

# Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls

## Governing Board Code of Conduct

<b>Approved by:</b>	Full Governing Board	<b>Date:</b> 18 September 2025
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	September 2025	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2026	

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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 governance guide and the Academy Trust Handbook. It should be read alongside our articles of association and Terms of Reference.

The terms “Governor” and “Trustee” are used interchangeably in this policy.

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 students.

## 2. The 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

As Governors, we will follow the Nolan 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 main functions of our Governing Board are:

- Strategic Leadership - defining a vision, fostering a culture and championing the strategy;
- Accountability & Assurance - providing robust and effective oversight of operations and performance; and
- Engagement - strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders.

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

- Understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the Governing Board and those of the school leaders;
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the Governing Board itself;
- Promote equality and diversity throughout our organisation, including the Governing Board's operation;
- Preserve and develop the character of the Academy Trust;

- 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 Trust's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the Governing Board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the Academy Trust's constitutional documents;
- Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our Governing 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 Governing Board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full Governing Board;
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation and our funding agreement that sets out how we must manage our Academy Trust'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 £20 and record them on the gifts and hospitality register. We will not accept bribes; and
- Work to actively identify and manage risks to the Academy Trust.

## 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 School Leaders and avoid routine involvement in operational matters;
- Respect each other's views;
- Work together as a Governing Board to develop effective relationships with stakeholders;
- Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders; and
- 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 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; and

- Will attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the Governing Board has a wide range of skills and expertise.

## 6. Openness and transparency

### Conflicts of interest

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

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all Governors including associate members; and
- 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 Governing 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 School's website to ensure transparency:
- The structure and remit of the members, board of trustees, and committees, and the full name of the chair of each one (where applicable);
  - For each member and trustee who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
    - Their full name;
    - Their date of appointment;
    - Their term of office (trustees only);
    - The date they stepped down (where applicable);
    - The body that appointed them (trustees only);
    - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests (including governance roles in other educational institutions); and
    - Their attendance record over the last academic year (only for trustees at Governing Board and committee meetings).
- We accept that the information about members and trustees will be published on Get Information About Schools (GIAS).
- We accept that the Governing Board may collect diversity data to publish on the school website, which could include information on any of the 9 protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.
- We understand that providing this information is voluntary and, if we have already provided this information, we are able to request it be removed from any reporting.
- We accept that the information about trustees will be published on Companies House.
- We accept that the approved Governing Board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person, as appropriate.

## 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, pupils and their parents); or

- 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; or
- 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 of Governors as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Governors understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended.

## **8. Data protection**

We will follow the Academy Trust's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

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 Trust's data protection officer immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

## **9. Social media**

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the School at all times;
- 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; and
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience or see towards Governors to the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the School (unless that group is personally relevant, e.g. for Parent Trustees);
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles;
- Make comments online about any members of the Governing Board or School community; nor
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the School 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 Board.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- 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 doesn't 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; and
  - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in.
- If there is no improvement in the governor's behaviour, the Governing Board will vote on a motion to ask the Members to remove them in accordance with sections 168 and 169 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Trust's Articles of Association. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Governors may be removed if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the Governing Board (including failing to undertake training and development appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the Governing Board);
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the Academy Trust or the office of the trustee into disrepute;
- Have acted to undermine fundamental British values or the Governing Board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty;
- Have been involved in 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;
- Have displayed repeated and serious incompetence; or
- Have acted in a way that is significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Governing Board, or their actions have interfered with the operational efficiency of the School.

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

- Speaking out publicly against the School;
- Being disrespectful to members of the School community;
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media; or
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the Governing Board's operation.

## Appendix 2: Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

<b>Name of governor:</b>	
<b>Role in the Governing Board:</b>	
<b>Year of appointment:</b>	
<b>Length of appointment:</b>	

**Please ensure that you read and understand the following documents as soon as possible (policies available on the School Website):**

Behaviour for Learning Policy	
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	
Health and Safety Policy	
Equality and Diversity Policy	
GDPR Policy	
Complaints Procedure	
Keeping Children Safe in Education	

I hereby acknowledge the terms detailed within the Governing Board Code of Conduct and agree to abide by this Code whilst I am an acting member of the Governing Board. I understand that the role is of a voluntary nature and, therefore, I will not receive payment for my duties. Any expenses which I claim will be in line with the Governors' Allowance Policy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_