SHEERHATCH PRIMARY GOVERNORS CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations, commitment and responsibilities for behaviours and actions, required from school governors and trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

The Code is based on the National Governance Association Code and governors should use this document to include specific reference to the aims and ethos of their school. Whilst recognising that every governing board works and operates in ways pertinent to their school, there is a general expectation of standards and principles of behaviour which are acceptable.

In adopting this Code of Conduct it is vital that governing boards read through, discuss and that all members agree to sign up to the principles of the Code. **New members of the governing board should agree to and sign the Code and it is good practice for the Code to be reviewed annually.**

The Seven Principles of public Life

Everyone involved in governance should be aware of and accept 'The seven principles of public life', as set out by Lord Nolan. These apply to anyone, locally and nationally, who is elected or appointed as a public office-holder.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of 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 seek to 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 the public office should be as open as possible about 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 public interest.

Leadership
Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Governing Board, General

In order for the governing board to achieve the best possible outcomes for all the children and young people to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, the governing board will operate according to the following principles:

- Set the strategic direction of the school by determining the character, aims, objectives, ethos and values of the school enabling the head teacher to deliver on the operational aspects.
- Alongside the Head teacher, develop the policy framework to achieve the aims and objectives.
- Help the school to provide the best education for each of its pupils and to enable them to achieve the highest standards of achievement.
- Through relevant policies and procedures ensure that the school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff.
- Agree strategies for school improvement, including approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.
- Acknowledge that the day to day operational running of the school and the implementation of plans and policies of the governing board, is the responsibility of the Head teacher and senior leadership team.
- Actively support and challenge the Head teacher, including monitoring, reviewing, evaluating and offering support, constructive advice and acting as a sounding board.
- Ensure accountability to all stakeholders (pupils, parents, community, local authority, Diocese). This accountability relates to safeguarding, standards, school improvement, the budget and making appropriate information available to the stakeholders.
- Regularly monitor and review the performance and activities of the governing board.
- Follow the School's complaints procedures as established by the governing board.
- Work to advance equality of opportunity.

The Role of the Governor

The office of governor involves a commitment of time and energy to the role. The individual governor acknowledges that:

- The governing board is a corporate body, therefore no governor can act alone without proper authority from the full governing board
- Governors accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing board and therefore do not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting
- Governors have an awareness of and accept the Nolan principles of public life
- Governors may be appointed by different bodies (parents, staff, local authority community, foundation) but the ultimate aim and concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole

- All governors must declare openly and immediately, any conflict of interest arising from a matter before the governing board or from any aspect of governorship

Commitment

Acknowledging the commitment of significant time and energy involved all governors will:

- Make every effort to attend meetings and where this is not possible explain why in advance.
- Read all paperwork prior to meetings and prepare themselves in advance of the meetings.
- Accept a fair share of the responsibility of the workings of the governing board and its committees.
- Enhance his/her effectiveness as a governor through participation in training, development programmes and increasing knowledge skills and behaviours as encouraged in the DfE Governance Handbook and A Competency Framework for Governors https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook.
- In response to governing board self-review participate in training for the governing board as a whole.
- Get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve themselves in school activities.
- 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.
- Accept that in the interests of open government, governors and associate members names, terms of office, roles on the governing board, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us, attendance at meetings and business interest forms will be published on the school's website. Any governor failing to provide information to enable the governing board to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing board into disrepute. In such cases the governing board should consider suspending the governor. (Ref: The Constitution of governing bodies of Maintained schools August 2017).
- Accept that information about governors will be uploaded on the Department for Education (DfE) national database of governors.
- Have an enhanced DBS check completed within 21 days of appointment.

Relationships

Governing boards can succeed or fail on the strength of relationships. The principal working relationships are with each other and the Head teacher, but accountability to stakeholders ensures that there are other relationships which need to be cared for.

Essentially the governing board:

- Must strive to work as a team, promoting constructive working relationships in an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- Will encourage the open expression of views and an environment where every governor feels confident to participate in discussions and feels listened to.
- Support the Chair to facilitate good discussions and support the Chair when there are challenges from any governor who becomes aggressive or tries to dominate.
- Discuss and review succession planning within the governing board to promote and preserve good relationships within the framework of the governing board.
- Will support and challenge in equal proportions, the Head teacher and senior leadership team in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Will respect and acknowledge time, effort and skills from all members of the governing board and staff at the school.
- Will accept that differences of opinion may arise in discussions, but when a majority decision is made this should then be accepted by all governors.
- Follow good practice and procedures in communications, to actively develop effective relationships with the staff, the parents, the community, the local authority and other relevant agencies.

Confidentiality

There are times during governing board meetings where discussions or information given, is confidential. These instances may or may not happen frequently and usually the Clerk, Chair of Governors, Head teacher will remind governors of the need for confidentiality.

This is an important area of governance where governors need to:

- Observe confidentiality when matters are deemed so and when matters concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside governing board meetings.
- Exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting – **and in particular when using social networking sites (see below)**
- Regard all discussions made when reaching decisions, as confidential.
- Never reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- Dispose of confidential papers responsibly. Governors who come to the end of their term of office to commit to disposing of all confidential papers and emails and this may be managed by the Clerk to the Board/the governance professional.
- Maintain confidentiality after leaving office.
- Governors should be aware of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Social Networking Sites

- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither personal or professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

Conflicts of Interest

Governors 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
- Accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website
- Declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise
- 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 as a parent or staff member

Implementation of the Code of Conduct

- It is essential that all governors and associate members within this governing board are aware of and understand each section of the Code of Conduct.
- It is essential that the governing board accept and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. This agreement must be recorded, signed by all governors including the Chair of Governors and dated. The code of conduct should be reviewed by the whole governing board.
- Governors never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing board, the Head teacher or staff.
- If any governor breaches the Code then the governing board will discuss the breach and take action if necessary. Action might be a warning, or possibly a suspension or removal for a period of five years.
- (Grounds for removal applies to Maintained schools)This governing board welcomes healthy and appropriate challenge, a governor will only be removed following prescribed and fair procedures, if there has been:
    - Serious misconduct.
    - Repeated grounds for suspension.
    - Repeated and serious incompetence.
    - Engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
    - The actions of the governor are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the governing board, distracting it from strategic functions or interfering with the operational efficiency of the school.(Ref: (The Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools August 2017).
    - If the Chair may have breached this code, another governor, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.

Adopted by: Sheerhatch Primary School on 3rd September 2026

Governor's Signature: ……

Date: ……