

# **RATCLIFFE COLLEGE**

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide governors with clear guidelines as to their responsibilities, the appropriate standard of behaviour and best practice in fulfilling their obligations to the charitable organisation they serve as governors.

This document should be read in conjunction with the governor job description and the conflicts of interest policy.

### **General**

1. Governors should act in accordance with the following (Nolan) principles: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
2. Governors must have a good understanding of and be sympathetic to the aims and objects of the School and act in accordance with the governing document at all times.
3. Governors must always act and make decisions in the best interest of the School, its present and future beneficiaries and be aware of sector and object specific issues which may affect the present and future growth of the School, and its relevance to modern society.
4. Governors must be mindful that their personal and professional conduct outside the School must be beyond reproach. When this is not the case and the circumstances are judged by the Chairman of Governors to affect its reputation adversely, he or she should require the governor to withdraw immediately from the Governing Body on a temporary basis. Having considered the circumstances and any subsequent outcome, the Chairman of Governors should then discuss with the Governor whether it is appropriate for him or her to resume their place on the Governing Body.
5. Where professional assistance is required for the governors to be able to make the most appropriate decision affecting the School, that assistance should be sought and considered carefully.
6. Governors must not receive any financial or non-financial benefit which is not explicitly authorised by the governing document. Governors must not exert any influence to garner any preferential treatment for themselves or family members (see the conflict of interest policy).
7. Governors are jointly and severally liable for their decisions. Therefore, decisions should be taken together, if necessary on the basis of a majority vote and communicated to parents, staff, and, if appropriate, students, in a unified manner. It is wrong for a governor who argued against a decision in a meeting to repeat that disagreement outside the meeting.
8. Governors are accountable for their actions, and, as such, decision-making and governance issues should be as transparent as possible and recorded clearly, except when confidentiality is required.

9. Governors should be prepared to spend an appropriate amount of time reading papers and preparing for board meetings. A minimum attendance of 75% of meetings is expected of governors to ensure that best practice in governance is reached and maintained.
10. Governors are expected to attend courses or seminars from time-to-time in order to apprise themselves of current issues and practice in education and governance. Particular importance is placed on the need for a detailed induction programme when taking up their appointment.
11. Should a governor feel that he or she requires further guidance or training in their role, they have a duty to inform the Clerk to the Governors who will assist in obtaining the necessary training or guidance.
12. Any information of a confidential nature must remain so outside the confines of the meeting. Where a governor sits on the Governing Body of another school, great care must be taken to ensure that commercially sensitive information is not shared, and that the requirements of the Competition Law are complied with.
13. The governor's role in school leadership is strategic. Governance and management are largely mutually exclusive. Governors should scrupulously avoid involvement in management detail which would carry a serious risk of confusing lines of responsibility and compromising the position of those with management responsibility, particularly the Head.
14. While governors will wish to, and should, take a close interest in the work of the staff, teaching and support, they should also take great care not to become involved in discussions with staff concerning the running of the School. Similarly, parents will be interested in the role of governors and governors who meet parents, at school or elsewhere, will wish to engage in conversation with them. Management of the School is the responsibility of the Head, not the Governors. Therefore, parental conversations with governors concerning the running of the School are inappropriate. At the first sign of a conversation moving in that direction, the Governor should indicate that those matters are for the Head alone.

**Annex:**

- A. Model Governor Job Description
- B. Model Conflict of Interest Policy