



Sonning CE Primary School

Building strong foundations for the years ahead
(Matthew 7:24-25)



“Unlocking the Future”

Governor Code of Conduct

Policy Level and Description:	1	<u>TKAT Statutory Policy</u> NO CHANGES TO THE CORE TEXT ALL Schools require a policy on this topic/area. Only changes to highlighted sections are allowed to the core text – changes will be limited to school name and very limited school-specific details - LGBs to adopt, implement and monitor this policy.	
Reviewed by: (Trust Officer)	Hester Wooller CEO		
Approved by: (Trust Committee/Trust Board)	FAPP		
Trust approval date: (dd/mm/yyyy)	10/07/24		
Review due: (mm/yyyy)	07/2025		

1. Role and function of Governors

Each member school will provide Governors with guidance outlining their specific role and responsibilities. In fulfilling their general roles and responsibilities individual governors must:

- adhere to The Keys Academy's rules and policies, including the Articles of Association, Scheme of Delegation and support its charitable objects
- act in the best interests of the school at all times, taking professional advice where necessary contribute to the work of the local governing body in order for it to fulfil its role and functions as defined in the Scheme of Delegation.
- recognise that their role is a collective one and that any task or function delegated to an individual governor or committee does not relieve the other governor of the responsibility for that task or function
- support and assist the Head of School, Headteacher and/or Executive Headteacher

Governors have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board of Trustees has delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the local governing body when have been specifically authorised to do so.

2. Conflicts of interest

The local governing body has a legal obligation to act in the best interests of The Keys Academy Trust and in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, and to avoid situations where there may be a potential, real or perceived, conflict of interest.

Governors should not exert any influence to obtain any preferential treatment for themselves or their family, or other connected persons or organisations. Governors should be aware of, and act in accordance with, the school's policy and procedures on identifying and managing conflicts of interest.

Upon appointment, and at least annually, governors are required to complete a declaration of interest form. This document must also be updated whenever a material change occurs. A register of interests will be maintained by the Clerk to the school, and will be made available to the public, in line with the school's conflicts of interest policy.

Failure by a governor to declare an interest, real or perceived, could result in the complaints process being instigated by the school. Depending on the circumstances and severity of the conflict, this may result in the governor being removed from office in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

3. Standards of conduct

Governors are required to adhere to the highest standards of conduct in the performance of

their duties. This code of conduct respects and endorses the seven principles of public life promulgated by the Nolan Committee and all governors are expected to perform their duties in accordance with them (see Appendix 1).

In addition, the school requires governors to perform their duties in accordance with the vision, mission and values of the school. Governors are encouraged to:

- value fellow governors, even when there are differences in opinion
- adhere to the school's meeting etiquette
- treat all employees of the school with respect and in accordance with the school's policies
- be mindful of conduct which could be deemed to be unfair or discriminatory
- conduct themselves in a manner which reflects positively on the academy when attending external meetings or any other events.

All governors are expected to understand, agree and promote the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy in every area of their work. The local governing body activities should not prejudice any part of the community on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. Any actual or perceived prejudicial action, views or comments shall be investigated and dealt with in line with the complaints procedure and could result in the governor being removed from office.

4. Stakeholder engagement

Governors are accountable to a range of interested parties for their actions, hence decision making and governance issues should be as transparent as possible, except for when confidentiality is required or there is likely to be a breach of the school's data protection policy.

In order to demonstrate their accountability to the school's wider community and regulators governors are encouraged to attend events in order to best understand their views and concerns.

Governors should be fully aware of their representative functions and should not become personally involved in those operational matters that should rightly be handled by the appropriate member of staff. Governors are advised to act as a conduit for forwarding pupil, parent and public comments and concerns to the appropriate senior leadership team member, when presented with a complaint from a pupil, parent, member, staff member or the general public, except where separate whistleblowing procedures are a more appropriate avenue for dealing with the complaint.

5. Visiting the school

In fulfilling their core duties and responsibilities, governors will be expected to visit the school site. For activities other than attending local governing body or committee meetings or events organised by the school, governors are requested to follow the procedure below:

- for group visits, arrangements will be discussed and agreed between the Chair and Clerk to the school, in liaison with appropriate members of the senior leadership team
- for individual visits, the governor speaks directly to the Head of School/Headteacher and/or Executive Headteacher

The school will make every effort to accommodate the request of the governor, but may not always be able to agree to specific dates, times or site visits.

Personal visits to the school, or volunteer activity or participation in fundraising events that are not related to the governor's role are not covered by this procedure but governors must abide by the rules of the event.

6. Expenses

The position of governors is unremunerated, though reasonable out-of-pocket expenses are paid. Please refer to school's policy on governor expenses and how to claim for reimbursement for costs incurred on behalf of the academy.

Further information about expenses can be gained by speaking directly to Chief Finance Officer of the Trust.

Governors must not receive any financial or non-financial benefit that is not explicitly authorised by the Scheme of Delegation or the Charity Commission.

7. Meetings

Governors have a responsibility to attend meetings of the local governing body. When this is not possible, they should submit an apology to the Clerk of the school in advance of the meeting. Governors are expected to attend for the duration of each meeting.

Absence from the Governor's Local Governing Body meetings without good reason established to the satisfaction of the body could result in the individual being removed from office, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

Non-attendance of three consecutive local governing body meetings within a period of one year will result in the governor being deemed to have resigned their position unless the grounds for absence are regarded as satisfactory by the body.

If a governor wants to submit an item for inclusion in the local governing body meeting's agenda, they should forward their request to the clerk of the school [at least 14 working days] before the meeting. Late items of an urgent nature may be added to the list of any other business, at the discretion of the chairman, in discussion with the Clerk to the school.

Meetings of the board shall be held in private, and in accordance with the school's meeting

etiquette. The local governing body may decide to invite named staff and other individuals to all or part of a meeting to discuss a particular item. Due consideration will be given to the handling of any confidential or sensitive items. Such invitations will be agreed by the chairman, in liaison with the Head of School, Headteacher and/or Executive Headteacher, and facilitated by the Clerk to the school.

8. Mediation

A mediation process is available to the local governing body, and individual governors, for use when there has been a breakdown of communication or trust between the local governing body and the school's senior managers. Further information should be requested from the Clerk to the school.

Before the mediation process is instigated, the chair/ vice chair and complainant should have met in an attempt to resolve the matter.

9. Confidentiality

All governors are required to respect the confidentiality of the information they are exposed to as a result of their membership to the local governing body while in office and also after they have left the governing body.

10. Ceasing to be a Governor

Governors must continue to comply with the qualifications required to hold a governor position throughout their period of tenure, as defined in the willingness to serve declaration. Any changes that would render the individual ineligible to serve must be forwarded to the Clerk of the Trust.

As previously mentioned, failure to attend three consecutive governing body meetings will result in the governor being deemed to have resigned their position unless the grounds for absence are deemed to be satisfactory by the governing body.

Governors may resign their office ahead of their tenure by writing to the Chair or Clerk to the school. Depending on the reasons and circumstances of the resignation, the chair, after consulting the Clerk to the school, may decide to formally record those particulars in the minutes of the next local governing body meeting.

The confidentiality requirements referred to above continue to apply after the governor leaves office.

11. Code non-compliance

In addition to this code of conduct, a complaints policy operates to cover allegations made against governors that appear to breach the spirit of the code or specific conditions of service. Ideally any penalties for non-compliance would never need to be applied.

Non-compliance with the code of conduct may result in action being taken as follows:

- Where misconduct takes place, Trustees may be authorised to take such action as may be immediately required, including the exclusion of the person concerned from a meeting.
- Where such misconduct is alleged, it shall be open to the Board of Trustees to decide, by simple majority of those in attendance, to lay a formal charge of misconduct. In such instances it will be the responsibility of the board to:
 - inform the governor in writing of the nature of the allegation of the breach, detailing the specific action or behaviour considered to be detrimental to the school , and inviting and considering their response within a defined timescale
 - inviting the governor to address the Trustees in person if the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily through correspondence
 - deciding, by simple majority of those present and voting, whether to uphold the charge of the breach and conduct detrimental to the school.
 - impose such sanctions as shall be deemed appropriate. Sanctions will range from the issuing of a written warning as to the governor’s future conduct and consequences, and the removal of the individual from office
- Where Trustees cannot agree on a course of action in a situation that is deemed detrimental to the school, the Trust has the power to remove the governor.

12. Ceasing to be a Governor

- Governors who stand down before their term of office is finished are asked to give at least one term’s notice in order to ensure a smooth transition period. We recognise that there may be special circumstances where the notice period is not possible.
- Governors should understand the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

13. Safeguarding and Cybersecurity Training

Governors are required to complete safeguarding and cybersecurity training annually. Newly appointed governors must complete training before they may attend a meeting of the local governing body or its committees. Existing governors must complete training before the first local governing body meeting of each academic year.

Appendix 1 The Nolan Principles

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.