



The Westminster Specialist College

Governing Board Code of Conduct 2021/2022

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| Approved by Board of Governors on: | |
| Signed by Chair of Governors: | |
| Head of College: | |
| Lead Personnel: | |
| Date of Review: | |

Governing Board Membership

2021/22 Academic Year

This code sets out the expectations and commitment required from College governors and for the trust to properly carry out its work within the college and the community. Governing Boards are responsible for standards in their College and are held to account for this by Ofsted and DfE.

Governors make a vital contribution to the lives of students. The College should aim to recruit, induct and continuously develop high calibre individuals with the relevant skills/experience. Skills should be reviewed on an annual basis or when relevant and all those involved in governance should demonstrate the following competences:

- a strong commitment to the role and to improving outcomes for students;
- the inquisitiveness to question and analyse;
- the willingness to learn;
- collaborative and creative;
- good inter-personal skills;
- appropriate levels of literacy in English (unless a board/trust is prepared to make special arrangements);
- sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data.

The three strategic functions of governing boards

1. Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the College
- Agreeing the College improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

2. Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the principal (where delegated)
- Monitoring the educational performance of the college and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the lead executive/headteacher (where delegated)
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to college self-evaluation

3. Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board, we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and its strategic role.
- We understand how the role of the board differs from and works with others including the principal.

- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board 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 governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other educational establishments
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our college. Our actions within the college and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board 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 college's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board 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.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing board.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor committee member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, 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 college well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the college, with all visits arranged in advance with the Principal and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the college in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- 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 and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors.

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 committee members, the clerk to the governing board and college staff both 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 will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities' any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life (see annex) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members 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 executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust, 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 college.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding college business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

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 board's business, 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 a register of interests will be published on the college'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 college as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

Ceasing to be a governor

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

Breach of this Code of Conduct

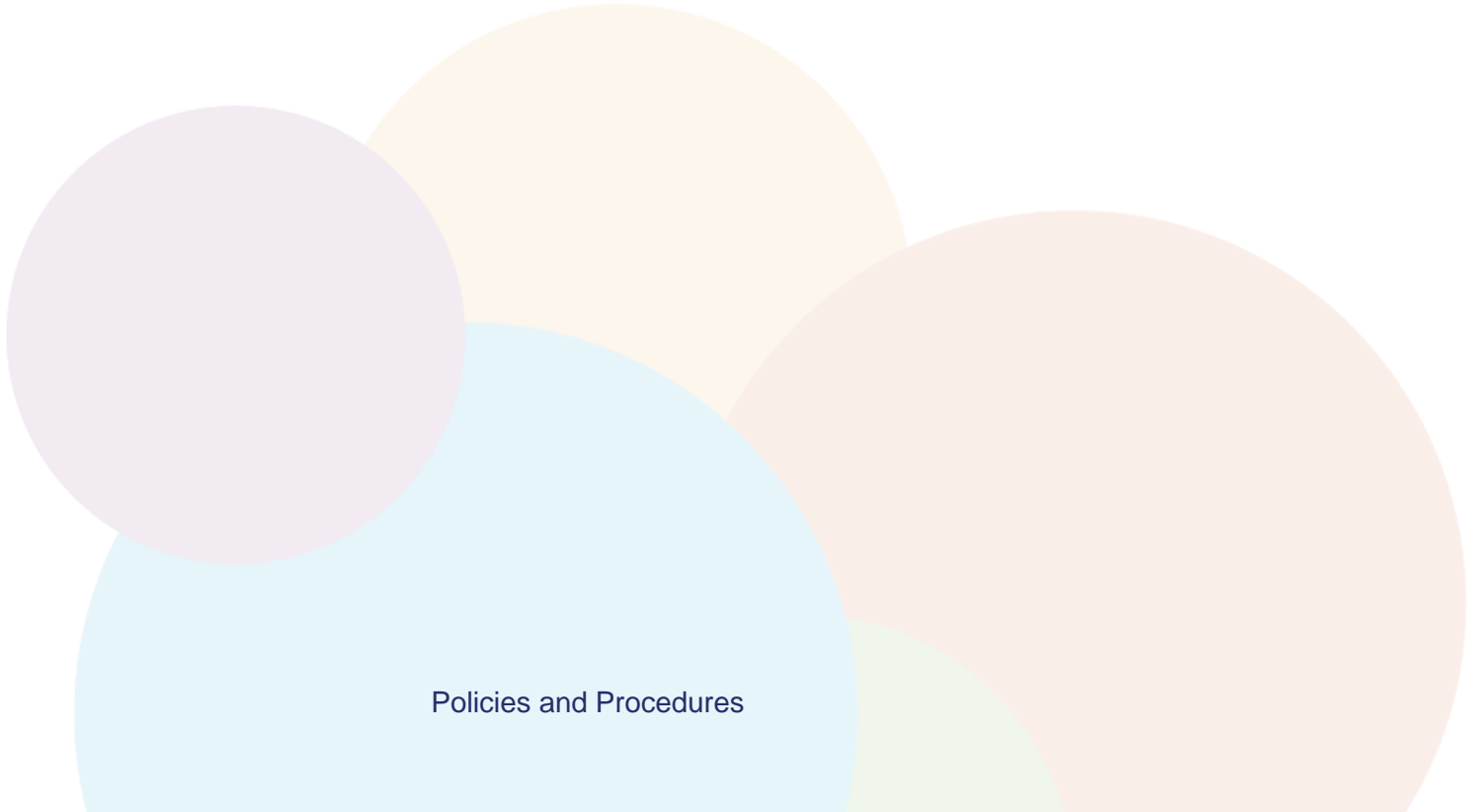
- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate

Adopted by the board of:

On:

Annex - 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.



Policies and Procedures