

# HEATHERLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Governor's Code of Conduct Policy Statement

**Review : Working Party – April 2011**

**Full Governing Body 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

## **Heatherley Primary School**

### **Code of Practise and Conduct for Governors**

**We believe that the ability of our governing body to work together for the good of the school depends essentially on trust and an understanding of our common purpose.**

This Governing Body of Heatherley Primary School has therefore adopted the following principles and procedures as set out in;

### **NGA's Code of Practice for School Governors 2010**

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

#### **The purpose of the governing body**

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being. Over the past decade the responsibilities of governing bodies have grown; and the 'Every Child Matters' agenda has meant that schools are now accountable for children's health and well-being in the community and for a wide range of extended services provision out of school hours.

#### **The governing body:**

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
  - Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
  - Setting statutory targets
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
  - Progress towards targets
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - The budget and the staffing structure
- Ensures accountability by:
  - signing off the Self Evaluation Form
  - responding to School Improvement Partner and Ofsted reports when necessary

- holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school
- ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- making available information to the community
- Appoints and performance manages the headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

### **The role of a governor**

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority Community, Foundation), the overriding concern of all governors has to be **the welfare of the school as a whole.**

### **General**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher as set out above
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 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 government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.

- 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 body.

### **Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy eg preparation for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, 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 in full why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher. (Visits Policy)
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the headteacher.

### **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.
- 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 delegated functions and take into account 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 headteacher, 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 exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.

**Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

**Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school governor and of Schedule 6 to the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 relating to the disqualifications from the role of school governor (Refer to appendix)

**The Governing Body of Heatherley Primary School adopted this code of practice on {Reviewed 25<sup>th</sup> May 2011}.**

Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year.

**Undertaking- Annually at the first Full Governing body meeting in the Autumn Term:**

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.

Signed ..... Printed name ..... Date: .....

**Appendix: 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. 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 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.

**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.

## **Appendix:**

### **Sanctions in the event of serious breaches of codes of conduct**

It is hoped that governing bodies will only need to consider this option as a last resort, for having understood and agreed a code of conduct it is assumed that governors would not knowingly breach it.

### **The removal of governors**

**Appointed** parent governors, community or sponsor governors can be removed by the appointing governing body.

In these cases the governor allegedly in serious breach must be notified in writing of the reasons for proposing their removal and given the opportunity to make a statement in response to the allegations before a vote is taken on the resolution to remove them. A governing body's decision to remove any appointed parent governor, community or sponsor governor in this way must be confirmed after a second meeting not less than 14 days after the first meeting.

**Elected** parents or staff governors may not be removed in this way.

LA and foundation governors to be removed by the appropriate appointing authority.

**Reference** Chapter 2 para 26-32 of A Guide to the Law for School Governors January 2010.

### **The suspension of governors**

A governing body can decide to suspend a governor for six months if they are:

- paid to work at the school and subject to disciplinary proceedings
- subject to any court or tribunal the outcome of which may mean they would be disqualified under Schedule 6
- the governor has acted in a way that is against the school's ethos or has brought or is likely to bring the school or governing body or his office into disrepute
- the governor is in breach of their duty of confidentiality to the school staff or to the pupils.

In these cases the governing body must vote to suspend a governor and record this in the minutes.

A motion to suspend must be specified as an agenda item and at least seven days' notice given to all members of the governing body.

The proposer of a suspension must give the reasons and the governor being proposed for suspension must have the opportunity to make a statement in response.

The governor being proposed for suspension must withdraw from the meeting to allow discussion and voting to take place. The maximum period of time for a suspension is 6 months. The suspension period begins from the date of the meeting making the decision to suspend.

Suspended governors must receive papers during the period of suspension and cannot be disqualified for non attendance under para 5 of Schedule 6 of the Constitutional Regulations during this time.

**Reference** Chapter 3 para 69-73 of A Guide to the Law for School Governors January 2010.