

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



Code of Practice for School Governors

September 2023

Mission Statement

St. Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

Ethos

We recognise that there is a challenge in creating an enriching environment for all those involved at every level of school life. We take our lead and inspiration from Christ with regard to the Gospel values: the belief that all human beings are uniquely created and loved by God and worthy of respect. This challenge manifests itself in the way that we treat and value:

- Our relationships with each other and the wider community;
- Our respect for one another;
- Our welcome to and interest in all those who visit our school;

- Discipline inspired by forgiveness, healing and reconciliation;
- Our school environment.

Through rising to this challenge we aim to create an awareness of a sense of belonging to and being part of the life of St Mary's.

The Aims of our School

We will endeavour to create a Catholic Ethos in our school, which reflects the Gospel values, through the love, care and respect we show to each other, and to all who come to our school. We will teach the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.

Through the prayer and worship in school we will try to be a living community of people celebrating their love for God and one another.

We believe the quality of the curriculum, with Religious Education at its core, is of prime importance and will focus on the development of the whole child. We will at all times try to make provision for children with special needs, so that all members of our school community achieve their potential.

We will help the children to develop an awareness of and respect for other religious and cultural backgrounds, as we believe this to be an essential preparation for adult life.

We believe that good communication between governors, staff, parents and children is important for the well-being of our school, and we will work in partnership with the wider community especially the home and parish in developing each child's potential.

Aims for Each Child at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

- ◆ Whilst at St. Mary's School I will learn about being a Christian. I will experience the beliefs, traditions and practices of the Catholic Faith.

- ◆ I will achieve as much as I possibly can in each area of the National Curriculum.
- ◆ I will know how to learn and enjoy learning, and will view work in a positive and conscientious manner.
- ◆ I will co-operate and communicate with others effectively, independently and in a group, and try to win and lose graciously.
- ◆ I will tolerate and respect the religious beliefs, views and values of others, understand the need for good behaviour and moderate my behaviour accordingly. I will respect the belongings and property of others.
- ◆ If I have a problem I know I can find someone who will discuss it with me.
- ◆ I will try to learn from my mistakes and accept there is always room for improvement.
- ◆ I will share a sense of responsibility for my school, parish, local community and the wider environment.

Code of Practice for School Governors

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

Once this code has been adopted by the governing body, all members agree to faithfully abide by it.

We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

The Seven Nolan 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.

The governing board will focus on our core governance functions:

- ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Fulfil our Role & Responsibilities

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day to day management.
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school.
- We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We shall fully co-operate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring checks.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
- We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.

- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
- We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/ communities.
- We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities and other schools.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will act as a governor; not as a representative of any group.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, 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.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

The Governing Body of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School adopted this code of practice on 18th September 2023.

Signed (Chair of board)

The governing board agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and it will be endorsed by the full governing board.

The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.

1. **Selflessness** School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. **Integrity** School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. **Objectivity** School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. **Accountability** School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness** School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty** School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. **Leadership** School and college leaders 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. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **Trust:** *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **Wisdom:** *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and

rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

- c. **Kindness:** *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- d. **Justice:** *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
- e. **Service:** *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.
- f. **Courage:** *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
- g. **Optimism:** *leaders are positive and encouraging*
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.

Signed

Printed name

Date:

Appendix: 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. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

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.

Objectivity

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.

Accountability

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.

Openness

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.

Honesty

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.

Leadership

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