

Viking Academy Trust



Governance Code of Conduct Policy

The VIKING ACADEMY TRUST 'Governance Code of Conduct Policy' has been written after consultation with governors and follows the NGA's (National Governors' Association) Code.

Approved by the Trust: Term 4 2017

Reviewed biennial: Term 1

Last review date: N/A

Signed:

Chair of Trust

Governors Code of Conduct

The Viking Academy Trust

Schools in the Viking Academy Trust (VAT)

These are:

Chilton Primary School
Ramsgate Free School
Upton Junior School

This 'Code of Conduct' is for all members of Governance at the Viking Academy Trust; be they Members, Trustees or Local Governors.

Code of Conduct for Viking Academy Trust Governance

"We cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together."

This Code of Conduct sets out the commitment and responsibilities for behaviours and actions, required from school governors. The Code is based on the NGA's (National Governors' Association) Code.

Terms: For the purpose of this policy, 'Governing Body' refers to Viking Governance in all its membership groups: Members, Trustees and Local Governors.

Governing Body, General:

In order for the governing body to achieve the best possible outcomes for all the children and to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, the governing body will operate according to the following principles:

- Set the strategic direction of the school by determining the character, aims, objectives, ethos and values of the school
- Alongside the head teacher, develop the policy framework to achieve the aims and objectives
- Set statutory targets and help the school to provide the best education for each of its pupils and to enable them to achieve the highest standards of achievement
- Through relevant policies and procedures ensure that the school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff
- Agree strategies for school improvement, including approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure

- Acknowledge that the day to day running of the school and the implementation of plans and policies of the governing body, is the responsibility of the head teacher and senior leadership team
- Act as a critical friend to the head teacher and school. This means supporting and challenging, it means monitoring, reviewing and evaluating and offering support, constructive advice and a sounding board
- Ensure accountability to all stakeholders - pupils, parents, community, local authority, diocese and so on. This accountability relates to safeguarding, standards, school improvement, the budget and making appropriate information available to the stakeholders
- Regularly monitor and review the performance and activities of the governing body

The Role of the Governor

The office of governor involves a commitment of time and energy to the role. The individual governor acknowledges that:

- The governing body is a corporate body, therefore no governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the full governing body
- As part of that corporate body, the responsibility for all decision making is carried equally amongst all governors
- Governors accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body and therefore do not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting
- He/she has an awareness of and accepts the 'Nolan' principles: The Seven Principles of Standards in Public Life (see Appendix 1)
- Governors may be appointed by different bodies (parents, staff, local authority community, foundation) but the ultimate aim and concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole
- All governors must declare openly and immediately, any conflict of interest arising from a matter before the governing body or from any aspect of governorship

All Governors - Commitment

Acknowledging the significant time and energy commitment involved all governors will:

- Make every effort to attend meetings and where this is not possible explain in full and in advance
- Accept a fair share of the responsibility of the workings of the governing body and its committees
- Take or seek opportunities to enhance his/her effectiveness as a governor through participation in training, development programmes and increasing his/her knowledge of the school
- As a result of self-review and areas for development identified, organise training for the governing body as a whole
- Ensure that any visit to school will be arranged in advance with staff and conducted according to the Governor School Visits Policy

Relationships

Governing bodies can succeed or fail on the strength of relationships. The principle working relationships are with each other and the head teacher, but accountability to stakeholders ensures that there are other relationships which need to be cared for.

Essentially the governing body:

- Must strive to work as a team, promoting constructive working relationships
- Will encourage the expression of views openly and an environment where every governor feels confident to participate in discussions and feels listened to
- Ensure that the chair of governors facilitates good discussions and challenges any governor who becomes aggressive or tries to dominate
- Discuss and review succession planning within the governing body to promote and preserve good relationships within the framework of the governing body
- Will support and challenge in equal proportions, the head teacher and senior leadership team in a courteous manner
- Will respect and acknowledge time, effort and skills from all members of the governing body and staff at the school
- Will accept that differences of opinion may arise in discussions, but when a majority decision is made this should then be accepted by all governors
- Follow good practice and procedures in communications, to actively develop effective relationships with the staff, the parents, the community, the local authority and other relevant agencies

Confidentiality

There are times during governing body meetings where discussions or information given, is confidential. These instances may or may not happen frequently and usually the chair of governors or head teacher will remind governors of the need for confidentiality. This is an important area of governance where governors need to:

- Observe confidentiality when matters are deemed so, or when matters concern specific members of staff or pupils
- Exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting - and in particular when using social networking sites (see below)
- Regard all discussions made when reaching decisions, as confidential
- Never reveal the details of any governing body vote

Social Networking Sites

We will use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal or professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

'Golden Rules' for Viking Academy Trust Members of Governance: A Summary of the Code of Conduct

Our Golden Rules are:

- Know 'Governing Body' roles and responsibilities (Governance Handbook, Scheme of Delegation & Terms of Reference set these out)
- Support the Viking Academy Trust's Mission, Vision & Values
- Ensure the Trust maintains high standards by planning for each of the Trust's school's future and setting targets for areas of school improvement
- Keep up to date with Trust, school, local and national priorities
- Read the agenda and supporting papers before each meeting
- Arrive at the meeting in good time
- Offer apologies in advance if you cannot attend a meeting
- Act honestly without ulterior or personal motive
- Be courteous and listen to others opinions. If you disagree, do so in a respectable way
- Be a critical friend to the Trust Leadership team and Viking schools, offering support and advice
- Help each of the Viking schools respond to the needs of parents and the community they serve
- Work with the Trust /Viking school on planning, developing policies and keeping the Trust / school under review
- Be open and keen to develop Governor training opportunities which link with the Trust /school Plan
- If there is an issue you are keen to explore, check it out with the Board of Trustees Chair and/or Chair of Local Advisory Body before the meeting
- Respect confidentiality in meetings, especially when talking about individual members of staff or pupils

Implementation of the Code of Conduct

- It is essential that all governors within the Viking Academy Trust are aware of and understand each section of the Code of Conduct.
- New members of Viking Academy Trust governance should be made aware of the Code as part of their Induction, sign two copies - one to retain, the other to be given to the Clerk of the Trust.
- It is essential that Viking Academy Trust Governance accept and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct. This agreement must be recorded, signed by the Chair of Trust Board at the start of each new academic year as well as by the Chair of each Viking school LAB.
- If any member of Viking governor breaches the 'Code' then the governing body will discuss the breach and take action if necessary. (Action might be a warning, or possibly a suspension)

Review of the Code of Conduct

- This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every two years at the first FGB meeting of that year.

Appendix 1: The Nolan Principles: The Seven principles of Standards in Public Life

1. INTRODUCTION

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (Nolan Committee) has set out seven principles of public life which it believes should apply to all in public service. The following are the seven principles of conduct that underpin the work of public authorities. The Board is asked to adopt these principles as the basis for working practices across the organisation. Subject to board approval it is intended that these principles be cascaded to staff asking them to recognise the importance of the principles and to uphold them at all times.

2. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

The seven principles comply with governance requirements contained within the DfE Governance best practice

3. SEVEN NOLAN PRINCIPLES

The following are the Seven Nolan Principles:

3.1 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 benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 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.

3.7 Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

4. **CONCLUSION** These statements have the support of the Trust Board and VAT staff and members of VAT governance are asked to recognise the importance of these principles and uphold them at all times.