

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes

Governors' Code of Conduct for All Governors

Co-ordinator: Clare Tayton

Last review: 2024

Next review: 2027



“Be responsible, be fair, stay positive and care”

John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes Governors Code of Conduct for All Governors based on NGA Model

The governing body agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life

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.

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

- ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff

- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- *NGA recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:*
- ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school/s.
- We agree to adhere to school/trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the school/s.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the school/s and local community.
- 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 only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
- We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the school's / trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- *We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Commitment

- We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
- We will make every effort 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/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- 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 and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Relationships

- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/communities.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- *We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Conflicts of interest

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the [register of business interests](#).
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- We will act in the best interests of the school/trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
- 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/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school/trust website.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

Ceasing to be a governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

Breach of this code of conduct

- We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by the governing board of John Ruskin Primary School and Language Classes on 01/11/21.

Governors' Email Protocol

The main advantage of email is that it enables information and documents to be circulated quickly and efficiently and it should be used for that purpose rather than to exchange opinions.

It is important to remember that only decisions reached by the governing body in properly convened meetings have any legal standing. The use of email as an open forum for reaching decisions is not provided for in current legislation which covers the procedures and protocols of governing bodies.

This protocol aims to support Governors by:

- Coordinating the flow of emails (messages and attachments)
- Minimising ad hoc messages.
- Ensuring the quality of email and avoiding unnecessary messages.
- Ensuring that messages are only sent to governors on the relevant committee, working group or panel, as appropriate

Principles to follow regarding email communication in connection with governor business:

- It should be considerate
- It should take into account the demands it may place on other people's time.
- It should avoid intemperate language
- It should be borne in mind that the indiscriminate and sometimes careless use of email can have unforeseen consequences

- Email is not a secure medium therefore care should be taken in relation to Data Protection, eg. names removed where appropriate.
 - In line with the school's GDPR protocols, all official governing body emails will be sent to a governor's school email address

Protocols to be observed:

- Being professional and careful about what you say or imply about others.
- Avoid writing in CAPITAL LETTERS this is the equivalent of electronic shouting.
- Avoid sending unnecessary e-mails; please especially remember the headteacher and chair of governors already receive numerous emails daily.
- Never e-mail in haste - consider the facts and the potential consequences of a message before you send it.
- Being polite goes a long way.
- Don't e-mail or respond when angry or upset.
- Only headteacher, School Business Manager or chairs of committees should address their members via email on a particular issue.
- Only the headteacher, School Business Manager, chair of governors or clerk to governors, should address the whole governing body via email. If an individual governor wishes to raise an issue for discussion, they should contact the chair of governors or committee with a request to add this to the relevant meeting agenda.
- Should a governor need to send an email either in the early morning or late at night, there should be no expectation of a response until normal working hours.
- If an email is marked 'confidential' or sent in confidence to a governor, it should be treated as such and not forwarded to any other individual without the originator's consent.

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