



Introduction

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 school and the community. It should be read alongside the Devonshire Primary's Instrument of Government available on the school website and the Full Governing Body Terms of Reference.

Once approved by the governing body, the Code will apply to all governors.

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

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the school are managed

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

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Headteacher.
- 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. 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.
- 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 school;
- We will respect the role of the Headteacher and their responsibility for the day to day management of the school 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 governor role we will ensure our comments reflect current school policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.
- We will adhere to the school's online safety policy, including when using school wifi during meetings/in school, noting that governor use of personal mobile phones on the school site is for governor meetings only and any governor access to and/or use of school staff email addresses is only for governing body business.

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 arranged in advance with the Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our conduct, behaviour and professionalism to the standards expected of a governor.

- 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, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the group responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information about Schools). Information which should be published on the school's website is visible on this database, all other information is held securely, and would be used by the Department to identify, more quickly and accurately, individuals who are involved in governance and who govern in more than one context.

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.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- If we are approached by anyone that is not a Devonshire governor who is seeking copies of governing body papers we will refer them to the Clerk via the school 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 school'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 by that group.

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

- 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.

We also agree to abide by the Seven 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. 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.

Adopted by the governing body of Devonshire Primary on 20 June 2023.

Once approved by the governing body, the Code will apply to all members of the schools governing body.

Name of Governor: _____

Signed _____

Date _____

Recommended approach to virtual meetings (source Governor Hub Knowledge)

In order to keep virtual meetings on track, it is recommended that all attendees should agree to:

	Why?
Attend the whole meeting	You don't want governors logging off and on during the meeting as this affects the quorum, security and flow of the meeting
Attend the meeting with the webcam/video switched on	This will make the meeting easier to moderate and minute – if this really isn't possible then the governor can attend via audio only
Focus on the meeting in the same way as if they're attending in person	With important topics being covered, and possibly decisions or votes being taken, governors need to give their full attention to the business under discussion
Remain on mute unless they're speaking	This improves the call quality for everyone
Say their name before they start speaking	To help the clerk know who's speaking
Use headphones	To help keep the meeting private if listening with other people present in the background
Be mindful of their surrounding	Governors need to be aware of who or what is visible or audible in the background. They should also avoid others overhearing their contributions to the meeting, particularly if discussing confidential information
Follow a set procedure for asking question	Ideally set out a procedure that allows governors to ask questions without lots of people jumping in at the same time. You could ask them to raise their hand, but there'll still be times when governors will jump in and ask a question – this is fine as long as it's managed