

**St. Joseph's**



# Code of Conduct

for

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary  
School

Governing Body



# Code of Conduct for School Governing Body

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school/s and the community.

Once approved by the governing body, the Code will apply to all governors.

## Aims

- All Governors are expected to contribute to the development of the school in setting the strategic framework within which the school operates; determining the character, aims and ethos of the school and developing and monitoring school policies, plans and procedures.
- Governors need to have a clear understanding of their role and that of the Headteacher and have an effective working relationship which facilitates good leadership and management.
- The aim of the code of conduct is to therefore provide Governors with a clear understanding of their role and providing a framework within which they will be able to carry out their duties effectively.

## The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the lead executive headteacher
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the executive headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

## As individuals on the body we agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the body and the role of the executive headteacher
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- 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 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 school/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive headteacher
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the body and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the executive headteacher and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing body as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

### 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 body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will be expected to regularly attend meetings of the full Governing Body as well as Committees and Working Groups where necessary. *(Regular non-attendance at full Governing Body meetings can lead to disqualification.)*

- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to. *(Governors should ensure they attend meetings promptly and for the full duration whenever possible. When this is difficult Governors should give such notice as possible to the Headteacher or Chair so they can ensure that meetings will still be quorate and rearrange agenda items if necessary.)*
- We should ensure we are prepared for meetings by reading all papers beforehand.
- We will make an effort to attend induction and other relevant training courses in order to our development and help discharge our duties responsibly.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the executive headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

## 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 to the governing body and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other body 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, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority, Diocese and other relevant agencies and the community.

## Confidentiality

- Decisions reached at governing body meetings are normally made public through minutes and reports, however, Governors should ensure confidentiality, when required, in respect of the discussions on which the decisions are based
- Individual Governors should observe complete confidentiality in all matters discussed at governing body meetings especially in relation to matters concerning staff or pupils and also any other matters agreed by the governing body. Failure to comply may lead to disqualification.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of caution when involved in sensitive issues arising outside the governing body which may have an impact on the work of the governing body or the operation of the school.
- Governors will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- Governors will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- Governors will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- On ceasing to be a Governor, individuals should ensure all information relating to the school is returned to the school for disposal as soon as possible.

BREACH OF  
CONFIDENTIALITY



## Conduct

Governors:

- must accept collective responsibility for all decisions taken by the governing body - that is they do not have the legal authority to act individually except when the governing body has delegated authority for them to do so.
- should never speak out against decisions in public or in private, outside the governing body.
- have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice with the overall good of the school overriding any personal feelings or individual concerns they may have.
- should not use the governing body to enhance or influence the education of their own children or pursue personal agendas. This can cause conflict with the strategic role of the governing body. Governors with issues regarding their own children should raise the matter in the normal way for any parent.

- when carrying out their monitoring role, governors should not make any judgements about the quality of teaching.
- All governors' visits to the school should be carried out within a framework that has been established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher.
- When discharging their duties governors will need to be mindful of their responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school and acting in the best interest of the school.
- Governors have a specific responsibility to support and promote the development of a strong counter fraud culture in school including mechanisms to monitor and report inconsistencies and risks.
- Apart from very specific instances where the chair has to act or take decisions on behalf of the governing body, governors should recognise that they have no individual powers and should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when specifically authorised to do so by the corporate body.
- Governors should be able to express their views openly within meetings but should ensure that they relate to matters proper for discussion by the governing body. Discussion should be conducted in a respectful manner to ensure that any governor does not feel uncomfortable.
- Governors will be required to declare any personal or financial interest on an annual basis by completing and returning to school the Governor Declaration of Interest Form. A declaration may also be made arising from a matter before the Governors or from any aspect of governorship. In such situations the individual Governor should declare the interest and withdraw from the meeting. Governors should not use their position as a governor to benefit them or other individuals or agencies.
- When Governors are unable to attend meetings they should ensure that the Clerk of the Governors and the Headteacher are notified in advance of the meeting.
- Governors should be aware of the procedures established by the governing body for responding to criticism or complaint relating to the school, not allow themselves to be included personally. Instead refer parents to the General School Complaints Procedure.



## Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

## Ceasing to be a governor

We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.



## Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice chair will investigate.

### The seven principles of public life

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

**Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty** – Holders of public office should be truthful

**Leadership** – Holders of public office 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.

Adopted by the Governing Body on ... ..7<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Signed .....

Dated: .....