

# BECOMING A SHELDON SCHOOL PARENT GOVERNOR

## What do School Governors do?

School governors are volunteers who help to run the school. Governors do not run the school day to day but are involved in decisions about all aspects of managing the school – such as running buildings and budgets, supporting staff and setting standards of school discipline. Governors also help to make decisions about the school's long-term goals. They support Headteachers, but also ask questions and make sure the Headteacher is taking the school in the right direction.

It's important to note that Parent Governors have the same role as all other types of governor. They bring a parental perspective to the strategic decisions the governing body makes, but don't speak on behalf of the parent body.

## What does the role involve?

Governors serve for a four-year term. Elected Parent Governors may continue to serve out their term of office if their child leaves the school.

Being a Governor does take up time. There are six Governing Body meetings a year, and Governors usually serve on a committee, which meets up to six times a year. You will need to set aside time to be able to be an effective governor: time to prepare for meetings, for visiting the school and undertaking training. It is estimated that Governors work for approximately 8 hours per month. The Department for Education has issued a Competency Framework for Governors setting out the skills, knowledge and behaviours that academy governing boards need to be effective.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

As Sheldon is an Academy its governors are also Directors of the company that is Sheldon School. We comply with the Academies Trust Handbook <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook> and Charities Commission guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>

If you would like to find out more about being a governor further information is available at Governors for Schools <https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/volunteers/>. If you would like to speak to one of our current governors, or have any other queries, please get in touch with the Clerk to the Governors at [pkearsey-gutkowska@sheldonschool.co.uk](mailto:pkearsey-gutkowska@sheldonschool.co.uk)

## Who can be a Parent Governor?

Anyone who has parental responsibility and is over the age of 18 is eligible to stand for election, including parents who work at the school provided that they work for less than 500 hours per year when they are elected.

'Parent' is defined as including 'any individual who has or has had parental responsibility for, or cares or has cared for, a child or young person under the age of 18'. It includes a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child. This must be someone involved in the full-time care of the child on a settled basis.

Governors agree to adhere to the Code of Practice and to the Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life. There are some circumstances that disqualify an individual from serving as a school governor. These are in the annexes to this document.

## How to nominate yourself

When there is a vacancy please complete the nomination form on the school website. You are asked to write a brief candidate statement (200 words maximum) to support your nomination. The statement should include evidence of the extent to which you possess the skills and experience the governing body is seeking, your commitment to undertake training and development to acquire or develop the skills to be an effective governor and how you plan to contribute to the future work of the governing body to ensure good outcomes for every child at Sheldon. If the number of nominations is the same as or less than the number of vacancies then candidates are elected unopposed and there is no need for a ballot. If there are more nominations than vacancies a ballot will take place, and the candidate statements will be circulated with the ballot papers.

## Sheldon School

# Code of Practice for School Governors

This code sets out the expectations of, and commitment required, from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

## The purpose of the governing body

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school, which provides them with a good education and supports their wellbeing. Central to our decision-making are the students and their education.

## The governing body:

- Sets the strategic direction of the school in conjunction with the Headteacher and SMT. Being mindful of the Sheldon Charters and Constitution, it is responsible for:
  - Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
  - Setting appropriate targets
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
  - Progress towards relevant targets
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - The budget and the staffing structure
- Ensures accountability by:
  - Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
  - Holding the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school
  - Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
  - Making available information to the community
  - Conducting appropriate self-evaluation
- Appoints and performance manages the Headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day-to-day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum).

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance using the agreed processes

## The role of a governor

The governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- No governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body, unless within their own TOR they have specific delegated powers
- All governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed through different routes (in accordance with the Sheldon Constitution), the overriding concern of all governors is the welfare of the school as a whole

## **Code of Conduct**

### **General**

- I understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Headteacher as set out above
- I am aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix
- I accept that I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given me delegated authority to do so, and therefore I will only speak on behalf of the governing body when I have been specifically authorised to do so
- I have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as I have responsibility for staff, I will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- I will encourage open government and will act appropriately
- I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that I will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting
- I will consider carefully how my decisions may affect the community and other schools
- I will always be mindful of my responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. My actions within the school and the local community will reflect this (including on social media)
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school I will follow the procedures established by the governing body

### **Commitment**

- I acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy
- I will involve myself actively in the work of the governing body, and accept my fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups
- If acting as a director, I will not go beyond my duties or act outside of the powers of authority conveyed to me, and acknowledge that were I to do so I could be held liable to the school and/or third parties
- If acting as a member of the governing body, I accept that I may be held responsible up to the limit in the articles of association, were the school/trust to go bankrupt
- I will make every effort to attend all meetings and where I cannot attend explain in advance why I am unable to do so. I understand meeting attendance is reported on the school's website
- I will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in school activities
- My visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher. Please see the guidance on school visits for clarity on this point
- I will consider seriously my individual and our collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- In my role as a critical friend, I am committed to actively supporting questioning and where necessary challenging the Headteacher

- I accept that in the interests of open governance, my full name, 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
- I accept that in the interests of transparency information relating to governors (trustees) will be collected and logged on to the DfE's national database of governors

### **Relationships**

- I will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted
- I will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all my communications with other governors
- I will support the chair in his/her role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- I am prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and I will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved
- I recognise that the roles of governor, staff member and volunteers in school are different. Where I am also a staff member and/or volunteer in school I will maintain the separation of my roles
- I will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community

### **Confidentiality**

- I will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school
- I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting
- I will not reveal the details of any governing body vote
- I will ensure any confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately
- I understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after I have left office

### **Conflicts of interest**

- I will record any pecuniary or other business interest that I have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests. I understand business interests are reported on the school's website
- I will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time
- I 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 practice**

- If I believe this code has been breached, I will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body should seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes constructively
- Should it be the chair that I believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate
- I understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstances removal from the governing body
- In taking the decision to suspend we will follow a process as set out in Annex A

**The Governing Body of Sheldon School adopted this code of practice on 11 July 2018.** Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year.

**Undertaking:**

As a member of the governing body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the governing body, the Headteacher or staff.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date: .....

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## **Appendix: 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.

## **Annex A**

### **Process for governor suspension**

Subject to the following paragraphs the governing body may by resolution suspend a governor for all or any meetings of the governing body, or of a committee, for a fixed period of up to 6 months on one or more of the following grounds—

- (a) that the governor, being a person paid to work at the school, is the subject of disciplinary proceedings in relation to his employment;
- (b) that the governor is the subject of proceedings in any court or tribunal, the outcome of which may be that s/he is disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor under the articles of association;
- (c) that the governor is in breach of any of the provisions of this code of practice which the governing body believes has, or could, bring the office of school governor into disrepute;
- (d) that the governor has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the school and has brought or is likely to bring the school or the governing body or his office into disrepute; or
- (e) that the governor is in breach of his duty of confidentiality to the school or to any member of staff or to any pupil at the school.

A resolution to suspend a governor from office shall not have effect unless the matter is specified as an item of business on the agenda for the meeting of which notice has been given in accordance with the articles of association.

Before a vote is taken on a resolution to suspend a governor, the governor proposing the resolution shall at the meeting state his/her reasons for doing so. The governor who is the subject of the resolution shall then be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting.

Nothing in this regulation shall be read as affecting the right of a governor who has been suspended to receive notices of, and agendas and reports or other papers, for meetings of the governing body during the period of his suspension.



## SCHOOL GOVERNORS: QUALIFICATIONS AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his or her election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A governor cannot hold more than one governor post **at the same school at the same time**. All the grounds for disqualification below apply also to associate members – except that **associate members can be registered pupils at the school and can be under 18**.

### Grounds that arise because of particular failings or actions on the part of the governor

A person is disqualified from being a governor of a particular school if they have failed to attend the meetings of the governing board of that school for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the governing board. This does not apply to headteachers appointed by virtue of their office.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if, in summary, that person:

- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; an interim bankruptcy restrictions order; debt relief restrictions order; an interim debt relief restrictions order; or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; a disqualification order under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order)
- has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of

a fine) in the five years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor or since becoming a governor

- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years ending with the date immediately preceding appointment/election or since appointment or election as a governor
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure And Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.
- has been removed as an elected governor from the governing board during their term of office; they are disqualified from serving or continuing to serve as a school governor for five years from the date of their removal – not just at the school they have been removed from, but any school\*.

\* From 1st May 2017 any person who was elected as a parent or staff governor and was removed during their term of office will be disqualified from becoming or continuing to serve as a governor for five years from the date of their removal.

**Anyone proposed or serving as a governor who is disqualified for one of these reasons must notify the clerk to the governing board.**

**I confirm that I have read the qualification and disqualification rules above and that I am eligible to be a school governor.**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

# Privacy Notice for Governance

We, Sheldon School, are a data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act

**The categories of governor (trustee) and member information that we collect, process, hold and share include:**

- personal information (such as name, address, email address and telephone number)
- special categories of data including characteristics information such as gender, age, ethnic group, nationality
- qualifications, skills, previous and current employment

## **Why we collect and use this information**

We use your data to:

- enable the development of a comprehensive picture of governance and how it is deployed
- enable appropriate checks to be completed
- enable individuals to be kept informed of governance training and relevant information
- to be able to distribute agendas, minutes and general information

## **The lawful basis on which we process this information**

We process this information under the following legal bases:

Consent: the individual has given clear consent for you to process their personal data for a specific purpose

Legal obligation: the processing is necessary for you to comply with the law

Public Task: the processing is necessary for you to perform a task in the public interest or for your official functions and the task or function has a clear basis in law. (Education Act 1944).

## **Collecting this information**

Whilst the majority of information you provide to us is mandatory, some of it is provided to us on a voluntary basis. In order to comply with data protection legislation, we will inform you whether you are required to provide certain information to us or if you have a choice in this.

## **Storing this information**

We hold governor data for the length of time that the individual serves plus 6 years. The school website must include certain information on governors that have served in the last 12 months (e.g. name, category of governor, term of office, appointed by)

We routinely share this information with:

- our Clerk to Governors
- School office
- School ICT department
- our local authority – Governor Support
- the Department for Education (DfE)
- National Governance Association
- Other governors on the same Governing Board
- Disclosure and Barring Service

## **Why we share governor information**

We do not share information about governors with anyone without consent unless the law and our policies allow us to do so.

### **Clerk to the Governors**

To support effective governance

### **School Office and ICT Department**

In case of emergency or an Ofsted inspection it is necessary for the school office to hold details of any individuals involved in the governance of the school, and for ICT to maintain school email addresses and the governance area of the website.

### **Local authority**

We are required to share information about our governance members with our local authority (LA) due to subscribing to the Governor Support Service.

### **Department for Education (DfE)**

We share personal data with the Department for Education (DfE) on a statutory basis.

### **National Governance Association (NGA)**

In order to access the NGA website and receive weekly email updates it is necessary for the NGA to have email names and email addresses. Home addresses for those governors receiving the hard copy of the NGA magazine will also be supplied.

### **Other governors on the same Governing Board**

For ease of communication, and if appropriate, contact details may be shared with other governors on the same board.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service**

Governors are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. Further details on DBS checks in schools are within the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

## **Requesting access to your personal data**

Under data protection legislation, you have the right to request access to information about you that we hold. To make a request for your personal information, please contact:

i-west  
Bath and North East Somerset Council  
Guildhall  
High Street  
Bath  
BA1 5AW  
E-mail: [i-west@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:i-west@bathnes.gov.uk)

You also have the right to:

- object to processing of personal data that is likely to cause, or is causing, damage or distress
- prevent processing for the purpose of direct marketing
- object to decisions being taken by automated means
- in certain circumstances, have inaccurate personal data rectified, blocked, erased or destroyed; and
- claim compensation for damages caused by a breach of the Data Protection regulations

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, we ask that you raise your concern with Julia Finch, School Business Manager, Sheldon School, Hardenhuish Lane, Chippenham, SN14 6HJ in the first instance. Email [jdfinch@sheldonschool.co.uk](mailto:jdfinch@sheldonschool.co.uk). Alternatively, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>