

Oxford Professional Education Group

Governor Policy

Date of Introduction of Policy September 2021

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Reference number 91

Governor Code of Conduct Policy

The Governing Body Code of Conduct is essential reading and outlines principles and procedures and provides further guidance to assist Governors in their day-to-day work. It is aimed at ensuring that Governors are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them by OXPEG.

Individual Accountability

Failure to observe the standards set out in this code, including failure to declare conflicting interests where applicable, will be regarded as serious and any breach will result in that individual Governor being held to account. In the event that there is a serious breach of this Code by a Governor behaving in a manner that would be inconsistent with OXPEG Governor guidance ethos and values, including failure to declare conflicting interests where applicable, the Governing Body has the right to hold that individual Governor to account.

Purpose

The standards outlined in this document are representative of the standards of performance and behaviour that are expected of OXPEG's governors and are not intended as a complete listing of all OXPEG's rules, regulations, and standards.

Only through the observance of such standards can OXPEG effectively and efficiently serve its external and internal clients. The relationship between OXPEG and its governors is based upon mutual respect, trust, and confidence. This code of conduct sets out some of the standards upon which this relationship is to be based.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all governors of OXPEG. It is the responsibility of all members of OXPEG's governing board to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, all OXPEG's rules, policies, and procedures.

Failure to comply with the standards of performance and behaviour outlined in this document may result in termination of contract.

All Governors will be made aware of this Governors Code of Conduct and will sign to confirm their understanding and acceptance of the standards set out within it.

General

Attendance & Timekeeping

Governors are expected to be punctual. Instances of lateness or non-attendance at meetings should be explained by the governor concerned to Jane Young (Main Governor) who will monitor the situation and take action as appropriate.

Alcohol & Substance Abuse

Governors must not attend governance meetings or conduct any governance work under the influence of any substance, including alcohol, illegal drugs and/or solvents.

Bullying and Harassment

OXPEG recognises that all governors have the right to be treated with consideration, respect and dignity, and is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.

All instances of bullying and/or harassment will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. Examples of bullying / harassing behaviour could include:

- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone;
- exclusion or victimisation;

- unfair treatment;
- deliberately undermining another competent governor by constant criticism.

Under the Equality Act 2010, harassment is unwanted conduct which is related to one of the following:

- age.
- disability.
- gender reassignment.
- marriage and civil partnership.
- pregnancy and maternity.
- race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

and is therefore unlawful.

Conduct Outside of Work

OXPEG does not seek to dictate how governors conduct themselves in their personal lives outside work. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by an OXPEG governor which may jeopardise OXPEG's reputation should be explained by the governor concerned to Jane Young (Main Governor) who will monitor the situation and take action as appropriate.

Confidentiality

All members of OXPEG's governing board have a responsibility to protect and maintain the confidentiality of OXPEG information. The disclosure of confidential information relating to OXPEG and/or its students and customers is prohibited, except as authorised or required by the law or in accordance with a governor's duties under his/her contract or when making a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

If governors are unsure as to whether they should disclose information which they consider to be, or might be, confidential, they should seek guidance from Jane Young (Main Governor). A breach of confidentiality may result in action

being taken against the governor. Any confidential data taken off-site must be securely

stored. Governors should familiarise themselves with OXPEG's data protection policy.

Driving in Pursuit of OXPEG Activity

OXPEG is committed to ensuring that governors are kept as safe as possible whilst undertaking any task on behalf of OXPEG, including driving during governance work in pursuit of OXPEG business.

Suitability to Work with Children and Vulnerable Adults

OXPEG works in line with 'keeping children safe in education July 2015'.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

OXPEG is committed to adhering to the DBS's Code of Practice. Governing roles at OXPEG are assessed in order to decide if a DBS disclosure or check is required and if it is, what level of disclosure is required.

DBS checks are undertaken to ensure that OXPEG upholds its duty of care to protect vulnerable groups who access OXPEG provision. Failure to co-operate with a reasonable request on the part of OXPEG to obtain a DBS check may result in termination of contract.

Police Enquiries of Current Governors

All governors have an obligation to inform OXPEG if he or she are the subject of criminal investigations, charge, caution, warning, or conviction. Failure to do so may result in termination of contract.

However, a governor will not have their contract terminated solely because he or she are the subject of criminal investigations, charge, caution, warning or conviction. In such cases consideration must be given to the effect on the governor's ability or suitability to undertake his/her governance role and/or on the reputation of OXPEG.

In such circumstances, the facts of the matter should be investigated. OXPEG will not usually wait for the outcome of any prosecution before deciding what action, if any, to take.

Allegations Against Governors (Safeguarding)

Any allegations of abuse (to students) against governors must be referred to the Director of Human Resources Rosemary Craig (RC) and the DSL Cari Read (CR).

The matter will then be referred to the local authority designated officer in line with 'Keeping children safe in education July 2015'. Where governors have any safeguarding concerns about another member of OXPEG staff these concerns must be reported immediately to the Director for Human Resources (RC) and DSL (CR) who will refer this to the local authority designated officer as above. If the accused person resigns or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with 'keeping children safe in education July 2015' guidance.

Personal Relationships

Governors

In relation to students under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for anyone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity (including touching of a sexual nature) with a person under the age of 18 who is in their care.

The position of trust definition applies to governors in an educational setting. Such a breach of trust is an arrestable offence, even if the activity and/or relationship is consensual. Anyone successfully convicted under this legislation will be subject to notification requirements and registration under the Sex Offenders Act 1997.

Governors in such a position of trust must not enter personal relationships with any student under the age of 18 and must not encourage behaviour on the part of the student which goes beyond that which could ordinarily be expected from a governor relationship.

Relationships with learners who are vulnerable adults are prohibited.

This type of relationship could be viewed as an abuse of a governor's position of trust and breach standards of professional conduct expected in OXPEG.

These rules will be strictly enforced.

Any member of OXPEG Governing board who enters such relationships may constitute gross misconduct, which could lead to termination of contract and referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

Furthermore, in suspected cases of an abuse of a position of trust, OXPEG may report those concerned to the Police.

In respect of allegations against governors, OXPEG will follow the framework set out in keeping children safe in education July 2015.

Governors must not contact, befriend, or accept friend requests from learners through their own personal social media accounts or personal email addresses. Communication through mobile phone use must be limited to emergencies only and Zoom or Teams calls should be used as an alternative.

If a student is deemed vulnerable, this may affect permission, for befriending/accepting friend requests between student and OXPEG governor on the professional site LinkedIn, being granted unless **the activity can always be supervised by either an additional member of OXPEG or the employer**. In these circumstances you must notify a member of the Safeguarding team who will risk assess, advise on and formalise the situation.

Any governor found to be in breach of the above Social Media rules maybe be liable to termination of contract.

Standards of Dress

Governors are expected to dress in a way which is appropriate to their role and their duties. Casual wear is permitted during office hours, but external meetings (including open evenings and exhibitions) require smart dress.

Equality and Diversity

OXPEG is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for its governors.

All governors have an individual responsibility to uphold and apply in practice OXPEG's Equality and Diversity scheme and to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with that scheme and with relevant legislation.

Discrimination and prejudice will not be tolerated by OXPEG, and such conduct may result in termination of contract.

Bribery Act 2010

OXPEG values its reputation for ethical behaviour and for financial probity and reliability.

It recognises that over and above the commission of any crime, any involvement in bribery will reflect adversely on its image and reputation. Its aim, therefore, is to limit OXPEG's exposure to bribery by setting out a clear anti-bribery policy.

- Encouraging governors to be vigilant and to report any suspicions of bribery, providing them with suitable channels of communication and ensuring sensitive information is treated appropriately.
- Rigorously investigating instances of alleged bribery
- Assisting Police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution
- Taking firm and clear action against any individual (s) involved in bribery.

OXPEG prohibits the offering, the giving, the solicitation, or the acceptance of any bribe, whether cash or other inducement to or from any person or company. This applies wherever they are situated and whether they are a public official or body or private person or company by any individual employee, board member, agent or other person or body acting on OXPEG's behalf. The governors cannot gain any commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for OXPEG in a way which is unethical or in order to gain any personal advantage, pecuniary or otherwise, for the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

Gifts and Hospitality

Governors must not accept any gifts, fees or inducements for any service connected with their provided services (including, for the avoidance of doubt, any such gifts received from students), except for minor gifts, inexpensive marketing materials and cards. Governors should inform the Main Governor Jane Young if they are offered any substantial gifts (over the value of £25) or if they require further clarification.

Health and Safety

OXPEG is committed to promoting and implementing all relevant health and safety legislation and recognises that the highest priority must always be given to safe methods of work.

Governors must familiarise themselves with OXPEG's Health and Safety Policy and must ensure that all health and safety standards are met in accordance with that policy.

Governors must not, under any circumstances, behave in a way which could endanger their own health and safety or the health and safety of others. Any breach of OXPEG's health and safety rules or regulations or its Health and Safety Policy will be viewed extremely seriously by OXPEG and may result in termination of contract.

Damage to Property

Governors caught, causing deliberate damage to OXPEG property, hired plant or third-party property within the confines of OXPEG and/or employer premises may be subject to a termination of contract.

Statements to the Press or Other Media

Statements to the press or other media on any aspects of OXPEG's business and/or activities must not be made without prior reference to the Managing Director Jane Young.

Theft

A governor who is suspected of or caught stealing the property or assets of OXPEG, its employees or clients will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with OXPEG's disciplinary procedure. The Police may be notified.

Use of Information Technology

All governors have an individual responsibility to uphold and apply in practice OXPEG's IT Policies.

All governors must familiarise themselves with OXPEG's email etiquette guidance, Acceptable use of ICT, Information security policy and E Safety policy

Breaches of any IT related policies will be addressed by Main governor Jane Young who will decide on appropriate action.

Conflict of Interest

The Main Governor Jane Young will be responsible for making appropriate alternative arrangements where necessary to avoid any conflicts of interest.

In some cases, it may be necessary to consider removing a governor from a set task if it is perceived that there is a conflict of interest to protect both parties.

Full discussions will take place with the individual governor concerned.

If you perceive that a personal relationship you have with a client, service provider or student may give rise to a professional conflict/compromise you should bring this to the attention of Main governor Jane Young.

Such disclosures must be treated with respect, dignity and in confidence.

Disclosure of Interest

In order to uphold fairness and consistency, and to comply with OXPEG's regulations (including but not limited to its financial regulations), members of OXPEG's governing board must disclose any interests and/or relationship(s), whether direct or indirect, that they have with any person, company or other organisation involved with OXPEG and/or its business and/or activities which may give rise to conflict / compromise.

Governors and staff should declare any financial or non-financial interests that may cause any conflict with OXPEG's interests.

The Conflict of interest form should be completed by all Governors to identify any business/commercial/financial interests they have which might give rise to a potential conflict of interest and whether they have any interests (or relationships) which could in some circumstances lead to suggestions that their objectivity and integrity is compromised.

When considering whether there may be a conflict of interest a Governor shall apply the test "Would a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts, think the Governor might be influenced?"

If the answer is yes, then the interest should be declared. If in doubt declare the interest.

Assistance can be sought from the OXPEG Director Jane Young if any clarification is required.

Declaring the interest

Any interest or relationship need be described in no more detail than is necessary to make clear in what circumstances an individual's position might be compromised, e.g.

'I am an employee of XYZ Ltd (or 'I am employed by XYZ Ltd as Job Title) - a likely supplier or contractor to OXPEG'.

'My sister is a director of XYZ Ltd - a likely supplier or contractor to OXPEG'.

'My brother-in-law is a Supply Teacher - who may be engaged by OXPEG

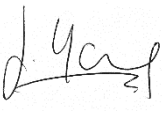
Guidance Notes on Code of Conduct

No code of conduct can hope to spell out the appropriate behaviour for every situation, nor should it seek to do so. OXPEG relies on each governor to make a judgement of what is right and good practice in any situation.

If you are unsure determining what action is appropriate in any given situation it is recommended that you seek clarification from the Main Governor Jane Young.



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Signed: 

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OXFORD PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION GROUP LTD

Summertown Pavilion, 18-24 Middle Way, Oxford OX2 7LG

 +44 (0) 1865 515 255  oxfordprofessionaleducationgroup.com

Reg. no: 03354327 VAT: 718160054