



St Mary's CofE Primary School

GOVERNING BOARD

CODE OF CONDUCT 2025

This code of conduct is based on DfE, NGA and AfC guidance and sets out the expectations on and commitment required from our school governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It will be amended, from time to time, to include specific reference to the ethos and values of our particular school. Unless otherwise stated it applies to all levels of school governance.

We request that all members of the governing body annually sign up to the code to evidence their commitment to the expectations placed upon them. Any newly appointed governors will also be expected to agree to the code in line with their appointment.

St Mary's was established by Trust Deed (1870), and our Instrument of Government (2015) states: 'Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to service its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.'

In our planning and provision we seek to embody and live out our theologically rooted Christian vision so that every child and adult has the opportunity to grow in their spiritual development and so flourish spiritually. The Bible and Christian practice root us and enable us in this task.

The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction by:

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

Ensuring accountability by:

- Appointing the headteacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity by:

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

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

Role & responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing 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 governing 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 government 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. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We recognise how essential it is to ensure school is a safe place for children. We accept our responsibility for maintaining safeguarding as a high priority, and will maintain awareness of changes in statutory guidance and practice, including reading the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- We will not act in any way that might pose a risk of harm to children in the school, and we will not act outside of school in a manner viewed as unsuitable for an individual to work with children.
- 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 headteacher.

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 commit to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, explain in advance to the clerk or chairs why we are unable to.
- 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 headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.

- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake to attend the 'Getting to Grips with Governance' (or equivalent) CPD session within the first three to six months of appointment, and aim to attend three CPD training sessions each year. We acknowledge that if, as individuals, we do not comply with training expectations this could lead to possible suspension from the governing body.
- We commit to refresh relevant training every three years (five years in the case of safer recruitment) to keep abreast of current changes in legislation.
- We acknowledge that our full names, date of appointment, term of office, date of resignation and applicable appointing body will be published on the school website.
- We acknowledge that our attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the academic year will be published on the website.
- We acknowledge that, in accordance with government legislation, we will comply with the school to instigate the application of an enhanced criminal records certificate within 21 days of appointment to the governing body.
- We acknowledge and agree to note our application form number and register immediately with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update Service (free to volunteers) at: www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service
- We acknowledge that by registering to the Update Service an annual DBS check will be electronically renewed, free of charge, in my capacity as a governor on this governing body.

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.
- We will support the chairs in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors 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 headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority, the diocese and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will acknowledge that as governors we are representatives of our category of governorship as opposed to representatives for parents or staff and are primarily appointed due to the skills that we bring to the governing body.

Proceedings of the governing body

- As a corporate body, we will agree alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings including, but not limited to, by telephone or video conference.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will use the allocated individual school email address (LGFL account) for school business matters in order to preserve confidentiality and maintain an effective audit trail in respect of GDPR matters.

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.
- The Register of Business Interests and governors' details will be published on the school website in line with the Statutory Guidance for the Constitution of Governing Bodies August 2017, for all governors and associate members. Any governor failing to provide information to enable the governing body to fulfil its responsibilities may be in breach of the code of conduct and as a result be bringing the governing body into disrepute.
- 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.

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 or removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that is believed to have breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice-chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

All members of the governing body at St Mary's CoE Primary School, Chessington are expected to adopt and abide by the Seven Principles for Public Life (Nolan Committee) when carrying out their role as governor of the school. These are:

Selflessness – Holder of public office should act solely in 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 – Holder 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 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.

