

Hermitage Primary – GOVERNORS CODE OF CONDUCT

The code is based on the DfE Governance Handbook. It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our articles of association, standing orders and any scheme of delegation).

This Code of Conduct will be signed annually by each Trustee and Governor. Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, Trustees / Governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of Hermitage, the school and our pupils.

The 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

All Trustees and Governors will follow these principles 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 interests

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

Roles and Responsibilities

- I understand the eligibility criteria for my role as Trustee or Governor and will immediately notify the Chair and Clerk if I have become or am likely to become ineligible.
- I understand the Hermitage governance structures, including the relationships between school and trust governance and the relationships with senior leaders.
- I understand my role as Trustee and / or Governor and agree to fulfil Hermitage's expectations for my role as set out in the relevant Role Description.
- I will act and make decisions in the best interests of pupils served by Hermitage and Hermitage / the school as a whole, in accordance with legislation and Hermitage's governance framework.
- I agree that I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Board of Trustees or LGB (where so empowered) has formally delegated authority for me to do so.
- I agree that I will only speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees or LGB when I have been specifically authorised to do so.
- I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Board or LGB that I am a member of. I will not speak against decisions, irrespective of my views, outside of the Board of Trustees / LGB meeting.

- I will be accountable for any delegated decisions that I am responsible for.
- I will act in accordance with Hermitage policies and procedures.
- If an elected parent governor I will:
 - Understand the difference between my role as a parent and as a governor;
 - Contribute to Governor discussions with feedback from experience as a parent, but not detailed operational or individual child issues which should be addressed via operational processes;
 - Not act or make decisions as a parent representative but in the best interests of the school and all of its pupils; and
 - Use established school processes for queries or comments relating to my child, and not bypass those processes directly to senior leaders or the Headteacher.

Commitment

- I agree that successfully fulfilling the Role Description for a Trustee or Governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- I will involve myself actively in the work of the Board of Trustees or LGB of which I am a member and accept my fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- I will make all efforts to attend all meetings and where I cannot attend, I will offer apologies in advance to the Chair and Clerk.
- I will prepare effectively ahead of meetings to ensure I make informed contributions.
- I will get to know the school(s) well, including visits undertaken as part of my role.
- I will actively participate in Hermitage’s governance and self-evaluation processes.
- I will seek and attend training and development to improve my skills, knowledge, and effectiveness as a Trustee / Governor

Working with Others

- I will develop constructive working relationships with my fellow Trustees and Governors, with Hermitage staff, with our school community, and our partners (such as the local authority).
- I will express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in all communications with other Trustees and Governors, the clerk, and Hermitage staff.
- I will support the chair in their role, including ensuring appropriate conduct by all Trustees and Governors at all times.
- I will respect the role of senior leaders and avoid routine involvement in operational issues.
- I will speak up against decisions or actions that could place pupils at risk or that would undermine public confidence in Hermitage’s governance, including where appropriate raising issues with the relevant statutory body.

Confidentiality

- I recognise that as part of my role I may be privy to confidential information, including about named individuals.
- I will observe complete confidentiality – at all times, inside and outside Hermitage – when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils. Specifically, I will never disclose confidential information without the relevant authority, use it to humiliate,

embarrass or blackmail someone, or use it for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.

- I recognise that my commitment to confidentiality does not overrule my duty to report child protection concerns.
- I will not reveal the details of any Trustee or Governor vote, or details of discussions at Trustee or Governor meetings, unless this has been agreed by my colleagues.
- I will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- I agree that these requirements relating to confidentiality continue to apply after I have ceased to be a Trustee or Governor.

Conflicts of Interest

- I will declare and keep up to date the written record of my pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people I am connected with) in accordance with Hermitage policy, and I accept that this information will be published in accordance with DfE requirements.
- I accept that, if a potential conflict of interest is identified, that it will be managed in accordance with Hermitage policy and I will comply with the approach agreed by my colleagues.
- I will immediately declare and record in writing to the Clerk any gifts received as part of or due to, or that could reasonably be perceived as being part of or due to, my role as Trustee or Governor.

Publishing Information

- I agree that Hermitage will publish online my name, date of appointment, terms of office, Hermitage role(s), attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, and any other information Hermitage is required to publish, as well as sharing that information with the Secretary of State or their agents as required who may also publish it. If I am a Trustee, I agree that personal information will be shared with Companies House.
- I accept that approved minutes and agendas and papers will be made available in accordance with legislation or Hermitage policy.

Data Protection

- I will follow Hermitage's information security and data protection processes.
- I will inform the CEO (Trustees) or Headteacher (Governors) immediately if I believe there has been a personal data breach.

Social Media

- When communicating in my private capacity (including on social media) I will uphold the reputation of Hermitage and maintain a professional presence at all times.
- I will report any incidents of harassment that I experience, or that I witness towards other Trustees, Governors, or staff, to the Chair and / or CEO/Headteacher as appropriate.
- I will not accept requests to friend / connect with pupils.
- I will not make negative comments or post opinions online about any member of the Hermitage community, including Members, Trustees, Governors, employees, parents, and pupils.

- I will not post anything (including comments, images, or language) that would bring Hermitage or a school into disrepute.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If I believe this code has been breached – by me or by a colleague – I will contact my Chair of Trustees or Governors and they will investigate. If my concern relates to a Chair of Governors, I will contact the Chair of Trustees. If my concern relates to the Chair of Trustees, I will contact one of the Members of Hermitage. The relevant individual will appoint an individual to investigate the concern raised.
- Investigation will include meeting with the individual who is the subject of the concern (two individuals would hold the meeting), and may involve making recommendations regarding the individual (such as support, mentoring or training) and / or about governance more generally.
- For serious and / or persistent breaches (based on the facts of the case), an investigation may recommend removal of Trustee(s) or Governor(s). Any such removal would be done in accordance with the Articles of Association (Trustees) or Hermitage Governance Framework (Governors).
- Serious breaches may include (but are not limited to) serious misconduct, serious incompetence, or conduct aimed at undermining the reputation or operations of Hermitage or any of its schools.

Declaration

I declare that I have read the Hermitage Code of Conduct, understand it, and will uphold all the principles, policies, practices, and procedures therein.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____