



**Governors Code
Governance, Conduct, Procedures and Responsibilities**

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Empowering learners to shape their future

HORIZONS COLLEGE

Governors Code Governance, Conduct, Procedures and Responsibilities

CONTENTS	
Item	Page No
Section 1 – Code of Governance	3 - 5
Section 2 – Code of Conduct	6 - 11
Section 3 - Procedures	12 - 17
Section 4 - Responsibilities	18
Signature Block	19
Amendment List	19

HORIZONS COLLEGE

SECTION 1 – CODE OF GOVERNANCE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Code is written to support governance practice, which in turn will help Horizons College to work successfully towards meeting their mission and strategy successfully. The Code needs to be read alongside Horizons College's Articles of Association and relevant legal and regulatory requirements. The Code is based on a set of shared values and expectations and Horizons College Local Governing Committee (LGC) will work within the 'spirit' of the Code as much as its letter and to be committed and pro-active.
- 1.2 The Code uses the normal "must and should" convention for governance codes. A "must" is an area of activity which is covered by statute and/or is the minimum expected by the principal regulators and funding agencies. Activities which exceed these basic requirements and represent good or enhanced governance practice are described as "should".

2. Core Values

- 2.1 High quality special needs further education, which commands public confidence and promotes the reputation of Horizons College and the sector, must rest on several shared values. By implementing such values, the LGC can:
 - a. Ensure quality of education and training for its learners.
 - b. Demonstrate public benefit.
 - c. Provide the basis for its own effectiveness.
 - d. Support Horizons College autonomy.
 - e. Support the sustainability of the service and enhance the reputation of the sector.
 - f. By example, demonstrate dynamic leadership.
- 2.2 A failure to adopt and implement a set of agreed values has implications beyond Horizons College, by potentially undermining the collective reputation of similar colleges and the wider sector.
- 2.3 In setting out core values, the Code adopts and builds on *Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life* (see Section 2 – Para 11) which provide an ethical framework for the personal behaviour of governors. In addition, given the specific nature of further education, the code also adopts the values and behaviours of being:
 - a. Respectful.
 - b. Professional.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

- c. Prudent.
- d. Passionate about special needs education and good governance.

2.4 The Code is based on the following expectations of good governance, which illustrate the values and beliefs Horizons College governors:

- a. Putting the learner first.
- b. Promoting high expectations and ambitions for learners and staff.
- c. Ensuring inspirational teaching and learning.
- d. Creating a safe environment for learners to learn and develop.
- e. Providing strong leadership to both the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the community Horizons College serves.
- f. Setting the strategy and acting as guardians of Horizons College's mission.
- g. Demonstrating accountability to learners, parents, employers, funders, trustees and other stakeholders, including publishing accurate and timely information on performance.
- h. Listen to learners, parents/carers, employers and staff.
- i. Ensuring the achievement of equality of opportunity and diversity throughout Horizons College.
- j. Using Horizons College's autonomy and independence to meet local special education and skills needs.

3. The Ten Principal Responsibilities of Good Governance

3.1 To implement and imbed the core values and expectations in Horizons College, Governors, Trustees and the SLT will undertake to:

- a. Formulate and agree the mission and strategy including defining the ethos of Horizons College.
- b. Be collectively accountable for the business of Horizons College taking all decisions on all matters within their duties and responsibilities as set out in the appropriate Scheme of Delegation (SoD).
- c. Ensure there are effective underpinning policies and systems, which facilitate the learner voice.
- d. Foster exceptional teaching and learning.
- e. Ensure that Horizons College is responsive to workforce trends by adopting a

HORIZONS COLLEGE

range of strategies for engaging with employers and other stakeholders.

- f. Adopt a financial strategy and funding plans which are compatible with the duty to ensure sustainability and solvency of Horizons College.
- g. Ensure the effective control and due diligence takes place in relation to all matters including acquisitions, subcontracting and partnership activity.
- h. Meet and aim to exceed its statutory responsibilities for equality and diversity.
- i. Ensure that there are organised and clear governance and management structures, with well-understood delegations.
- j. Regularly review governance performance and effectiveness.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

SECTION 2 – CODE OF PRACTICE

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this Code is to enable Horizons College Governors to have a clearer understanding of their role.
- 1.2. Horizons College Governors make a positive contribution by giving their time and bringing their expertise to help with Horizons College improvement.
- 1.3. The Clerk to the Governors will give all new Governors a copy of the code on their appointment. Horizons College Governors are asked to record their understanding of the expectations by signing this document below and passing back to the Clerk to the Governors to be kept with LGC records.

2. The Purpose of Horizons College LGC

- 2.1. Brunel Education Board of Trustees remains ultimately responsible for standards and finance; however, it would be impossible for Trustees to oversee everything and so key roles for Horizons College is delegated to Horizons College LGC which functions, day-to-day, largely in the same way as a maintained school.
- 2.2. Horizons College LGC is Horizons College's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of Horizons College and for promoting high standards. The LGC aims to ensure that Horizons College learners are attending a successful College that provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

3. Horizons College LGC

- 3.1. The LGC sets the strategic direction of Horizons College by:
 - a. Setting the values, aims and objectives for Horizons College.
 - b. Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives.
 - c. Setting targets.
 - d. Agreeing the Horizons College Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.
- 3.2. Challenges and supports Horizons College by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
 - a. The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework.
 - b. Progress towards targets.
 - c. The implementation and effectiveness of QIP.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

d. The allocated budget and the staffing structure.

e. Ensuring financial probity.

3.3. Ensures accountability by:

a. Signing off Horizons College own Self-Assessment Report (SAR).

b. Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary.

c. Holding the Principal to account for the day-to-day performance of Horizons College.

d. Holding the Principal to account for the strategic performance of Horizons College.

e. Ensuring parents / carers and learners are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate.

f. Making available information to the community.

3.4. Appoints and performance manages the Principal (Within the constraints of the SoD) who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the College, implementation of the agreed policy framework and QIP, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the LGC.

3.5. Governors must be:

a. Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously.

b. Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals.

c. Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task.

d. Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

4. The Role of the Horizons College Governor

4.1. In law, the Horizons College LGC is a corporate body, which means:

a. No Governor can act on her / his own without proper authority from the full LGC.

b. All Governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made.

c. Although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents / carers, staff, and community), the overriding concern of all Governors must be the welfare of Horizons College.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

5. General Responsibilities

- 5.1. The Horizons College Governor has the following general responsibilities:
- a. Understand the purpose of Horizons College LGC and the role of the Principal.
 - b. Have awareness of and accepting Nolan's seven principles of public life (See Para 11).
 - c. Having no legal authority to act individually, except when the LGC has given delegated authority to do so, and therefore only speaking on behalf of the LGC when specifically, authorised to do so.
 - d. Having a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as having responsibility for staff, will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
 - e. Will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
 - f. Accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the LGC or its delegated agents. This means not speaking against majority decisions outside the LGC meeting.
 - g. Consider carefully how decisions may affect the community and other Colleges.
 - h. Always be mindful of the responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of Horizons College. Governors' actions within Horizons College and the local community will reflect this.
 - i. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting Horizons College will follow the procedures established by the LGC.

6. Commitment

- 6.1. The Horizons College Governor will commit to the following:
- a. Acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
 - b. Involve himself / herself actively in the work of the LGC, and accept their fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
 - c. Make full efforts to attend all meetings and where he / she cannot attend give apologies explaining in advance why they are unable to.
 - d. Get to know Horizons College well and respond to opportunities to involve himself / herself in College activities.
 - e. Visits to Horizons College will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the LGC and agreed with the Principal.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

- f. Consider seriously his / hers individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.
- g. Be committed to actively supporting and challenging the Principal.

7. Relationships

7.1. The Horizons College Governor will:

- a. Strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- b. Express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications with other Governors.
- c. Support the Chair of Governors (CoG) in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and always.
- d. Be prepared to answer queries from other Governors in relation to delegated functions and consider any concerns expressed, and will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- e. Seek to develop effective working relationships with the Principal, staff and parents / carers and other relevant agencies and the community.

8. Confidentiality

8.1. The Horizons College Governor will:

- a. Observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or learners, both inside and outside Horizons College.
- b. Exercise the greatest prudence always when discussions regarding Horizons College business arise outside a LGC meeting.
- c. Not reveal the details of any LGC vote.

9. Conflicts of Interest

9.1. The Horizons College Governor will:

- a. Record any pecuniary or other business interest about the LGC's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- b. Declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

10. Breach of this Code of Practice

10.1. The Horizons College Governor will apply the following process:

- a. If he / she believes this code has been breached, he / she will raise this issue with the CoG and the CoG will investigate; the LGC should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- b. Should it be the CoG that he / she believes has breached this code, another Governor, such as the Vice CoG will investigate.
- c. He / she understands that any allegation of a material breach of this Code of Practice by any Governor shall be raised at a meeting of the LGC, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the LGC.

11. Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life

11.1. Selflessness:

- a. 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.

11.2. Integrity:

- a. 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.

11.3. Objectivity:

- a. 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.

11.4. Accountability:

- a. 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.

11.5. Openness:

- a. 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.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

11.6. Honesty:

- a. 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.

11.7. Leadership:

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

12. Adoption of Code of Practice

- 12.1. The LGC of Horizons College adopted this code of practice on 1st September 2017. Governors will sign the Code at the first LGC meeting of each College year.

13. Undertaking

- 13.1. As a member of the Horizons College LGC I will always have the well-being of the learners and the reputation of Horizons College at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for Horizons College, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the College, the Governing Committee, the Principal, Learning Leads, staff or learners.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

SECTION 3 – PROCEDURES

1. Governor Recruitment

- 1.1 Horizons College seeks to recruit appropriate Governors when vacancies become available. Horizons College strives to have a wide range of individuals on their LGC with differing skills and experience and will endeavour to fill any skills gaps, where possible, as and when vacancies arise.

2. Composition of LGC

- 2.1 The Horizons College LGC comprises of:
 - a. 1 x Head of College.
 - b. 2 x Parent Governors.
 - c. 2 x Staff Governors.
 - d. 7 x Community Governors.

3. Staff Governor Vacancies

- 3.1 This is the responsibility of the Principal to fill. The Principal will seek expressions of interest from staff and then hold a staff vote should more than the required number of staff members express an interest.

4. Parent Governor Vacancies

- 4.1 These will be filled by a nomination and voting process. Any vacancies will be advertised in newsletters or via a formal letter and nominations requested. Again, if more than the required number of parents expresses an interest then the parents will be given the opportunity to vote.

5. Community Vacancies

- 5.1 These will be filled either by direct approach to suitable individual members. These individuals will be co-opted onto the LGC.

6. Governor Induction

- 6.1 Horizons College LGC is committed to implementing an Induction Policy for new Governors:
 - a. To help them feel welcome immediately.
 - b. To enable them to be confident and effective as soon as possible.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

- c. So that the whole LGC can recognise their skills, attributes and valuable new insight.
- d. To make available training.
- e. To provide ongoing support.

6.2. Programme:

- a. The Clerk to the Governors will notify the new Governor of their position in writing or by email immediately after election or appointment. The Clerk to the Governors will send out the minutes from the previous two LGC meetings.
- b. The CoG or appropriate Governor will welcome the new Governor via letter or phone call and invite them to attend a short 30-minute meeting and tour of Horizons College prior to their first full LGC meeting.
- c. The pre-meeting session will be used to provide the new Governor with an overview of LGC practice and procedures at which they will receive the Governors Handbook.
- d. The introduction and welcome to the new Governor will be the first agenda item at the first full LGC meeting they attend.
- e. The new Governor will be invited to attend any current working groups or sub committees as appropriate to gain an overview of the work of the LGC. They will then decide where best to allocate their skills against the appropriate committee.

7. Governor Training and Development

- 7.1. The LGC of Horizons College is committed to ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring a high standard of teaching is provided for all learners of the College. Towards this end the LGC will ensure that its own training and development needs are not neglected.
- 7.2. The Clerk to the Governors will ensure that all new Governors receive the items listed in the induction section of this policy.
- 7.3. All Governors, where possible, will attend training courses relevant to their specific committee involvement or individual responsibilities.
- 7.4. The Clerk to the Governors will keep a record of all Governor training undertaken on behalf of the LGC and Governors attending training will be given the opportunity at the subsequent LGC meeting to report back any learning points for the LGC.
- 7.5. Governors linked to specific areas will meet regularly with their respective Provision Lead and jointly prepare reports for the LGC to inform decision-making.
- 7.6. To increase the LGC's knowledge about Horizons College and demonstrate its support for staff, Governors will aim to visit Horizons College at least twice each

HORIZONS COLLEGE

academic year. The Horizons College visits section of this policy to be observed by Governors when making visits.

- 7.7. To include priorities for LGC development as part of QIP), the LGC will undertake a self-evaluation review of its effectiveness at least once every two years.

8. College Visits

8.1. All Governors are invited to visit Horizons College regularly in a supportive role. Governors will monitor progress on agreed areas of the QIP and make suggestions for change or further improvement to that plan. If visiting they will follow the visit guidelines. All visits will be recorded, and this information will then be fed back to the LGC or its committees as appropriate and then filled in the visit folder in the College office.

8.2. The aim of Horizons College visits is:

- a. To demonstrate evidence of leadership, management and commitment by the LGC Governors to Horizons College.
- b. To develop positive relationships between Horizons College Staff and Governors.
- c. To enable Governors to become familiar with Horizons College working environment.
- d. To observe policies being implemented.
- e. To enable more informed decision-making at LGC level.
- f. To enable Governors to have a better understanding of target setting and Horizons College improvement data.
- g. To become familiar with different teaching and learning styles.
- h. To get to know learners.
- i. To experience the ethos of Horizons College.
- j. To understand the demands and pressures on staff;
- k. To look at the use of resources.

8.3. The College visit is not about:

- a. Inspecting.
- b. Making judgements on the abilities of teachers.
- c. Checking on progress of individual learners.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

d. Arriving with pre-conceived ideas.

8.4. How to prepare for a visit:

- a. Arrange the visit through the Principal or appropriate Provisions Lead. The appropriate members of staff will liaise with colleagues to make specific arrangements where necessary.
- b. Have a clear and agreed purpose for your visit.
- c. Respect Horizons College routines and rules.
- d. Always be prepared to give feedback to the Principal, Learning Leads and Governors.
- e. Let Horizons College know if the visit cannot take place.
- f. Respect Confidentiality always.

9. **Governors' Allowances**

9.1. This statement has been developed in line with the School Governance (Roles, procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013. Horizons College LGC has the discretion to pay allowances from the Horizons College annual budget allocation to Horizons College Governors for certain allowances which they incur in carrying out their duties. Horizons College LGC believes that paying Governors' allowances, in specific categories as set out below, is important in ensuring equality of opportunity to serve as Governors for all members of the community and so is an appropriate use of College funds. The specific items allowable reflect this objective.

9.2. All Governors of Horizons College will be entitled to claim the actual costs, which they incur as follows:

- a. Governors will be able to claim allowances providing the allowances are incurred carrying out their duties, as a Governor or representative of Horizons College, and are agreed by the appropriate section of the LGC that they are justified before any reimbursable costs are incurred.
- b. Governors will be able to claim for the following, on a case-by-case basis and with the prior approval of the LGC:
 - childcare or baby-sitting allowances (excluding payments to a current / former spouse or partner);
 - cost of care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative (excluding payments to a current / former spouse or partner);
 - the extra costs they incur in performing their duties either because they have special needs or because English is not their first language;

HORIZONS COLLEGE

- the cost of travel relating only to travel to meetings / training courses at the mileage rate paid to staff and personnel;
 - travel and subsistence costs, payable at the current rates specified by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, associated with attending national meetings or training events, unless these costs can be claimed from the Local Authority (LA) or any other source;
 - telephone charges, photocopying, stationery, postage etc;
 - any other justifiable allowances;
 - are required providing receipts as appropriate.
- c. The LGC at Horizons College acknowledges that:
- Governors may not be paid attendance allowance;
 - Governors may not be reimbursed for loss of earnings.
- d. Governors wishing to claim under these arrangements, once prior approval has been sought, should complete a claim's form (obtainable from the College Office), attaching receipts where possible, and return it to Horizons College within two weeks of the date when the allowances were incurred. The claim will be submitted for approval by the CoG or Vice CoG and will be noted in the Finance Report of the next Full LGC meeting.
- e. Claims will be subject to independent audit and may be investigated by the CoG (or Vice CoG in respect of the CoG) if they appear excessive or inconsistent.

10. Meetings

- 10.1. Meetings of the LGC will be held at least once every second term. Dates for the full academic year will be agreed at the final meeting of the preceding academic year.
- 10.2. Meeting Preparation:
- a. The Clerk to the Governors prepares the agenda for the Governors, in consultation with the CoG and Principal, ten to fourteen days before the meeting.
 - b. Any Governor may request the CoG for an item to be placed on the agenda.
 - c. Items for inclusion should be given to the Clerk to the Governors, with relevant papers, no later than fourteen days before the meeting except for the Principal's reports which will be provided one week before the meeting.
 - d. The agenda and any supporting papers will be circulated by the Clerk to the Governors at least seven days before a full governing body meeting and a

HORIZONS COLLEGE

meeting pack for each Governor will be provided by the Clerk to the Governors at the meeting.

- e. Any urgent issues to be identified at the start of a meeting and the Governors agree where it should be included within the agenda.

10.3. Meeting Procedures:

- a. If possible, Governors should arrive 5 – 10 minutes before the start time given on the agenda, having already read the papers to be considered.
- b. The CoG will ensure the meeting starts on time and finishes on time. Unfinished business will be carried forward to the next meeting or an extra meeting arranged for matters requiring urgent consideration. Alternatively, the CoG can request that the meeting extends beyond the allotted time if the committee agrees.
- c. Apologies for absence, with reasons, should be given to the Clerk to the Governors or CoG.
- d. Declarations of Interest should be made at the beginning of the meeting.
- e. Written reports of the Principal or committees / working groups which are for information and discussion will be taken as read – questions and comment being accepted.
- f. An item requiring full LGC approval will be proposed and seconded formally.
- g. The CoG will encourage everyone to contribute to the discussion. Consensus will be achieved when possible. If a vote is necessary and there is equality, the CoG has a casting vote.

10.4. Election of Chair of Governors and Vice-Chair of Governors:

- a. The LGC must elect a new CoG and Vice CoG or re-elect existing officers at the meeting preceding / following the end of term of office. (The Clerk to the Governors shall act as the CoG during the part of the meeting at which the CoG is elected).
- b. Governors will be informed at the meeting preceding the election of the date for receipt of a self-nomination for either the CoG or Vice CoG positions. Nominations received will be listed on the agenda for the final meeting of the academic year. Nominations for either position will only be accepted at the meeting if no nominations have been received prior to the meeting. If more than one nomination is received, for either position, a secret ballot will be held. If only one nomination is received, for either position, that individual will automatically be elected;
- c. Governors who are employed to work at the College are not eligible to stand for election.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

SECTION 4 – RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The following areas of responsibilities relating to the Principal and the LGC are describes in the appropriate SoD that each Governor has a copy of:
 - 1.1 Curriculum.
 - 1.2 Safeguarding, Wellbeing, Health & Safety.
 - 1.3 Learner Outcomes.
 - 1.4 Discipline and Exclusions.
 - 1.5 Information for Parents / Carers.
 - 1.6 Participation.
 - 1.7 Operations.
 - 1.8 Governance.
 - 1.9 Inspections.
 - 1.10 Expansion.
 - 1.11 Policies.
 - 1.12 Finance
 - 1.13 Staffing.
 - 1.14 Admissions.
 - 1.15 Exclusions.
 - 1.16 Premises.
 - 1.17 Performance Management.
 - 1.18 Partnering Arrangement.
 - 1.19 General Requirements.

HORIZONS COLLEGE

Name	
Signed	
Date	

AMENDMENT LIST (AL)

AL No	Change	Reason
1	Various Terminology Revise Section 4	To ensure terms are College centric To list headline responsibilities for the LGC / Principal as indicated in the relevant SoD
2	Terminology Regulations	Reflecting change in name from Body to Committee Update in regulations governing Governor allowances
3	Regulations	Removing reference to Instrument of Government
4	Terminology	Reflecting change from 'Horizons College Development Plan' (HCDP) to 'Quality Improvement Plan'.