

# Mountjoy School

## Code of Conduct for School Governing Board

**November 2023**



**This is a Dorset Council Policy**  
**Reviewed by: Full Governing Board**

**Date: November 2023**  
**Date of next review: November 2024**

## **Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards**

This code sets out the expectations on, and commitment required from, school governors and trustees to allow the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. 'School' includes academies, and it applies to all levels of school governance.

### **The governing board has the following core strategic functions:**

Establishing the strategic direction by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school/trust
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability by:

- Appointing the Head Teacher/Executive Leader
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the Head Teacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity 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:**

### **Role & Responsibilities**

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the Head Teacher/Executive Leader – we will focus on the core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring or right-to-work checks.
- 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 stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- 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.
- 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the Head Teacher/Executive Leader.
- 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 will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governance documents and the law.
- 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.
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

### **Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee 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.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- 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 to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the Head Teacher.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas – such as safeguarding, and commit to ongoing development of our skills and knowledge.
- 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/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information about Schools).

### **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/trustees/academy committee members, 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 governors in relation to functions delegated to us and consider 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 the Head Teacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **Confidentiality**

- 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 always exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside of 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.

### **Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member**

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/academy committee member leaves office

### **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 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 Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any 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.

### **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.

#### **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, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.