Newfield Primary School
Governors' Annual Pack 2026/27

A. Code of Conduct for Governors

As a governing board, we will be focused on the following strategic functions:

- Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction across the school.
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and ensuring money is well spent.

As an individual, on the board I agree to:

a) Fulfil my role and responsibilities

- I accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than operational or 'day to day' management.
- I will share and live the ethos and values of our school.
- I agree to adhere to school policies and procedures, as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- I will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
- I will consider how our decisions affect the school and local community.
- I will stand by the decisions that we make, as a collective.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the 'Seven Principles of Public Life', or may place pupils at risk, I will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- I will only speak or act on behalf of the Board if I have the authority to do so.
- I will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints, I will follow the established procedures.
- I will strive to uphold the school's reputation in all private or public communications (including social media).

b) Demonstrate my commitment to the role

- I will involve myself actively in the work of the Board and accept my share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups as required.
- I will make every effort to attend all meetings and, should I be unable to attend, explain in advance why this is the case.
- When meetings are held virtually, I will be visually present (i.e. with a camera enabled) and muted (for better reception) unless speaking.

- I will be prepared for meetings, reading all papers in advance, and make a positive contribution.
- I will observe the protocols of politeness, listening carefully, questioning sensitively and giving my views firmly but respectfully.
- If I wish to raise matters for discussion by the Board, I will make a request to the Chair for the item to be included on the next meeting's agenda. This will be done in advance of the agenda being prepared.
- Apart from very specific instances in which the Chair must act or take decisions on behalf of the Board, I recognise that I have no individual powers and that I may only speak or act on behalf of the Board when specifically authorised to do so.
- I will get to know the school well and engage with opportunities to involve myself in school activities.
- I will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance, observing the school visit protocol.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (e.g. as a parent or carer), I will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- I will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

c) Build and maintain relationships

- I will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
- I will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications with Board members and staff, both inside and outside of meetings.
- I will support the chair in his/her role (leading the Board and ensuring appropriate conduct).
- I will maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all my interactions with pupils, staff, parents/carers, fellow Governors and other members of the school community or third parties. I will treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect and will not engage in or tolerate any form of sexual harassment, inappropriate or unwelcome behaviour, whether in person, online or at school-related events. I recognise that, as a Governor, my position carries authority and responsibility, and I will ensure that my conduct reflects the highest standards expected of someone holding public office.

d) Respect confidentiality

- I agree that the requirements of confidentiality cover all forms of verbal (written and oral) communication, including social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc).
- Governor meetings are not open to the public. Visitors may attend by invitation but will be asked to leave should a confidential item be discussed.
- I will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of Governor meetings and from my visits to school.

- I will observe complete confidentiality in all matters discussed by the Board, especially in relation to matters concerning staff or pupils and also any other matters agreed by the Board.
- I will exercise the highest degree of caution when involved in sensitive issues arising outside the Board where they may have an impact on the work of the Board or the operation of the School.
- I will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- I will ensure all confidential documents are held and disposed of appropriately.
- I will maintain this confidentiality even after I leave office.

e) Data

- I recognise that Governors have a duty to comply with all data protection processes, as set out by the school.
- I acknowledge that Governors have a responsibility to keep data safe and to report any potential data breach, via the Clerk, should they believe a breach has occurred.
- I agree to delete, upon expiry or termination of my term of office, any records in my possession.

f) Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- I will declare any business, personal or other interest in connection with Board business, and agree that these be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
- I will declare any conflict of interest at the start of any meeting.
- I understand that Governors must govern in the interests of the school and not represent or advocate political or other interests.
- I understand that Governors are expected to act in a politically neutral manner and should be aware of their duties regarding impartiality and avoiding bias or unbalanced discussion of political views.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- I accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- I will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group. It is important that prospective Staff Governors understand that their role will not be to represent staff, nor to stand alongside the Headteacher in being held to account by the governing body, but to operate as part of the governing body to provide strategic leadership. Similarly, Parent Governors must understand their role is not to represent parents.
- I accept that, in the interests of open governance, my full name, date of appointment, term of office, role on the governing board, attendance record, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Governor and the body responsible for my appointment, may be published on the school's website.

- I accept that information relating to Board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of Governors ('Get Information About Schools'), some of which will be publicly available.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct

In the event of a breach of this code of conduct, this will be raised with the Chair of Governors and the Chair will initiate an investigation. Governors must be clear that breaches of this Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and any breach of this code of conduct will result in removal. Should it be the Chair that has breached this code, another Governor will initiate the investigation.

B. Refresher on Effective Governance

Governors have the following core strategic functions:

- Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction across the school.
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and ensuring money is well spent.

The key features of effective governance are:

1. **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
2. **Accountability** that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
3. **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
4. **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
5. **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements.
6. **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

Strategic leadership and **Accountability** are the core pillars of the Board's role and purpose.
People and **Structures** are about the way governance is organised.
Compliance and **Evaluation** are about ensuring and improving the quality of governance.

1. Strategic leadership *that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy through*:

- A clear and explicit vision for the future set by the Board, in collaboration with executive leaders, which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart and is communicated to the whole organisation.
- Strong and clear values and ethos which are defined and modelled by the Board, embedded across the organisation and adhered to by all that work in it, or on behalf of it.
- Strategic planning that defines medium to long-term goals, and development and improvement priorities which are understood by all in the organisation;
- Processes to monitor and review progress against agreed strategic goals and to refresh the vision and goals periodically, as necessary, including at key growth stages or if performance of the organisation drops.
- Mechanisms for enabling the Board to listen, understand and respond to the voices of parents/carers, pupils, staff, local communities and employers.
- Determination to initiate and lead strategic change when this is in the best interests of children and the organisation, and to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders.

- Procedures for the Board to set and manage risk appetite and tolerance; ensuring that risks are aligned with strategic priorities and improvement plans, and that appropriate intervention strategies are in place with risk management embedded at every level of governance.

2. Accountability *that drives up educational standards and financial health through*:

- Rigorous analysis of pupil progress, attainment and financial information with comparison against local and national benchmarks over time.
- Clear processes for overseeing and monitoring school improvement and financial health, providing constructive challenge to leaders.
- A transparent system for performance managing leaders, which is understood by all in the organisation, linked to defined strategic priorities.
- Effective oversight of the performance of all employees and the framework for their pay and conditions of service.
- A regular cycle of meetings and appropriate processes to support organisational and financial planning.
- Effective controls for managing within available resources and ensuring regularity, propriety and value for money.

3. People *with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity who*:

- Understand the purpose of governance and the role of non-executive leadership, and have the necessary skills to deliver it well.
- Include an effective Chair and Vice-chair with the ability to provide visionary strategic non-executive leadership.
- Provide sufficient diversity of perspective to enable robust decision making.
- Are recruited through robust and transparent processes against a clearly articulated skillset, set out in a role specification
- Use active succession planning to ensure the Board, and the whole organisation, continues to have the people and leadership it needs to remain effective.
- Employ a professional Clerk to provide expert advice and guidance and to ensure the efficient and compliant operation of the Board.

4. Structures *that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities through*:

- Appropriate Board and committee structures that reflect the scale and structure of the organisation and ensure sufficient and robust oversight of key priorities.
- Clear separation between strategic non-executive oversight and operational executive leadership, which is supported by positive relationships that encourage a professional culture and ethos across the organisation.

- Processes for ensuring appropriate communication between all levels and structures of governance and to pupils/students, parents/carers, staff and communities – particularly to ensure transparency of decision-making.
- Published details of governance arrangements, including the structure and remit of the Board and any committees, which are understood at all levels of governance and leadership and are reviewed regularly.

5. Compliance *with statutory and contractual requirements, through:*

- Awareness of, and adherence to, responsibilities under education and employment legislation and, where applicable, charity and company law and all other legal duties.
- Regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory guidance) to ensure that key safeguarding and safer recruitment duties are undertaken effectively.
- Plans to ensure that other key duties such as inclusion and Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) are undertaken effectively across the organisation and monitoring and oversight of the impact of pupil premium and other targeted funding streams.
- Understanding of, and adherence to, responsibilities under the Equalities Act, promoting equality and diversity throughout the organisation - including in relation to its own operation.

6. Evaluation *to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance through:*

- Regular skills audits, aligned to the organisation's strategic plan, to identify skill and knowledge gaps, which both define recruitment needs and inform a planned cycle of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activity including appropriate induction for those new to governance.
- Processes for regular self-evaluation and review of individuals' contribution to the Board, as well as the Board's overall operation and effectiveness
- Commissioning external reviews of Board effectiveness, particularly at key growth or transition points, to gain an independent expert assessment of strengths and areas for development.
- Documentation which accurately captures evidence of the Board's discussions and decisions, as well as the evaluation of their impact, which complies with legal requirements for document retention.

The DfE has produced a framework made up of 16 competencies underpinned by a foundation of important principles and personal attributes. The competencies are grouped under the headings of the six features of effective governance, which are set out in the Governance Handbook.



Principles and Personal Attributes of Governors

Governors should fulfil their duties in line with the seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles):

- **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.

- **Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.