



Sheffield Lower School
Code of Conduct

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1. Aims, scope and principles

- 1.1 This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.
- 1.2 By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity and help us to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.
- 1.3 The code is based on [the Governance Handbook](#) and the Department for Education's [School governance - GOV.UK](#). It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our instrument of government, SLS Governance Handbook and relevant policies and procedures associated with the board).
- 1.4 Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix.
- 1.5 Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. Shefford Lower School Vision Statement

- 2.1 Governors will be involved in the strategic development of the school vision statement/ The review takes place every 3 years.
- 2.2 Governors will adhere to the school's vision statement and actively ensure this is consistent throughout their roles and responsibilities
- 2.3 The school's vision statement guides all strategic priorities and procedures, serving as the primary driver of the school's direction.
- See Appendix 1 – Shefford Lower School Vision 2024

3. The 7 Nolan principles

- 3.1 We will abide by the 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

We will act only in public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisation that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not make decisions for personal, family, or friends' financial or material gain. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

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

Accountability

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

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.

Honesty

We will be truthful.

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.

3.2 We will focus on our core governance functions:

3.2.1 Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

3.2.2 Ensuring executive leaders are accountable for organisational and pupil educational outcomes, as well as staff performance management.

3.2.3 Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

NGA recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:

ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

4. Governors' roles and responsibilities

As individual board members, we agree to:

4.1 Fulfil our role & responsibilities

4.1.1 We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.

4.1.2 We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school.

4.1.3 We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.

4.1.4 We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring checks.

4.1.5 We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.

4.1.6 We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.

4.1.7 We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.

4.1.8 We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.

4.1.9 Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.

4.1.10 We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.

4.1.11 We will fulfil our responsibilities to school staff, ensuring a safe working environment, supporting their wellbeing, and acting fairly and without bias.

4.1.12 When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.

4.1.13 We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).

4.1.14 We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

4.2 Demonstrate our commitment to the role

4.2.1 We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.

4.2.2 We will strive to attend all meetings and, if unable to do so, will provide prior notice with an explanation.

- 4.2.3 We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all the papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- 4.2.4 We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- 4.2.5 We will visit the school and when doing so will decide with relevant staff in advance and observe the school and board protocol.
- 4.2.6 When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honor the commitments made in this code.
- 4.2.7 We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

4.3 Build and maintain relationships

- 4.3.1 We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
- 4.3.2 We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively, with, relevant authorities and other schools.
- 4.3.3 We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- 4.3.4 We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- 4.3.5 We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

5. Declaring conflicts of interests

- 5.1 We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
- 5.2 We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- 5.3 We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- 5.4 We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave the office.

6. Conflicts of interest

To make sure our board takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- 6.1 Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all governors/trustees including associate members.
- 6.2 Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter.

7. Publishing information

To ensure our board is transparent and open to the community we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.

- 7.1 We expect this information to be published on the school's website for transparency.
- 7.2 The structure and remit of the board and any committees, and the full name of the chair of each one
- 7.3 For each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - Their term of office

The date when they stepped down (where applicable)

The board which appointed them

Their relevant business and pecuniary interests

Their attendance record at board and committee meetings over the last academic year

7.4 We accept that the approved board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. *We will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:*

Information about sensitive matters

Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents)

Details of individual governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted.

8.2 Confidential information will never be:

Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority.

Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others.

Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

8.3 Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

8.4 We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

9 Data Protection

9.1 We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the [register of business interests](#).

9.2 We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.

9.3 If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.

9.4 We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.

9.5 We will act as a governor, not as a representative of any group.

9.6 We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school website.

9.7 We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information about Schools), some of which will be publicly available.

10 Social media and online professionalism

10.1 We will:

Abide by any requirements set out in our school's acceptable use policy

10.2 We will:

Always uphold the reputation of the school

10.3 Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community

10.4 Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available

10.5 Report any incidents of harassment we experience or see towards governors to the chair of governors and the headteacher

10.6 We will **not**:

10.6.1 Accept friend requests from pupils.

10.6.2 Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles.

10.6.3 Make comments online about any members of the governing board or school community.

10.6.4 Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute. Including political, racial or sexist views and opinions.

10.6.5 We advise not to join any private parent groups associated with the school.

11 Monitoring arrangements

11.1 This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the full governing board.

12 Other Policies/documents to be read and understood

Safeguarding and child protection policy

KCSIE

Conflict of interest policy

Complaints Policy

Data Protections policy

Disciplinary policy and procedures

Shefford Lower School Vision 2024

Relevant Governors Roles and Responsibility Document

Governor structure and schedule of works

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by: [Governing body] on [date]

Signed:

[chair of board]

We agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually endorsed by the full governing body.