

## **The Firs Lower School Governing Body**

### **How is our Governing Body organised at The Firs?**

At The Firs we use the DfE preferred model of Governance. We have a group of Trustees who meet regularly and take an active role in setting the strategic direction of the school and overseeing the progress we make with our development objectives. In addition we have a small group of 5 Members who meet less regularly but who maintain an important watching brief, overseeing the work of the Trustees. (If you want to know who our Trustees and Members are, you can look on our website on the Governors 'Meet Us' page under the 'School Information' tab.)

### **What Governors do we need?**

The governing board should have a balance and diversity of knowledge, skills and experience to enable it to be effective. We need a range of professional knowledge on our governing board including education, finance, human resources, legal, marketing and public relations, property and estates management, and organisational change.

### **Who can be a Governor?**

Any parent or member of the community can be a Trustee on our board of Governors. There is no requirement for you to have an understanding of the education system, just the necessary skills, character and time to contribute. There is plenty of training available to help you learn about education.

### **What trustees do?**

The board of Governors provides strategic leadership and accountability in schools. It has three key functions:

- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- Holding the school to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Our Trustees set the aims and objectives for the school and oversee the policies and targets for achieving those aims and objectives. They monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making and act as a source of challenge and support to the headteacher.

Trustees work together as one team and although they may be elected by the parents, they serve in a personal capacity on the Governing Body and cannot be mandated to vote in any particular way or to abstain. They are free to exercise their own personal judgement. They can, like any other trustee, voice their own personal opinions.

Parents having concerns or questions about any matter are free to contact any governor of the school, although parents are encouraged to contact the school with any questions or concerns in the first instance.

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We have a 'Working Protocol' for Governors at The Firs and Members and Trustees must be prepared to adopt the Nolan principles of public life, see below:

**Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**Integrity** - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity** - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness** - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty** - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership** - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).