from the *Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (The Nolan Committee)* [CM3270 - 1 May 1996]

Collective responsibility

Employees of the school are not permitted to chair the full governing body. In certain circumstances, such as when the chair has to take urgent action, individual governors may be formally delegated to act on their own. In every other respect, all governors have equal power and enjoy the same esteem and status.

Governors are elected or appointed by different groups to which they may feel some loyalty. However, we see ourselves as representatives of these groups and not delegates routinely reporting back.

Our aim is always to work as a team in a truly collaborative manner. We recognise that our individual commitments may be uneven due to personal circumstances. However, this should never cause us to work as an 'A' team (*those willing and able to give the time*) and a 'B' team (*those willing to rubber-stamp decisions of the 'A' team*). We may delegate some of our responsibilities to others but we may not delegate our accountability.

The strength of the governing body lies in the talent of our members, and in our ability to work together as a team. Each governor is equally important and has an equal right to participate and to state his or her view, while respecting the views of others.

Each governor makes up his or her own mind about specific issues. Once decisions are made by the group, individual governors are bound by them and are loyal to them.

Confidentiality

We decide if an item of discussion is confidential. How individual governors vote, and opinions regarding a named individual will always be regarded as confidential. Each governor respects the confidentiality of confidential items and must not disclose what individual governors have said or how they have voted. Reports which name individuals, including teachers, pupils or candidates for admission, are treated as confidential to the committee which receives them.

All reports to the governing body, or its committees, are public papers after the meeting has considered them and are made available at the school to anyone wishing to inspect them, unless we decide they should be confidential.

Governors and staff are expected not to mention school business or names on sites such as Facebook. They are not allowed to be 'friends' with pupils whilst they are at the school and should carefully consider whether this is suitable after pupils leave the school.

Meetings

All governors' meetings are private but the intention of the law is that our business is open, tempered with discretion. If we wish to do so, we may invite people to contribute to specific agenda items and others to observe our meetings.

A great deal of our time is spent preparing for, travelling to, attending and following up meetings. We are committed to making the most effective use of this time by planning well-structured agendas and running efficient meetings. We keep our meeting practice under regular review.

Decisions

Decisions are collective. We always aim to move towards consensus, but there will be occasions where it will be necessary to take a vote. The main arguments on either side will be recorded impersonally. Having arrived at a decision - whether by vote or consensus - it is vital that we all remain loyal to that decision.

We remember to ask ourselves the question: *"How will this decision benefit the education of the pupils of the school?"*

Who makes decisions?

Our Scheme of Delegation makes this clear and new governors read this document as part of their induction. The scheme is reviewed annually but in broad terms it aims to clarify how day-to-day management of the school is delegated to the headteacher and how the committee structure works in this school.

Conflicts of interest

We avoid putting ourselves in a position where there is a conflict - actual or potential - between our personal interests and our duties to the governing body. Examples of a circumstance where a governor withdraws from a meeting in order to avoid such a conflict are:

- *when the behaviour or progress of that governor's child is being discussed.*
- *when a personnel issue is being discussed in relation to a post where a teacher or staff governor or other employee at the school might directly or indirectly benefit from or be disadvantaged by the outcome.*
- *when a contract for building work is being discussed and a governor has an interest in or is employed by one of the companies quoting.*

We do not expect such conflicts to be difficult to anticipate or resolve. In the case of any dispute, it is for the full governing body to adjudicate. We compile and update a

'Register of Interests' which can help to anticipate any such conflict.

Commitment to the school

Induction

In order to welcome new governors properly and to enlist their lasting commitment, we have established a well-planned induction for all new governors. This policy is reviewed annually.

Meetings

We commit ourselves, as a very high priority, to attend all governing body meetings and as many committee meetings as we can. To facilitate the best possible attendance we fix the dates of all full governing body meetings a year ahead.

To make the most effective use of meetings we also commit ourselves to prompt starts and proper preparation, including having read and understood papers to be discussed.

Visits

It is very hard to be an effective school governor without knowing about the school, the staff who run it or the children who learn in it. We have agreed a policy with the staff for visiting the school and classrooms, not as inspectors, but as those given a legitimate role in its strategic development. We recognise that some governors may not be able to visit as often as others.

Monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is the responsibility of the headteacher, not the governing body.

Training

We are dedicated to the development of the school and of those who work in it. We recognise that the central role we now have in that development will be effective only if we ourselves seek appropriate training and support.

Harnessing talent

Where possible we will recruit new members to the governing body who possess the skills we require. We show respect for and utilise the different knowledge, skills and experiences of all our governors.

Confirmation of agreement

This code was agreed by the governing body of Marlborough St Mary's Primary School on 14th September 2016
at which time the governors in office were:

Amanda Carver

Andrew Trowbridge

Angus Taylor

Anne Schwodler

Ben Ferris

Dawn Steele

Janet Buck

Janneke Blokland

Joyce White

Katie Riches

Kristian Smith

Margaret Hoyland

Mark Thomas

Mary Mundy

Simon Taylor

Toni Holford-Wright

Zoe O'Reilly

Wiltshire Governor Services would welcome your comments on this document and will be pleased to offer further advice.

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This document is available free to subscribing governing bodies via email, on request.