



Synergy SCHOOLS

Learn, Grow & Shine Together

Governors Code of Conduct (March 2023)

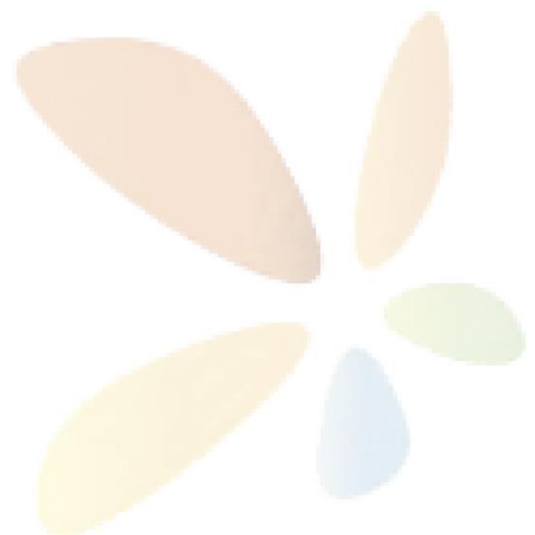
This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity and help us to ensure our federation is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The code is based on the [Governance Handbook](#) and the Department for Education's [guidance on the school governance regulations 2013](#). It should be read alongside Synergy Schools Federation constitutional documents.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils. Failure to adhere to this code of conduct could result in removal from the board.

Once this code has been adopted by the governing board, all members agree to faithfully abide by it.



We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff.
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.
NGA recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

As individual board members, we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of Synergy Schools Federation.
3. We will set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself.
4. We will take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our board's performance, constitution and skillset.
5. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
6. We will preserve and develop the character (and religious character) of Synergy Schools Federation.



7. We will not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
8. We will work collectively for the benefit of each school within the Federation, operating and making decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, the local community and the local authority).
9. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
10. We will consider how our decisions may affect each school and local community.
11. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
12. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
13. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
14. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
15. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
16. We will comply with relevant guidance and legislation that sets out how we must manage our schools' money and procure goods and services.
17. We will strive to uphold the Federation's reputation in our private communications (including on social media) considering carefully how we privately interact with the school stakeholders and wider audiences.
18. We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We understand that failing to attend meetings is a breach of this code of conduct which could lead to removal from the governing body.
5. We will get to know each school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
6. We will visit the schools within the Federation and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
7. When visiting a Federation school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
8. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/communities.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders and holding them to account.
4. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
5. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.
5. We will inform the chair as soon as possible of any breach of confidentiality.
6. We understand if we breach confidentiality we may be suspended.
7. We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Data Protection

1. We will follow the schools' information security processes and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal or confidential data.
2. We will inform the schools' data protection officer immediately if we believe there has been a data breach.

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

3. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the [register of business interests](#).
4. We will act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited.
5. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
6. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
7. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
8. We will act as a governor; not as a representative of any group.
9. 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 website.
10. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information about Schools), some of which will be publicly available.
11. We will declare all gifts worth more than £1 and record them on the gifts and hospitality register. We will not accept bribes.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by: Synergy Schools Federation on 22nd March 2023

Signed: *Mairi Reed*

[chair of full governing body]

We agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually and it will be endorsed by the full governing board.

References

[The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Appointing and removing governors - National Governance Association](#)

Appendix 1: breaches of the code of conduct

If we suspect a governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The chair will investigate
- The chair will hold a meeting with the governor to discuss the issue. The governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the chair to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the governor
 - Making sure the governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in
- If there is no improvement in the governors' behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances.

Governors may be suspended if they:

- Are a staff governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school.
- Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the governor being disqualified from holding office.
- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the school and has brought, or is likely to bring the school into disrepute.
- Breach confidentiality.

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media

We may remove a governor from office where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension.
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious.
- They display repeated and serious incompetence.
- They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values.
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school.