



Model Code of Conduct for Governors and Trustees

for use by Governing Boards of VA/VC schools, Single Academy Trusts and
Local Governing Bodies within Multi-Academy Trusts

How to use this model code:

Governing boards should use a code of conduct alongside role descriptions to ensure all members understand what is expected of them.

This model code of conduct is anchored in the Church of England's [Vision for Education](#) and the [Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life](#). Consistent with recommendations of the National Governance Association, this model code is also aligned with the [Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education](#) which outlines principles that support ethical decision-making and challenge unethical behaviour.

Please adapt this code where indicated to your school's local context.

Boards should review and approve their code of conduct annually, normally at the first meeting of the autumn term. When reviewing your code, we encourage governing boards to reflect on the events of the previous year and consider if any changes are required. We recommend that you publish your code of conduct on the school website and include it whenever inducting new governors to your board.

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Introduction

[insert school name] is a Church of England [voluntary aided / controlled / academy school] which aims to serve our community by providing the best possible education within the context of Christian belief and practice and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan levels.

This code is underpinned by the Church of England's vision for education, which is deeply Christian, with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart, and for the common good of the whole community. This code is also anchored in the Seven Nolan Principles for Public Life.

Our school's distinctive Christian vision is [insert vision and values]

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

The Principles of Public Life

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

- 1. Selflessness** – We will act solely in terms of the public interest.



2. **Integrity** – We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
3. **Objectivity** – We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
4. **Accountability** – We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness** – We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty** – We will be truthful.
7. **Leadership** – We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Our core governance functions.

We will focus on our core governance functions, with the wellbeing of pupils as our central and common concern:

- 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.

Our individual commitment

As individual members of the school's governing board, we agree to:

1. Fulfil our role and responsibilities:

1. We accept that our role is strategic. We will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management of the school and its staff. We will avoid any actions that might undermine these arrangements.
2. We commit to working in partnership with each other and school staff to develop and improve the school.
3. We will develop, share and live the Christian vision and values of our school.
4. We acknowledge the particular additional role of foundation governors in ensuring that the school's Christian vision is reflected in all aspects of school life and that the school is conducted in accordance with any trust deed.
5. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures, as well as all statutory requirements that apply to school governors and trustees.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.



7. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective. We will not speak against majority decisions outside the board meeting.
9. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have been given express authority by the board to do so. When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if that might be different to our personal views.
10. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice. This includes seeking advice where necessary before taking action.
11. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
12. We will at all times be mindful of and strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications, including on social media.
13. We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010 and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
14. Where decisions or actions conflict with the Church of England's vision for education, the Seven Principles of Public Life, or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up. If we have concerns about the activities of any individual or the board, we will follow established procedures (for example, this Code of Conduct, complaints, safeguarding, whistleblowing) in bringing them to the attention of appropriate persons or bodies.

2. Demonstrate our commitment to the role:

1. 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.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school in accordance with the framework or protocols established by the board and agreed with the Headteacher.
6. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

3. Build and maintain relationships:



1. We will develop effective working relationships with each other, school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community, including the linked parish church, the London Diocesan Board for Schools and the local authority.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members, staff, and the board's clerk, both inside and outside of meetings. We will ensure that our contributions relate to matters proper for discussion by the board.
3. We will strive to work as a team and to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally. We will listen to perspectives that differ from our own and, when disagreements arise, we will strive to disagree well with one another.
4. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.
5. We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed. We will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed by other governors.

4. Respect confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern named or identifiable staff, pupils or families.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board discussion or vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.
- We accept that this commitment to respect confidentiality includes all forms of verbal, written and electronic communication, including social media.

5. 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 in the best interests of the school, and 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 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.

6. Breach of this code

- We accept that consequences will follow any breach of this code.
- If we consider that this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate as appropriate.
- We agree that the board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Approved on: [insert]

Next review date: [insert]

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