



# Alexandra

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## GOVERNING BODY CODE OF PRACTICE

<p><b>Approved</b> Chair of the Governing Body</p> <p>Date: 8 Oct 2020</p>	<p>Head Teacher</p> <p>Date: 8 Oct 2020</p>
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# GOVERNING BODY CODE OF PRACTICE

## INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body has adopted the following Code of Practice. This is not a statement of responsibilities, but is concerned with the broad principles by which the Governors have agreed to operate.

## GENERAL

- We have responsibility for the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
- We recognise that the Head Teacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of the school and operation of the curriculum.
- We accept that all Governors have equal status and, although appointed by different groups (i.e. parents, staff, RBK, Community), our overriding concern will be the welfare of the school as a whole.
- We have no legal authority to act individually, except where the Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times. The overall good of the school will always override Governors' personal feelings and individual concerns.
- We accept that we are accountable for our decisions.
- The scheme governing the way the Governing Body works is our Scheme of Delegation, approved annually by the full Governing Body. It sets out the accountabilities of the full Governing Body and the responsibilities of individual link Governors.

## COMMITMENT

- We acknowledge that being a Governor requires the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Body, attend regularly and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on working parties and acting as link governors.
- We will consider our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake to attend the 'Getting to grips with governance' CPD session within the first 3-6 months of appointment.
- We will commit to refresh relevant training every three years (5 years in the case of safer recruitment) to keep abreast of changes in legislation.
- We will get to know the school well and take opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We acknowledge that our full names, dates of appointment, terms of office, date of resignation and applicable appointing body will be published on the school website.
- We acknowledge that our attendance record at Governing Body meetings over the academic year will be published on the school website.

## RELATIONSHIPS

- We will strive to work as a team.

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- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Head Teacher, staff, parents, RBK and other relevant agencies, where appropriate.
- 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.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

- We will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.
- We will declare an interest if an item under discussion at any full or working party meeting of Governors impinges upon our personal, family or financial situation.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the Governing Body.
- We will not reveal the details of any Governing Body vote.

## CONDUCT

- We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak out against the majority decisions in public (or private) outside the Governing Body.
- Apart from very specific instances for the Chair, we recognise that we have no individual powers and should only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when specifically authorised.
- Our visits to school will be undertaken within a framework, which has been established by the Governing Body and agreed with the Head Teacher.
- We will follow procedures for responding to criticism or complaint relating to the school. Any concern or possible criticism about the school should be discussed with the Head Teacher in the first instance.
- We will always take every opportunity to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school.
- We will actively support and challenge the Head Teacher.
- If an elected parent governor, or a co-opted governor who is a parent, we will:
  - Understand the difference between our role as a parent and as a governor;
  - Contribute to Governor discussions with feedback from experience as a parent, but not detailed operational or individual child issues, which should be addressed via operational processes;
  - Not act or make decision as a parent representative but in the best interests of the school and all of its pupils and
  - Use established school processes for queries or comments relating to my child.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will uphold the reputation of Alexandra Primary School and maintain a professional presence at all times.

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- We will report any incidents of harassment that we experience, or that we witness towards other Governors or staff to the Chair or Headteacher as appropriate
- We will not make negative comments or post opinions online about any member of the Alexandra Primary School community, including Governors, staff, employees, parents or pupils.
- We will not post anything (including comments, images or language) that would bring Alexandra Primary School into disrepute.

### 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 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.
- The Register of Business and Governor's details will be published on the school website in line with the Statutory Guidance for the Constitution of Governing Bodies August 2015 for all Governors and associate members. Any Governor failing to provide information to enable the Governing Body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the Governing Body into disrepute.
- 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.

### 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 Governor, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.

### 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.

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**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.

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## Governors' Visits to Schools – Protocol

Governors' visits to schools during the school day give insights that can be acquired in no other way. To carry out strategic, monitoring, executive and accountability roles it is important that Governors understand the way the school works and understand the particular dynamics of a school. A visit during the school day is the best way to gain this information.

Ideally every member of the Governing Body should make a visit to the school at least once a year, this may be done as part of an annual governor day in school or as a separate visit to investigate a particular issue.

It is good practice for the Governing Body to have a protocol for school visits. Governors should be clear about:

- Why they are visiting
- What they are looking for
- How they will feed back to the school and the Governing Body

As part of a framework for a visit, the following should be considered:

### 1) Preparation

- Agree a convenient time and date with the Head Teacher and / or member of staff you are linked with.
- Decide what the visit is for, and if you need any paperwork, make sure the relevant person is aware of this
- Inform yourself about the aspect you will be observing by reading relevant documents such as the school policy, self evaluation or the last Ofsted report
- Dress suitably – nurseries or practical lessons can be messy!

### 2) Start and Briefing

- Governors should arrive punctually and observe school protocols for signing in and wearing a visitor badge
- Effective visits start with a meeting with the Head Teacher or link member of staff to clarify the nature of the visit, what Governors are to see and do and any protocols to be followed.

### 3) During the visit

- Remember you are not an inspector, don't give the impression you are looking for faults. Governors should not make judgements about what they observe, especially when they are watching lessons.
- Bear in mind that governor visits are about gathering information and developing relationships.
- You may want to offer praise and this is entirely acceptable. However, Governors should not offer advice or criticism directly to the staff. Any such comments should be made to the Head Teacher separately.
- Don't make any promises on behalf of the Governing Body, unless you have been given specific delegated power to do so.
- Thank everybody for their hospitality, including pupils where appropriate.

### 4) Follow up

- It would be helpful to include a de-briefing at the end of your visit so you can clarify any issues and share your experience with the Head Teacher and / or relevant members of staff. Remember, do not criticise any member of staff in their presence.

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- If there are any urgent actions needing to be followed up, such as a health and safety issue, these should be raised with the Head Teacher in the first instance. **If you have any concern about Child Protection, report it to the Head Teacher immediately.**
- A brief report back to Governors is an important part of the visit, especially if you are looking at a particular aspect of school life. Completing the form (below) will provide a consistent way of reporting on visits.

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## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Summary

Alexandra Primary School

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred. Alexandra School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy applies to all children, staff, governors, visitors and volunteers in the school, and is reviewed on an annual basis. It can be found on the school server, the school website, and a hard copy can be obtained on request from the school office. School staff are asked to read the policy every year, and to attend annual training supplied in school.

Our school is committed to providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected and which promotes their social, physical and moral development. Children in our school feel confident to, and know how to, approach adults if they are in difficulties. We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, families and school staff, we are well placed to identify any concerns for children and/or their families, in particular to recognise and identify potential indicators of abuse or neglect.

- The welfare of our children is paramount. All children, regardless of age, gender, culture, language, race, ability, sexual identity or religion have equal rights to protection, safeguarding and opportunities.
- We recognise that all adults in our school have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm and have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- Our school is committed to providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected and which promotes their social, physical and moral development. Children in our school feel confident to, and know how to, approach adults if they are in difficulties.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action. All staff, visitors and volunteers are asked to

- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- Know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse.
- Refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (Robert Waiting) or if necessary where the child is at immediate risk, to the police or Single Point of Access (SPA 020 8547 5008 ), or if a child lives out of borough, to the relevant local authority.

**Any child in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Adults should always maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here'. If the behaviour, words or appearance of a child worry you, you should always share that worry with the DSL, Robert Waiting. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If you are unsure, you should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).**

Key points for staff to remember when taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call 999
- report your concern to the DSL as quickly as possible – immediately when there is evidence of physical or sexual abuse and certainly by the end of the day. Complete a yellow record of concern form, and if possible capture the child's own words.
- do not start your own investigation, ask leading questions, or suggest words for the child to use.
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern, draw it immediately to the attention of the DSL or DDSL and seek support for yourself if you are distressed or need to debrief.

Thank you for reading this summary. Robert Waiting Designated Safeguarding Lead,

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## Alexandra School: Governor Visit Report

Name	
Date of Visit	
Focus of Visit	
Classes / Staff visited	
School Development Plan area of focus	
Summary of activities e.g. observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources etc.	
What I have learned as a result of my visit	
Positive comments about the area of focus	
Ideas for future visits / discussions in school or in committee	
Actions	