



Governor Code of Conduct

The principles of good governance are absolutely key to making a difference. The crucial ingredients needed to transform a team of diverse people with a range of skills, experience and knowledge into a highly effective Governing Board are:

- The right people around the table with the right skills, knowledge and experience.
- Understanding of, and clarity around, the role and responsibilities
- Good chairing
- Professional clerking
- Good relationships based on trust
- Knowing the school or academy - the data, staff, parents, pupils and the community
- Commitment to asking challenging questions
- Confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people.

Having this in place will help ensure that our schools and academies have the support of a Governing Board which holds the school or academy to account for its standards and conduct. Therefore:

- Governors must conduct themselves in line with the Nolan Principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Governors must seek to uphold the Christian foundation of the school.
- Governors are responsible for determining the overall strategic direction of their schools but must not become involved with the management. The distinction between managing and governance is important.

Principles

- The Governing Board is a corporate board. Governors have no authority to act individually except where the governing board has delegated authority to do so.
- All governors have equal status, and although governors are appointed or elected by different groups, the central concern must be the welfare of the school as a Church of England school.
- Governors are representative of the category of governor to which they are appointed or elected. They are not delegates of those groups, e.g. they are not expected to speak on behalf of the group but according to their own understanding and conscience.
- Governors have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as they have responsibility for staff, will fulfil all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of, the employer.
- The Governing Board will encourage open governance and be seen to be doing so.
- All Governors, but especially Foundation Governors, have a specific role in preserving and developing the Christian ethos of the school; including its religious character and distinctiveness.
- Governors of a Church of England School are committed to upholding and modelling the school's Christian values along with the requirement to ensure the promotion of British Values.
- The Governing Board will always consider carefully how decisions may affect other schools, the local Church and the Diocese.
- Governance is primarily concerned with three strategic functions:
 - a. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
 - b. Holding the leadership to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
 - c. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.
- In the case of academies within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), governors will endeavour to fulfil the functions delegated to them by the MAT's Board of Trustees. As a Local Governing Body (LGB) they must be aware of the Scheme of Delegation and their particular roles and responsibilities.

Relationships

Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Governing Board will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- The headteacher
 - Staff
 - Children
 - Parents
 - The Diocese
 - The Local Authority
 - Multi-agency representatives
 - Local Church community
 - Other local schools and academies
 - Local educational organisations/businesses etc.
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- Governors will work as members of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted, forming the governing board which functions with corporate responsibility and accountability.
 - Governors will seek to develop an open and honest relationship with the headteacher and all school staff, acting as 'critical friend' to the school, ensuring a balance is struck between offering challenge and support.
 - The Governing Board will ensure that Christian values underpin the relationships between governors and others. These core values based on the Beatitudes may be summarised as follows:
 - faithfulness and integrity
 - dignity and compassion
 - humility and gentleness
 - truth and justice
 - forgiveness and mercy
 - purity and holiness
 - tolerance and peace
 - service and sacrifice

Conduct

Governors will:

- acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- each involve themselves actively in the work of the Governing Board, attend meetings regularly, and accept their fair share of responsibilities, including any membership of committees or working groups.
- get to know the school well, respond to opportunities to get involved and be faithful in attending all commitments/meetings.
- prepare for meetings by reading the paperwork provided, encourage open expression of views/questions and accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Board.
- Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Board when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- When receiving and responding to any criticism or complaints about the school the procedures established by the Governing Board will be followed.
- Any visits to school whether informal, formal (e.g. monitoring) will be undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board, in agreement with the Head and staff.

Confidentiality

Governors will:

- always observe the confidential nature of the proceedings of the Governing Board in meetings and visits to school as governors.
- observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the Governing Board, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.
- keep discussion about decisions confidential even when decisions themselves are made public through the minutes of meetings.
- exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the Governing Board.

Training

- Induction training is considered essential for all governors joining the governing board. This includes training offered by the DBE for governors of Church schools.
- Undertaking regular training in all aspects of the role of a governor is expected throughout the term of office.
- Training for specific roles and responsibilities e.g. Chair, finance, performance management of the Headteacher is strongly recommended.

Structures¹

- The Governing Board will employ a clerk with a view to their efficient functioning and must have regard to advice from the clerk (who will undertake regular training/updating) as to the nature of the Governing Board's functions.
- The Governing Board will work efficiently and effectively in the best interests of the school by
 - utilising the skills and strengths of the governors
 - appointing individuals to appropriate roles and responsibilities
 - forming committees and working parties when desirable
- fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, including ensuring the statutory right of appeal, through appropriate full delegation of powers and statutory functions to either:
 - a. a committee
 - b. a governor
 - c. the headteacher.
- Parent governors will act for the good of *all* children and will not take advantage of the role for personal reasons.
- Governors will declare any pecuniary or business interest to be recorded in the Register of Business Interests - 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.

Breach of this Code of Practice

¹ These are relevant for maintained schools and Single Academy Trusts. Local Governing Bodies within a Multi-Academy Trust should check the requirements as outlined in the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.

In the case of a maintained school:

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the Governing Board should seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes constructively.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Governing Board, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be recorded in the minutes and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstances removal from the Governing Board.
- In the case of Foundation Governors, serious breaches of this code may result in consideration of removal by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE). Further information can be found in the Removal of Foundation Governors Policy which is available on the DBE's website. It is expected that Church schools will seek advice from the DBE in these cases.
- Governors will sign the Code at the first Governing Board meeting of each academic year.

In the case of a Single Academy Trust (SAT) or an academy within a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT):

- Each Academy Trust will have its own procedures for responding to breaches of this code which will reflect statutory guidance such as the Governance Handbook and the trust's Articles of Association. It is expected that Church academies will seek advice from the DBE in these cases.