THE FEDERATION OF BROMSTONE PRIMARY AND ST MILDRED'S PRIMARY INFANT SCHOOL

Governor Code of Conduct 2024 2025

Approved and adopted by The Federation of Bromstone Primary and St Mildred's Primary Infant School:

Date: 2nd October 2024

Next review due by: 1st October 2025

Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards 2024-2025

Governing Board Code of Conduct

School Name: The Federation of Bromstone Primary and St Mildred's Primary Infant School

Vision/Ethos Statement:

The vision of Bromstone school is:

'Dream, Believe, Achieve'

This is underpinned by Bromstone's school values of **C**o-operation, **H**onesty, **E**xcellence, **C**ourtesy, **K**indness, **E**njoyment, **R**espect.

The vision of St Mildred's School is:

'Dream Big, Aim High, Make a Difference'

This is underpinned by the St Mildred's values of Honesty, Enjoyment, Achievement, Respect and Teamwork (HEART)

Both sets of values are expected of all members of each school community at all times.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the Maintained Governance Guide, Terms of Reference (ToR's) and relevant law.

Once approved by the Governing Board, this Code of Conduct will apply to all governors at maintained school level and for trust boards for all trustees, local governors, academy committee members.

Failure by any individual governor to sign the Code of Conduct will be counted as a breach of the Code.

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The Governing Board has adopted the following Code of Conduct

Purpose of the Governing Board

The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. The Governing Board is the key strategic decision-making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. High quality effective and ethical governance is key to success in our school and for the future of our pupils. Ensuring the best possible outcomes is at the heart of a Governing Board's strategic role; every child has the right to reach their full potential.

The Maintained Governing Board has the following core strategic functions:

Ensure the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined by:

- setting the vision, values, and objectives for the schools
- agreeing the school improvement strategy as appropriate including its priorities and targets
- being the strategic key decision maker with decisions made in the best interest of pupils and our purpose
- delegating operational matters to executive leaders and governance functions to committees as appropriate
- being connected with, and answerable to, the communities we serve, particularly parents/carers
- meeting statutory duties

Ensure the executive headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school by:

- appointing the executive headteacher and any head of school and deputy headteacher
- performance managing the executive headteacher and heads of school in accordance with the terms of reference (ToR)
- robust holding to account for improving pupil and staff performance by asking the right questions
- workload consideration
- rigorous analysis of data
- understanding the curriculum offer, its intent, implementation, and impact
- monitoring and evaluating progress towards targets
- contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensure proper and effective use of the school's financial resources, in accordance with the Terms of Reference by:

- ensuring financial probity
- ensuring financial compliance
- setting the budget
- monitoring spending against the budget
- ensuring value for money is obtained, with the money being well spent
- ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

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Collectively as a board we agree the following:

- **Organisational purpose -** our board is clear about the purpose of the schools and ensures these are being delivered effectively and sustainably.
- **Leadership -** our schools are headed by an effective governing board that provides strategic leadership in line with the school strategic aims, values and culture including the values and virtues to preserve the religious character of the school and a commitment to fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.
- Our maintained board bases its effectiveness on the six key features of effective governance: **strategic leadership**, **accountability**; **people** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity; structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities; compliance with statutory and contractual requirement; and evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.
- **Integrity -** our board acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which helps achieve the schools purpose. Our board is aware of the importance of the public and stakeholder confidence in our schools and governors undertake their duties, accordingly, abiding by the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education including the Seven Principles of Public Life (see appendix 1) including avoiding placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, governors must declare and resolve openly **any actual or perceived conflict of interest and relationships**, with our board, managing any risk appropriately.
- **Decision making, risk and control -** our board makes sure that its decision-making processes follow our required statutory procedures, which act solely in the interest of pupils, are informed, timely, impartial and fair, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias, and that effective delegation, control and risk assessment, and appropriate management systems are set up and monitored. Our board assesses the risks attached to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare by abiding and role modelling the schools' culture to encourage pupils to respect other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- **Board effectiveness -** our board works as an effective collective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.
- **Diversity -** our board's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and provides sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable robust decision making.
- **Openness and accountability -** our board leads the schools in being transparent and accountable. Our board and school are open in its working, particularly to ensure transparency of decision-making.

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As individuals on the board, we agree the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board, the skillset required to perform our core roles, and any individual delegated functions, and the role of the executive headteacher and heads of school.
- We accept and abide by the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Schools which incorporates The Seven Principles of Public Life (see appendix 1).
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given its delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so, reporting back accordingly to the Governing Board.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Board meeting.
- When making decisions we will act objectively, impartially and fairly. We will use the best evidence, and without discrimination or bias, be objective when exercising judgement and analysis solely for the good of the pupils.
- When communicating formally within our governing role, we will ensure any comments made reflect the school/organisation policy even if they differ from our personal views.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open transparent governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our schools. Our actions within the schools and the wider local community will reflect this.
- We will promote and demonstrate tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and British Values.
- We will demonstrate a professional attitude in all our undertakings as a governor.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the policies and procedures established by the Governing Board, acting without discrimination or bias.
- We will actively support the executive headteacher and heads of school and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and respectfully hold them to account for school performance.
- We understand, accept, and respect the differences between the strategic board role and the staff day to day operational and management roles, avoiding actions that may undermine these arrangements.
- We understand, will adhere to, and respect the differences between the strategic governor role and any other which we may undertake within the school as a parent, professional or volunteer.
- We agree to adhere to the schools rules and the policies and procedures we approve as a board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law, including complying within the required timeframe to apply for an enhanced DBS check and Section 128

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check, and any subsequent checks thereafter as part of the ongoing school safeguarding procedures.

- We agree to abide by the schools e-safety protocols for social media and when communicating in a private capacity will strive to uphold the reputation of the schools. We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal or professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We agree to abide by the requirements of any contracts (such as The Education People, Governor Services Training package or The Clerking Service Specification) procured by the Governing Board.
- We agree to use our governance portal and school email addresses for all governance communication both within and outside the school organisation. We recognise this will protect the schools from any potential breach of data protection.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will **each** involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees, monitoring pairs, monitoring activities, panels or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings, including any held virtually or a hybrid option, and where we cannot attend, send apologies and explain in advance why we are unable to and in accordance with our protocols, where possible will send questions for consideration.
- We will attend meetings being fully prepared, having read all papers in advance, being ready to make a positive contribution and in accordance with our agreed protocols, where possible will send questions in advance
- We will get to know the schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the schools with all visits arranged in advance in accordance with the monitoring visit policy and schedule as established annually by the Governing Board, excepting those governors with statutory governor roles which require a number of visits per year.
- We will demonstrate commitment to our individual and collective needs for induction which must include safeguarding training and will undertake relevant training to develop the knowledge and skills required to effectively perform our core and individual delegated functions and keep them up to date.
- We will ensure collectively that all governors comply with the requirements for statutory training for safeguarding, PREVENT Duty and any others identified in the Governance Guides or Keeping Children Safe in Education, including safeguarding training at local Induction.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Governing Board, attendance records, relevant business, familial, friendship, relationship and pecuniary interests, diversity data (see Maintained / Academy DfE guidance for the publication of diversity data), category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us, will be published on the school websites until 12

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months after our service has ended in line with the DfE 'What Maintained schools / Academies must publish online' requirements.

- We will abide by the board agreed staff code of conduct, regarding behaviours and dress code when visiting the school.
- In the interest of transparency, we will commit to declaring at meetings and updating our pecuniary, familial, friendship, relationship and business interests as soon as possible.
- In following statutory requirements, we will ensure we are registered with the Local Authority (LA) maintained school statutory database and Get Information about Schools database and keep our contact details up to date. (For Kent and Medway maintained schools the LA database is GovernorHub)
- We will abide by UK GDPR, data protection and the LA data retention information documentation

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk/governance professional to the Governing Board and all school staff.
- We will always support the clerk/governance professional in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at and between meetings.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the executive headteacher and heads of school, staff and parents, the Local Authority and other relevant agencies and the wider community.

Social Media

- We will abide by the requirements of the school's social media and Authorised Users Protocols (AUP) policies

Confidentiality

- We will ensure we abide by the protocols of our virtual meeting policy and processes to ensure our attendance enables the confidential conditions required.
- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school.
- We will continue to recognise and honour the commitments made in this Code when visiting the school in a personal capacity (ie, as a parent or carer, volunteer)
- We will always exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Governing Board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential documentation including any held electronically, is securely stored, and disposed of appropriately in accordance with our data protection policy and procedure, the LA document retention schedule for schools, associated to the DfE best practise document, and being mindful of the UK GDPR legislation requirements.

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- We will use school email accounts for all email communication in our governance role, for communications both within and outside of the Governing Board.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any familial, pecuniary, friendship, relationship or other business interest (including those pertaining to people we are related to, connected to or friendly with, and those governing in other schools) in the Register of Business Interests and also declare these at all relevant meetings. If any familial, friendship, pecuniary, business or relationship conflict perceived or real arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time and accept the board's decision on managing the conflict.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school websites.
- We will declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise, such as supporting the school with any operational element.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected or appointed by them to the Governing Board.

We recognise this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this Code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school, its pupils, and their role in holding public office.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If we believe this Code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair for investigation and reporting back to the Governing Board.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this Code, the issue should be raised with the vice chair for investigation.
- In certain circumstances, e.g., tainting, it may be more appropriate for another member of the board or an appointed independent investigator to undertake the investigation, then report back to the Governing Board.
- The Governing Board will only use suspension (maintained schools only) or removal (ensuring statutory guidance, procedures and regulations are followed) as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways. Removal will be used where serious misconduct has taken place.
- We understand in maintained schools, that we are only expected to exercise the power to remove an elected governor (which incorporates a five-year disqualification term), in exceptional circumstances where the actions or behaviour of the elected governor warrants removal rather than suspension.

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Annual Governor Declaration

I declare that I am not disqualified from serving as a school governor (or associate member) in that I do not breach any of the circumstances in which a governor (or associate member) is disqualified from standing for election, being appointed or continuing in office:

Qualifications and disqualifications (regulation 17 and Schedule 4 to the Regulations)

Grounds for disqualification fall into three broad categories:

- general grounds
- grounds that apply to particular categories of governor; and
- grounds that arise because of particular failings or actions on the part of the governor.

All the grounds for disqualification apply also to associate members except that associate members can be registered pupils at the school and can be under 18.

General Grounds
Registered pupils cannot be governors.
A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment.
A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time.

Grounds That Apply to Particular Categories of Governor
A person is disqualified from being a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours (i.e., for more than one-third of the hours of a full-time equivalent) in any consecutive twelve-month period at the time of election or appointment.

A person is disqualified from being a Local Authority governor if they are eligible to be a staff governor at the school. The Local Authority may also have restrictions on potential candidates. Please check the criteria list for the Local Authority governor positions.

A person is disqualified from being a partnership governor if they are:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school
- eligible to be a staff governor at the school
- an elected member of the Local Authority; or
- employed by the Local Authority in connection with its education functions.

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 the headteacher or to foundation governors appointed by virtue of their office.

A foundation, Local Authority, co-opted or partnership governor at the school who is disqualified for failing to attend meetings is only disqualified from being a governor of any category at the school during the twelve-month period starting on the date on which they were disqualified.

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

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- 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
- has been removed from office as an elected governor within the last five years
- 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/governance professional to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

Anyone proposed or serving as a governor who is disqualified for one of these reasons must notify the clerk/governance professional to the Governing Board.

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Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Maintained school Governing Boards **must** apply for an enhanced DBS check and section 128 check for any governor who does not already hold one for the school. This must take place within 21 days of election if a governor is elected or appointment after 1 April 2016.

Academy/Multi Academy Trusts
The trust board/chair **must** make sure the following are carried out on members, trustees and local governors with delegated responsibilities in accordance with the latest version of the Academy Trust Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate
- A section 128 direction check
- Checks to confirm their right to work in the UK
- Any other checks deemed necessary where the individual has lived or worked outside the UK

For trust chairs that are newly appointed as the chair of trustees or have not previously had a suitability check completed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education in relation to this role, they must apply for a suitability check from the ESFA.

I have agreed to an application being made for an enhanced criminal record certificate, section 128 check and any other checks deemed necessary.

I agree to abide by the above Code of Conduct and know of no reason from the above disqualification criteria for not continuing to hold the office of governor.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Failure by any individual governor to sign this Code of Conduct will be counted as a breach of the Code.

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Appendix 1

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Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

SELFLESSNESS | School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.

INTEGRITY | School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.

OBJECTIVITY | School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.

ACCOUNTABILITY | School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

OPENNESS | School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

HONESTY | School and college leaders should be truthful.

LEADERSHIP | School and college leaders 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. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do.

Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

TRUST | leaders are trustworthy and reliable
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.

WISDOM | leaders use experience, knowledge and insight
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

KINDNESS | leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.

JUSTICE | leaders are fair and work for the good of all children
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.

SERVICE | leaders are conscientious and dutiful
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.

COURAGE | leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.

OPTIMISM | leaders are positive and encouraging
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.

FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

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