

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNING BODY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the Governing Body and individual governors will operate.

The role of the Governing Body is strategic in:

- *Setting and ensuring the vision, ethos and strategic direction.*
- *Holding the Headteacher 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.*

The Governing Body adopts the following principles and procedures:

### **GENERAL**

1. We are entrusted by DOWAT with the ministry of school governance and will always act in the best interests for all members of the school community and one another.
2. In discharging our duties, we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the Catholic ethos and reputation of our school.
3. We have responsibility for determining; monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
4. We recognise that our Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, management of the school and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.
5. We have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so.
6. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all legal requirements as the employer.
7. We will encourage open governance and shall be seen to be doing so.
8. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect other schools and the wider community.
9. We will act honestly, with loyalty, diligently and in good faith.
10. The Clerk to the Governing Body will maintain a register of governors' business and pecuniary interests. Any governor failing to reveal information to enable the Governing Body to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of this code of conduct and as a result be bringing the Governing Body into disrepute. In such cases the Governing Body may consider suspending the governor.
11. To comply with the schools Safeguarding Policy all Governors will be required to undertake a satisfactory (Disclosure and Barring Service) DBS check before they may take up office.
12. At the beginning of each academic year, all governors will read and sign the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.
13. All governors will complete the National Governance Association (NGA) online training module Safeguarding - The Governors Role, or equivalent.

14. The Governing Body will appoint a Safeguarding Link Governor, with the appropriate expertise, who will provide governors with an anonymised annual report on Safeguarding within the school.

## **COMMITMENT**

1. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. We recognise that work and family commitments may affect attendance and non-attendance may be considered a problem. Governors should submit their apologies to the Clerk to the Governing Body, stating the reason for their non-attendance. The committee members will decide if the reason is valid and whether to accept the apologies. If a governor has not submitted their apologies, the chair of the relevant committee will contact them to discuss their absence. Non-attendance will be considered a problem if a governor has two absences in a row or whose attendance is inconsistent or a governor misses a third of meetings in a twelve-month period. Governors' attendance will be monitored on a termly basis, and any initial concerns addressed. If an attendance issue arises and no resolution is possible, the Chair will share the issue with governors and governors will decide what action should be taken. If the governor in question is a Foundation Governor, it may be necessary to have a discussion with the Diocese to decide a way forward.
2. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Body, attend regularly and accept our share of responsibilities by serving on a minimum of two committees and on working parties when required. It is possible for an individual governor to only serve on one committee (for specific work/personal reasons) but this should be in full discussion and agreement with the Chair.
3. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
4. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development and will undertake relevant training.
5. Any governor who aspires to the role of Chair of Governors will undertake the relevant training in preparation for the role.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

1. We will work as a team.
2. We will seek to have robust conversations at meetings.
3. 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.
4. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with our Headteacher, staff, parents, Diocese, and other relevant agencies and the community.
5. We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but to do this there must be trust between governors.
6. We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

1. We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the Governing Body in meetings and from our visits to school as governors.

2. We will observe complete confidentiality regarding matters concerning individual staff or pupils.
3. We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the Governing Body.

**COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

1. We will accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents. This means we will not speak out against decisions, in public or private, outside the Governing Body meetings.
2. We will only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
3. In responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures outlined in the Complaints Procedure.
4. Our visits to school will be undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Body, in agreement with the Headteacher and staff.
5. We will always act in a professional and courteous manner in our interactions with each other, staff in the school, pupils, parents, visitors and with any other person especially where it can be identified we are governors of the school.
6. We will operate by taking majority decisions at quorate meetings.

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

1. At the beginning of each governing body meeting, governors should declare if they have an interest in an item on the agenda.
2. Governors who have children attending St Mark’s should follow the school procedures when wishing to report a matter or make contact with staff. Being a governor does not give a parent an accelerated way to resolve an issue.
3. Governors who have children attending the school and are visiting in a parental capacity, should not wear their governor lanyard.
4. 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.
5. When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media), we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation and ethos of the school.
6. 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.

**SUSPENSION OR REMOVAL**

If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending or removing a governor, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process. We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort. No individual governor can remove a governor; it will be a decision taken by the full governing body.

As a member of the Governing Body of St Mark’s Catholic School I agree to abide by the principles set out in this document

..... **Sign**

..... **Print Name**      .....**Date**