Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School



Governor Code of Conduct

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| Committee: | FGB |
| Reviewed by: | Hannah Rimmer |

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1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct is designed to give clear guidance on the standards of behaviour that all governors and those acting on behalf of the school are expected to observe. All governors are role models, and are in a unique position of influence, and must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all the children within the school. At a very basic level, all governors are expected to behave in a way that is ‘Kind, Respectful, Safe.’

This Code of Conduct applies to all governors of the school. This policy may be amended at any time.

This Code helps all governors to understand what behaviour is and is not acceptable.

Governors should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in suspension or removal from the Governing body.

Where this policy requires a governor to disclose matters from their personal life the school will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.

1. The 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

Governors should follow these principles,set out by the government, at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

* Selflessness – we will act in the public interest
* Integrity – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interest
* Objectivity – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
* Accountability – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
* Openness – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
* Honesty – we will be truthful
* Leadership – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens
1. Bernards Heath Principles

Alongside the 7 Nolan Principles, all governors are expected to consistently role model ‘Kind, Respectful, Safe’ towards all stakeholders.

All governors are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with all school policies and procedures and respond to guidance and advice from leaders in line with these.

Governors must not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

* 1. Setting an example

All governors set examples of behaviour and conduct which can be copied by children. Therefore, all governors must:

* comply with the expectations of behaviour ‘Kind, Respectful, Safe’
* avoid using inappropriate or offensive language at all times
* demonstrate high standards of conduct in order to encourage our children to do the same
* avoid putting themselves at risk of allegations of abusive or unprofessional conduct
1. Commitment to Governance

All governors commit to:

* attend all meetings where possible. When unable to attend a meeting provide apologies to the Chair or Clerk in advance of the meeting
* Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role
* Understand that work should be shared among members and that all governors are expected to take an active role
* Prepare ahead of meetings to ensure all governors make informed contributions
* Participate in regular pre-arranged school visits in accordance with governor visits policy
* Attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the board has a wide range of skills and expertise
1. Safeguarding Children

Governors have a duty to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education and abide by the duties placed upon them within this.

Governors have a duty to safeguard children from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

The duty to safeguard children includes the duty to report concerns about a child or colleague to the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The School’s DSLs are Hannah Rimmer and Lottie Woolfson. The Deputy DSLs are Suzanne Steadman and Antonia Onyeze.

Governors have access to the Child Protection Policy and Whistleblowing Procedure which may be found on GovernorHub and governors must be familiar with these documents.

Governors should treat children with respect and dignity and must not seriously demean or undermine children, their parents or carers, or colleagues.

Governors should not demonstrate behaviours that may be perceived as sarcasm, making jokes at the expense of children, embarrassing, or humiliating children, discriminating against or favouring children.

Governors must take reasonable care of children under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

Governors should be aware that the management of any safeguarding concerns is dealt in accordance with the latest statutory guidance as detailed in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes any allegations that meet the harm test and/or allegations considered to be low level concerns (i. e those which do not meet the harm test).

* 1. Low Level Concerns

The term ‘low-level’ concern does not mean that it is insignificant; it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harm test threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

* is inconsistent with the governor code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
* does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

* being over friendly with children
* having favourites
* taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
* engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
* using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language
* being unkind or disrespectful to children/colleagues/parents
1. Relationships

Governors must declare any relationships that they may have with other governors, children, staff, clients, contractors, suppliers or parents outside of the school. This may include mutual membership of social groups, tutoring, and/or family connections.

Existing or new personal relationships at work/school between colleagues should be declared to the Headteacher where there is a potential for this to impact upon the work of either (for example: a risk of allegations of bias or conflict of interest). The Headteacher will treat declarations in confidence.

Governors should not assume that the school are aware of any such connections and should use Appendix 2 and/or 3 to make a declaration.

* 1. Relationships with children

Relationships with children must be professional at all times. Physical relationships with children are not permitted and may lead to a criminal conviction.

Encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which may lead to a sexual relationship, or any other inappropriate relationship will be viewed as a grave breach of trust.

Contact with children must be via school-authorised mechanisms and solely for educational purposes. At no time should a personal telephone number, text, email addresses or communication routes via personal accounts on social media platforms be used to communicate with children.

If contacted by a child via an inappropriate route, governors should report the contact to the Headteacher immediately.

Behaviour giving rise to concern should also be reported which includes children seeking affection, being sexually provocative or exhibiting overly familiar behaviour.

1. Child Development

Governors must comply with all school policies and procedures that support the wellbeing and development of children.

Governors must co-operate and collaborate with colleagues and with external agencies where necessary to support the development of children.

Governors must follow reasonable instructions that support the development of children including adaptations that are in place for children with additional needs.

1. Honesty and Integrity

Governors must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity in their work. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities.

All governors must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be found guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they:

* offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone
* if they request, agree or accept, or receive a bribe from another person

If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the Whistleblowing procedure which may be found on GovernorHub.

Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school exceeding the value of £40 must be declared to the Headteacher – see the gifts and entertainment policy on GovernorHub.

Personal gifts from individual members of the governing body to an individual children are inappropriate and could be misinterpreted and may lead to suspension or removal.

Governors must not act on behalf of the school unless they have the authority to do so.

Professional references from the school, in any capacity, will be provided by the relevant person with delegated authority.

1. Conduct outside of School

Governors must not engage in conduct outside school which could seriously damage the reputation of the school or the governor’s own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, any conduct or behaviour that indicates a governor may not be suitable to work with children including such behaviour outside of school which may or may not involve children is likely to be regarded as unacceptable.

For example, should a governor be involved in domestic violence at home and no children were involved, the school will need to consider what triggered these actions and question whether a child in the school could trigger the same reaction, therefore be put at risk.

In addition, criminal offences that involve violence or possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable where it brings into question a governors suitability or ability to do their role in an educational setting.

Governors may undertake work outside the school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school.

* governors must disclose any work outside the school or outside business interests where there is a potential conflict of interests with their role at the school (Pecuniary interests)
* if any allegation of wrongdoing occurs in a governor’s work outside the school (whether or not they deny this) which may have a bearing on their role, they must disclose this immediately to the Chair of Governors

Forming inappropriate relationships or friendships with children or young people who are children under the age of 18 at another school/college will be viewed as inappropriate and impact upon the school’s ability to trust the governor to maintain professional boundaries with children at the school.

Any school-related social event is considered to be an extension of the school and as such the standards of behaviour expected at these events is in line with this policy.

1. Technology and Social Media

Governors must exercise caution at all times both inside and outside of school when using technology. Governors should be aware of the risks to themselves and others when using school equipment and personal devices. Governors should ensure that they adopt suitably high security settings on any personal profiles they may have. If it can be determined from an online/social media account that the governor is on the Governing Body at Bernards Heath Infant and Nursery School, the governor member must state *‘these views are my own and not that of the school’* on their profile.

When referring to social media, this includes but is not limited to: Twitter/X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok and message boards. It also includes any website where you can contribute or edit content and instant messaging services i.e. WhatsApp, Snapchat etc.

The use of personal devices must not be in the presence of children. Personal use must not interfere with governor responsibilities or productivity and must comply with this policy.

This policy also applies to any other existing or new social media platform not mentioned, whether internal or external or used on a personal or work device.

Social media use is permitted as long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with the school or the governor’s role or responsibilities. **Inappropriate** use includes, but is not limited to:

* Any content/conduct that is not in line with ‘Kind’

sharing sensitive or personal information about the school or employees (this is covered under GDPR i.e., absence information or phone numbers)

speculating or ‘gossiping’ about colleagues/children or their families

* Any content that is not in line with ‘Respectful’

swearing (both verbal and gestured), any content including explicit lyrics

disparaging the school, its employees or any third party

posting or sharing information that could jeopardise the school’s confidentiality, particularly regarding sensitive school-related topics, such as the school’s performance, internal disputes involving children, families or employees

making or endorsing harmful or derogatory comments e.g. ‘liking’ derogatory posts/comments

endorsing, liking, sharing content that could be offensive, speculative or may cause reputational damage to the school. This includes adding or commenting on speculation

* Any content/conduct that is not in line with ‘Safe’

content that could be viewed as malicious, abusive, offensive, obscene, threatening, intimidating or contain nudity or images of a sexual nature

any threatening behaviour that may cause harm to others or the interests or reputation of the school

discrimination (e.g., racism, homophobia)

bullying and harassment

making false or misleading claims/ statements

impersonating colleagues or third parties

using your school email address for a personal social media account

creating social media accounts representing the school without prior authorisation

expressing opinions on behalf of the school or using the school’s logo or other trademarks without express authorisation

sharing login details or allowing others to post on your behalf

Governors should **exercise caution** in their use of all social media use. This includes creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo’s, videos, audios or messages. This also includes speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators’ content and any music used.

This may also include the use of dating websites where governors could encounter children either with their own profile or acting covertly.

Contact with children/families should only be made via the use of school email accounts when appropriate and strictly for educational reasons.

Photographs or video footage of children should only be taken using school equipment, for purposes authorised by the school. Any such use should always be transparent and only occur where parental consent has been given. The resultant files from such recording or taking of photographs must be stored in accordance with the school’s procedures on school equipment.

1. Openness and Transparency

To ensure our board is transparent and open to the community we serve, certain information will be made publicly available.

* The following information will be published on the school’s website to ensure transparency:
	+ The structure and remit of the board and any committees, and the full name of the chair of each one
	+ For each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
		- Their full name
		- Their date of appointment
		- Their term of office
		- The date when they stepped down (where applicable)
		- The body which appointed them
		- Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
		- Their attendance record at board and committee meetings over the last academic year
* Relevant interests include:
	+ A business interest in a company that could gain from your position on the governing board
	+ Governance roles in other educational institutions
	+ Relationships with other governors or members of school staff
* Information relating to governors will be published on “Get information about schools” (GIAS)
* Approved board and committee minutes, and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available, upon request, to any interested person
1. Confidentiality

Where governors have access to confidential information about children or their families, governors must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the child and only when necessary.

All governors may at some point witness actions or events which need to remain confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child (or by a member of staff), once reported through the appropriate school procedure, it must not be discussed outside the school, including with other governors, staff, children, parents or carers, or in the school except with the appropriate member of staff to deal with the matter.

Governors have an obligation to share with a DSL/DDSL any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a child. Governors must not promise a child that they will not act on information that they are told by the child.

Governors are not allowed to make any comment to the media about the school, its performance, governance, children or parents without written approval. Any media queries should be directed to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

1. Dress and Appearance

When in school in a professional capacity during the school day, all governors must dress in a manner that is appropriate to their role and promotes a professional image.

Governors should dress in a manner that is absent from political or other contentious slogans. If clothing has wording or pictures on it, this should not be offensive. Footwear should not pose a health and safety risk.

Where governors are transitioning to live in the gender with which they identify, the school will apply and adapt this code sensitively and flexibly.

The school understands that there may be circumstances that make it difficult for some governors to follow a code (for example, if they have a disability or is experiencing certain menopausal symptoms). If this is the case, the school will discuss with the governor how we can support them and make reasonable adjustments where possible.

The school has the final say on whether clothing and appearance is appropriate.

1. Compliance

All governors must complete the form in Appendix 1 to confirm they have read, understood and agreed to comply with the code of conduct. This form should then be signed and dated.

1. Appendix 1- Confirmation of compliance

I hereby confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the school’s code of conduct.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Hannah Rimmer – no later than 22nd September 2024

1. **Appendix 2** - Relationships with children outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby governors of the school are known to children outside of work.

Governors must declare any relationship outside of the school that they may have with a child/children.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Governor Name | Child Name | Relationship  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct relating to contact out of the school with children in line with this policy.

If I am tutoring a child outside of the School, I am aware that the following must be adhered to:

* I do not, at any point, teach the child in question as part of my daily timetable - this is a stipulation of such tutoring
* I emphasise to parents that this is done completely independently of the school
* no monies come through the school at any point, either informally (e.g., via the child) or formally
* no private tutoring has/will take place on the school premises.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Hannah Rimmer – no later than 22nd September 2024

1. **Appendix 3** - Relationships outside of work declaration

It is recognised that there may be circumstances whereby governors of the school are known to others connected with the school outside of work.

Governors must declare any relationship outside of the school that they may have with others that could create a conflict of interest.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Governor Name | 3rd party name | Relationship  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

I can confirm that I am fully aware of the code of conduct and relationships at work/school policy, and I am not in breach of these.

I confirm that if these circumstances change at any time, I will complete a new form to ensure the school are aware of any relationships.

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Once completed, signed and dated, please return this form to Hannah Rimmer – no later than 22nd September 2024.