



Charlton Park Academy Governing Body Code of Conduct

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1. Aims, Scope, and Principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.

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.

The code is based on the [academy trust handbook](#) and should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our articles of association, standing orders and any scheme of delegation).

Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix.

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. The 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

As governors, we will follow these [principles](#) set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

- Selflessness – we will act in the public interest.
- Integrity – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests.
- Objectivity – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias.
- Accountability – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary.
- Openness – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.
- Honesty – we will be truthful.
- Leadership – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens.

3. Governors' Responsibilities

The three functions of our governing body are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the academy.
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the academy, and the performance management of staff.
- Oversee the financial performance of the academy and make sure money is well spent.

In order to do this effectively, as individuals we will:

- Understand and respect the distinction between the [role and responsibilities of the board](#) and those of the senior management team.
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself.
- Preserve and develop the character of the academy.
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, the local community and the local authority).
- Follow the academy's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the academy's constitutional documents.
- Take responsibility for our [self-evaluation](#), regularly reviewing our board's performance, constitution and skillset.
- Take part in any [training or development](#) required to fill any gaps in the skills we need for effective governance.
- Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the board remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full board.
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation and our funding agreement that sets out how we must manage our academy's money and procure goods and services.
- Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited.
- Declare all gifts worth more than £25.00 and record them in the academy's Register of Pecuniary Interest. We will not accept bribes.
- We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the academy.

4. Working with Others

We will:

- Support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders and holding them to account.
- Respect the role of the senior management team and avoid [routine involvement in operational matters](#).
- Respect each other's views.
- Work together as a board to develop effective relationships with stakeholders.

- [Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve](#) and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders.
- Follow the [Equality Act 2010](#), and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything we do.

5. Commitment to Governance

We:

- Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice.
- Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role.
- Understand that work should be shared among members and that all governors/trustees are expected to take an active role.
- Will [prepare ahead of meetings](#) to ensure we make informed contributions.
- Will participate in regular [pre-arranged school visits](#) in accordance with school policy.
- Will attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the board has a wide range of skills and expertise.

6. Openness and Transparency

Conflicts of Interest

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

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all governors/trustees including associate members.
- 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.

Publishing Information

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

- We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
 - The structure and remit of the governing body and committees, and the full name of the chair of each.
 - 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 they stepped down.

- The body that appointed them.
- Their relevant business and pecuniary interests.
- Their attendance record over the last academic year.
- We accept that the information about members, trustees and local governors will be published on [Get information about schools](#).
- We accept that the information about trustees will be published on [Companies House](#).
- 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](#).

7. Confidentiality

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, students, and their parents).
- Details of individual governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted.

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.

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.

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

Breaches of Confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible, who will investigate the matter further.

Governors' understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended or in cases of a serious breach, e.g. if they have shared confidential or sensitive academy information with third parties, be removed from office.

8. Data Protection

We will follow the academy's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when [using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data](#).

All electronic communications are to be sent or viewed using the Academy's secure email system only, unless prior approval has been sought.

Video conference meetings are to be held using the Academy's software system only i.e. Microsoft Teams, unless prior approval has been sought.

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

Personal Data Breaches

We will inform the academy's data protection officer immediately if we believe that there has been a [personal data breach](#).

9. Social Media

We will abide by the requirements below:

We will:

- Always uphold the reputation of the academy.
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community.
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available.
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience or see towards governors to the chair of governors and the Principal.

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the academy.
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles.
- Make comments online about any members of the governing body or school community.
- Post [any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media](#) that may bring us or the academy into disrepute.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

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 body.

11. Links with Other Policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Gifts and Hospitality

- E-safety
- Data Protection

Appendix 1: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If we suspect a governor has breached the Code of Conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The chair will investigate
- The chair will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation does not improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the chair to reset expectations, based on this Code of Conduct.
 - Support, mentoring or training for the governor.
 - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in.
- If there is no improvement in the governors' behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, other than in exceptional circumstances.

Governors may be suspended if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board of trustees (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the governing body) and
- Have brought, or are likely to bring, the academy trust or the position of the governor, into disrepute.

'Bringing the governing body into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the academy.
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community.
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a staff meeting or on social media.

We may remove a governor from office where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension.
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 Principles of Public Life, if sufficiently serious.
- They display serious or repeated incompetence.
- They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values.
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the governing body, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the academy.