



Code of Conduct for Governors

Applicable to:	✓	Astley Community High School
	✓	Seaton Sluice Middle School
	✓	Whytrig Middle School
Approval body:	Full Governing Body	

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Approval by	Governing Body to determine

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Statutory requirement to publish on school website	No
Agreed to publish on school website	Yes

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Business Manager (SH)	8 July 2015	1.0	Final document for publication
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Business Manager (SH)	21 September 2016	1.1	Final document for publication
Clerk to the Governing Body (AS)	19 September 2017	1.2	Draft update for 2017-18
Clerk to the Governing Body (AS)	20 September 2017	2.0	Final document for publication
Clerk to the Governing Body (AS)	22 August 2018	2.1	Updated in line with NGA model policy
Business Manager (BW)	15 October 2018	3.0	Final approved version for publication

1 Scope

- 1.1 This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the three schools within the Seaton Valley Federation and the community.

2 Core strategic functions

- 2.1 The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

- Establishing the strategic direction, by:
 - setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
 - agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
 - meeting statutory duties
- Ensuring accountability, by:
 - appointing the headteacher
 - monitoring progress towards targets
 - performance managing the headteacher
 - engaging with stakeholders
 - contributing to school self-evaluation
 - following all relevant policies and procedures to ensure that young people in the need of protection are effectively safeguarded.
- Ensuring financial probity, by:
 - setting the budget
 - monitoring spending against the budget
 - ensuring value for money is obtained
 - ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

3 Individual functions

- 3.1 As individuals on the governing body we agree to the following:

Roles and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept that we do not represent an individual school within the federation and we are required to consider the interests of all schools when making decisions.
- 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 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 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 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 and to keep our pupils safe. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

- We will ensure the safeguarding allegations against members of staff, volunteers or governors are referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the governing body and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing body as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 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 why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, category of governor, relevant business and pecuniary interests and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the schools' websites.
- As required by statutory regulation, we will each provide an enhanced criminal records certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the details of which will be held in the schools' single central record of recruitment and vetting checks.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (in force from 3 September 2018) includes a recommendation that maintained school governors should have a 'section 128 check' in the same way as academy trustees, to see whether they are prohibited or restricted from taking part in the management of an independent school, academy or free school
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governor committee members will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's national database of governors (GIAS; Gathering Information About Schools).

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, the clerk to the governing body and school staff in and outside of meetings.
- 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, senior leadership team, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will work with the clerk to the governing body in relation to requests for information and availability and ensure that these are dealt with in a timely manner.

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.
- We will use either the individual email account created by the IT & Technical Support Manager or, where already available, a @northumberland.gov.uk account for all governor business to ensure this remains confidential.
- Ceasing to be a governor, we understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after leaving/termination of office.

Conflicts of interest

- We 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 body'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. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the federation's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will 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 body.

Equalities

- We are committed to tackling discrimination in how we treat our pupils, employees and other stakeholders and in how we deliver services to ensure that individuals with protected characteristics are able to participate fully in school life and are free from adverse treatment and harassment.
- We will actively promote and champion equality in the community.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body will only use

suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

- We agree to work in accordance with the above principles which were originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life 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.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____