

# **DONCASTER GOVERNORS - WORKING TOGETHER**

## **GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT**

This Code of Conduct is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles. By adopting this Code the Governing Body will ensure that all Governors are aware of and accept a collective responsibility in the way that they work corporately and with each other, honour confidential material and vote on specific issues.

### **Introduction**

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but outlines the common understanding of broad principles by which the Governing Body and individual Governors will operate.

### **The Nolan Principles**

The 'Nolan Principles' Code of Practice was written with regard to the seven 'Principles of Public Life' identified by the Nolan Committee in its first Report on Standards in Public Life in May 1995 and subsequently endorsed by the Government.

This Code of Conduct embraces those seven 'Nolan Principles of 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 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.

### **1 Implementing the Code**

- 1.1 There is an expectation that anyone serving as a Governor will adhere to this Code of Conduct.
- 1.2 Governors have a collective responsibility in relation to this Code of Conduct. Where they have concerns, Governors should be able to raise these directly with the colleague concerned or else with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.
- 1.3 In the event that there is a serious breach of this Code by a Governor behaving in a manner that would be inconsistent with the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the school's ethos and values, the Governing Body has the right to hold that individual Governor to account.
- 1.4 The Code will be reviewed every two years.

### **The Governing Body accepts the following principles and procedures:**

### **2 Aims**

- 2.1 We recognise that all individuals who become school Governors make a positive contribution by giving of their time and bringing their experience to help the school provide the best possible education for each of its pupils by enabling staff and pupils to reach the highest standards of achievement.
- 2.2 All Governors contribute to the development of the school in setting the strategic framework within which the school operates; determining the character, aims and ethos of the school and developing and monitoring school policies, plans and procedures.
- 2.3 Governors need to have a clear understanding of the role of the Headteacher and have an effective working relationship that, in turn, facilitates good leadership and management.
- 2.4 The aim of the Code, therefore, is to provide Governors with a clearer understanding of their role and provide a framework within which they will be able to carry out their duties effectively.
- 2.5 Governors accept that the safeguarding of the individual is a primary responsibility.

### **3 Commitment**

- 3.1 We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves a significant level of commitment both in terms of time and energy.
- 3.2 We will be expected to attend meetings regularly of the full Governing Body, Committees and Working Groups. Regular non-attendance at full Governing Body meetings can lead to eventual disqualification.
- 3.3 We will ensure that we attend meetings promptly and for the full duration whenever possible. On occasion, when this is difficult due to other commitments, we will give as much notice as possible to the Headteacher or Chair so that they can ensure that meetings will still be quorate and re-arrange agenda items if necessary.
- 3.4 We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Body and will all be willing to carry out our fair share of responsibilities including serving on Committees and Working Parties and taking on links with curriculum subjects and areas of special responsibility.
- 3.5 We will regularly review our individual and collective training needs and access designated funds to address them.
- 3.6 We will attend induction and other relevant training courses in order to aid our development.
- 3.7 We will ensure that all reports and documents for all our meetings shall be delivered to each Governor at least 7 days in advance and are not circulated at the meeting. We will prepare for meetings by reading all reports beforehand.
- 3.8 We will make every effort to get to know the school by visiting and involving ourselves in school activities.

### **4 Relationships**

- 4.1 We will operate as a corporate team and recognise that our overriding concern should always be the best interests of the school and its pupils.
- 4.2 We accept that all Governors have equal status irrespective of their appointing body (i.e. parents, staff, LA, Diocese or the community) unless the full Governing Body delegates particular responsibilities to them. We appreciate that this also applies to the Chair and Vice-Chair, and that they have a key role in helping the Governing Body work as a team, recognising and using people's strengths.
- 4.3 We will listen to, consider and respect the views of others and be loyal to collective decisions made by the Governing Body.
- 4.4 We will reflect on how we are perceived by stakeholders in all that we say and do, both as individual Governors and as a corporate body.

- 4.5 We will develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, senior management team, teachers, support staff, parents, LA, Diocese and other relevant agencies where appropriate.
- 4.6 We will ensure that an appropriate balance is reached between offering challenge and support to the Headteacher and Senior Management team.

## 5 **Confidentiality**

- 5.1 We accept that decisions reached at Governing Body meetings are normally made public through Minutes and reports; however, we will ensure confidentiality, when required, in respect of the discussions on which the decisions were based.
- 5.2 We will observe complete confidentiality in all matters discussed at Governing Body meetings, and all documents circulated, especially in relation to matters concerning staff, pupils and their parents/carers and also any other matters agreed by the Governing Body. Failure to comply can lead to disciplinary action and potential suspension from the Governing Body.
- 5.3 We will exercise the highest degree of caution when involved in sensitive issues, which may have an impact on the work of the Governing Body or the operation of the school.
- 5.4 The Minutes of all our meetings will record key matters considered; summarise the key points discussed; record decisions and / or agreed actions accurately. The detail of the discussion and how Governors vote is confidential, unless a recorded vote is agreed.
- 5.5 On ceasing to be a Governor we will ensure all information relating to the school is returned to either the school or the Governors' Support Service for its effective disposal.

## 6 **Procedure**

- 6.1 Apart from very specific instances where the Chair has to act or take an urgent decision on behalf of the Governing Body, we recognise that we have no individual powers and should only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when specifically authorised to do so by the corporate body.
- 6.2 We will accept collective responsibility for all decisions taken by the Governing Body. We will also respect those collective decisions, even where a decision is reached which we personally may/do not agree with. We will never speak out against decisions, in public or in private, outside the Governing Body.
- 6.3 We will not use the Governing Body to enhance or influence the education of our own children or pursue personal agendas. This can cause conflict with the Governing Body's strategic role. Governors with issues regarding their own children will raise the matter through the normal process for any parent.
- 6.4 When carrying out our monitoring role, we will not make any judgements about the quality of teaching.

- 6.5 When discharging our duties we will need to be aware of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school and act in the best interests of the school.
- 6.6 We will be able to express our views openly within meetings but should ensure that they relate to matters relevant for discussion by the Governing Body. Discussion will be conducted in a respectful manner with opposing views being expressed in a constructive way.
- 6.7 Governors' decisions should always take account of the views of staff, parents, pupils, community and other interested parties and Governors will be aware of how their decisions may affect all interested parties.
- 6.8 Governors are not delegates to the Governing Body but attend in their own right and therefore are not mandated to vote a particular way on an issue by the constituency they represent e.g. Local Authority, Diocese, parents or staff.
- 6.9 Governors are typically representative of the category of Governor to which they are elected or appointed. Governors are not representatives of those groups e.g. they are a representative parent not a representative of the parents.
- 6.10 Governors who wish to raise matters for discussion by the full Governing Body should make a request to the Chair for the item to be included at the next meeting's agenda, giving at least 14 days prior notice. Some items may be considered at meetings without notice but only with the approval of the Governing Body.
- 6.11 We will all be expected to prepare properly for meetings by reading papers/reports in advance and giving thought to the issues to be discussed. All papers/reports circulated in advance of a meeting will be taken as read.
- 6.12 We agree to the publication of a register of interests on the school's website. This will include any relevant business interests, details of any other educational establishments we govern and any relationships between Governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relatives. This is for each Governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months. (This does not apply to academies)
- 6.13 We agree to the publication on the school website the following information relating to Governors who have served at any point over the past 12 months; full name, date of appointment, term of office, date stepped down, appointing body and attendance record at Governing Body and committee meetings. (This does not apply to academies)
- 6.14 We will be required to declare any personal or financial conflict of interest arising from a matter before the Governing Body and its Committees or from any other aspect of Governorship and should not use our position as Governor to benefit ourselves or other individuals or agencies. Where we declare an interest in a matter, we will withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

- 6.15 When we are unable to attend meetings we will ensure that the Clerk to the Governing Body, Headteacher or Chair is notified in advance of the meeting and the reason for our absence. Apologies for absence will be considered at Governing Body meetings, not simply accepted.
- 6.16 All Governors' visits to the school should be carried out within a framework that has been established by the Governing Body and agreed with the Headteacher.
- 6.17 'Any other Business' will not normally be an agenda item but when it is it will be limited to genuinely urgent matters that need to be addressed by Governors.

## **7 Conduct**

- 7.1 We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice with the overall good of the school overriding any personal feelings or individual concerns we may have.
- 7.2 We will be expected to be punctual for meetings, which will start at the agreed time and have a maximum time limit of two hours.
- 7.3 Governors who are unavoidably late will not be permitted to effectively re-run any agenda item.
- 7.4 We will not be permitted to re-debate issues through the Minutes of the last Governing Body meeting or Committee meetings.
- 7.5 Individual Governors should not seek to progress complaints on behalf of another individual, and in making or responding to criticism of the school should follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.
- 7.6 Governors should not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school, unless they are authorised to do so.
- 7.7 Governors should not use social networking sites irresponsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings. Any such postings could lead to the suspension or removal from the Governing Body.

## **8 Suspension of a Governor**

- 8.1 Clearly the Governing Body will only consider the suspension of a Governor as a last resort and will first seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- 8.2 If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a Governor, we will do so by following the procedures set out in the School Governance Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

## **9 Removal of a Governor**

- 9.1 We recognise that removing a Governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies, which have the power to remove those they appoint.

9.2 If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a Governor, we will do so by following the procedures set out in the School Governance Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Reviewed October 2017

Next Review date – October 2019