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## **Code of Conduct for Governors**

### **Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School**

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Approved by: Governing Body

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# Code of Conduct for Governors

## Aim:

Positive, professional relationships are key to the successful development of pupils' engagement and increased academic progress; we want a happy work place environment where everyone feels respected. We value the diversity and wealth of experience that our governing body brings and welcome the critical friendship and support that we can bring together to ensure that we fulfil the school's aims:

- To encourage children to aspire to the highest standards and personal success.
- To provide vigorous and stimulating learning opportunities to meet the needs of each individual child.
- To motivate children to take responsibility for their own learning.
- To ensure that all children have equality of access to the curriculum.
- To provide a safe and supportive environment for all children.
- To value the contribution of pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community in working together to celebrate individual and the whole school attainment and success.

## The Core Function

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

## Confidentiality

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Whilst governors are entitled to disclose the decisions made by the governing body, unless it was agreed as a confidential item by the governing body, governors are **not** entitled to identify the views expressed by individual named governors.
- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

## General

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school: the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors have a responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.

Headteacher's responsibilities:

- Day-to-day management of the school
- Implementation of policy
- Operation of the curriculum

Governors' responsibilities:

- Determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.  
The main aim of the school is to raise the educational achievement of all its pupils.
- The governing body will contribute most effectively to this aim by focusing on its three roles:
  - To provide a strategic view of where the school is heading
  - To act as a critical friend by providing support and advice to the school - To hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of the education it provides
- All governors have equal status. Although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, their central concern is the welfare of the school as a whole.
- Governors have a general duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- In so far as they have, or share, responsibility for the employment of staff, governors should fulfil all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
- Governors should consider carefully how their own decision might affect other schools.
- Governors should encourage open government and should be seen to do so.
- Governors do not act alone but as members of a corporate team. Individual governors have power only when it is designated specifically to them by the whole governing body.

## Commitment

- Being a governor involves significant amounts of time and energy. Careful regard should be paid to this when agreeing to serve or to continue to serve on the governing body of a school.
- All governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the governing body and accept a fair share of the responsibilities, including service on committees.
- Regular attendance at meetings of both the full governing body and committees is essential. There is an expectation for governors to attend all meetings unless sufficient notice is given, in each instance (48 hours). Three consecutive absences without sufficient notice will result in a review of the governor's ongoing presence in the body. Three consecutive absences, with or without notice, will result in a supportive conversation with the Chair of Governors to ascertain whether the level of commitment expected is too high for the member.
- Governors should know the school well and take opportunities to visit it and become involved in school activities. An agreed rota will be created each year for governors to organise their visits.

## Relationships

- Governors should strive to operate as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- Governors should develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff, parents, the LEA and their local community.

## Visiting the School

- Governors do not have an automatic right to enter the school. However, they do need to have the opportunity to arrange visits to the school in order to see governors' policies in action and to understand how the school works.
- All governors should visit the school and it is recommended that this is seen a collaborative process with the school to make each visit as purposeful as possible.
- The total number of visits per term should be agreed in advance with the headteacher. Too many visits can be disruptive to pupils' learning.
- The date and timing of a visit should be arranged in advance with the headteacher and other staff involved.
- Visits should have a clear focus, linked to a school policy, a curriculum area or an aspect of the school development plan.
- If a governor is going to spend time in a classroom, this should be discussed with the class teacher so that both are clear how long the governor is coming for, what they are going to look at and what they are going to do.

- Governors should understand that their visits do not replace professional inspections or the monitoring role of the headteacher. Governors should not make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching that they see.
- If governors are concerned about any aspects of what they have seen this should be passed to the headteacher.
- After the visit, the governor should report back, either orally or in writing to the governing body. How this is to be done should be made clear in the policy. If a written report is to be produced, it is sensible to discuss it with the headteacher before publication.
- There is an expectation for governors to punctually attend all meetings unless sufficient notice is given in each instance (48 hours). 3 consecutive absences without sufficient notice will result in a review of the governor's ongoing presence in the body. Three consecutive absences, with or without notice, will result in a supportive conversation with the Chair of Governors to ascertain whether the level of commitment expected is too high for the member.
- An agenda and relevant documents to reach the Clerk to the Governors at least seven days before each meeting.

### Conduct

- Governors should express their views openly within meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions.
- Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so.
- All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the governing body and agreed with the Headteacher.
- In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, governors should refer to the school's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors have a responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. Their actions within the school community should reflect this.

Any pecuniary interest that a governor may have in connection with the governing body's business must be recorded in the register of pecuniary interests.

- Where an interest is declared, the governor must leave the meeting while the item is under discussion.

### Training and Development

- Governor training and development is important. It benefits the school and individual governors, and can help to develop effective teamwork.
- Governors are encouraged to undertake training to further their individual interests within the governing body and the work of the governing body as a whole.

### Mentoring

- An experienced governor who acts as a mentor to new governors can provide support and a listening ear for all aspects of the work of the governing body.
- Governors should be prepared to act as mentors, as required.

### Meetings

- Individual governors do not have any authority in school.
- It is the collective decisions of all the governors together that carry authority.
- The activities that governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the governing body 'goes live' - in a meeting.
- *Any agenda, minutes and other papers (including policies) are expected to have been read before the meetings. A lack of objections will be interpreted as the papers having been read and agreed to. It is the responsibility of governors to keep up to date with documentation provided by the school.*

### Meetings Charter

#### **As a governor I expect:**

- *an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item;*
- *a Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point;*
- *my contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion;*
- *the decision-making process to be quite clear;*
- *governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan;*
- *governors to take collective responsibility for decisions;*

- *minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.*

***Others can expect me to:***

- *attend regularly and be punctual;*
- *read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about;*
- *bring my papers to the meeting;*
- *make relevant and positive contributions;*
- *listen to and consider what other people want to say;*
- *accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions that I do not personally agree with.*