

Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School

Governor Code of Conduct



Thomas Coram Centre and
Nursery School
49 Mecklenburgh Square
London WC1N 2NY



Reviewed and Approved: Spring 2023	Next review: Spring 2024
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Reviewed annually

The governing board has adopted the following Code of Conduct

Purpose of the governing board

The governing board is the key strategic decision-making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. Ensuring the best possible outcomes is at the heart of a governing body's strategic role; every child has the right to reach their potential.

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- 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, with the money well spent
- 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, the skillset required to perform our core, and any individual delegated, functions and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept and abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 1).

- 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.
- Upon communicating formally within our governing role we will ensure any comments reflect the school/organisation policy even if they differ from our personal views
- 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/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We will promote tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation.
- We will demonstrate a professional attitude in all our undertakings as a governor/ trustee/ local governor/ academy committee member.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the policies and procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support the headteacher and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and hold them to account for school performance.
- We understand, accept and respect the differences between the strategic board role and the staff day to day operational and management role, avoiding actions that may undermine these arrangements.
- We understand, accept and respect the differences between the strategic governor role and any other which we may undertake within the school as a parent, professional or volunteer.
- We agree to adhere to the schools' rules and the policies and procedures we approve as a board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law,

including complying within the required timeframe to apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS.

- We agree to abide by the school/ organisation e- safety protocols for social media and when communicating in a private capacity will strive to uphold the reputation of the school /organisation. We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We agree to abide by the requirements of any Service Level Agreement contracts procured by the governing board. This includes the use of school email accounts for governors/trustees/ local governors/ academy committee members.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee/local governor/academy 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, panels 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/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher, undertaken in accordance and abiding with the monitoring visit policy and schedule as established annually by the governing board.
- We will demonstrate commitment to our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training to develop the knowledge and skills required to effectively perform our core and individual delegated functions and keep them up to date.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, 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 until 12 months after our service has ended.

- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors/ trustees/local governor/academy committee members will be collected and logged, until 12 months after our service, has ended on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools) with updates to any changes made as soon as possible. (For Academies, we accept that information relating to /trustees/local governors/academy committee members and any changes will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors within 14 days of said change or appointment.)
- We will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of protected characteristics as set out in the Equalities Act 2010 and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

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/trustees/academy committee members, the clerk to the governing board and all school staff.
- 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 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 headteacher, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the wider 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/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

- We will ensure all confidential documentation is securely stored and disposed of appropriately in accordance with our data protection policy and procedure, mindful of the GDPR legislation requirements.
- We will use school email accounts for all communication in our governor role, both within and outside of the governing board.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those pertaining to people we are related to and 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. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust'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 board.

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, ensuring statutory guidance, procedures and regulations are followed, as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- We understand, in maintained schools, we are expected only to exercise the power to remove an elected governor, with a five year disqualification term, in exceptional circumstances where the actions or behaviour of the elected governor warrants removal rather than suspension.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the vice chair, will investigate.

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. 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.