



Mary & John Governing Body – Code of Conduct

Governing Body Core Functions

The Governing Body (GB) has the following core strategic functions:

- **Establishing the strategic direction of the school, by:**
 - Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values and objectives for the school
 - Agreeing school improvement strategy, with priorities and targets
 - Meeting statutory duties
- **Ensuring accountability, by:**
 - Appointing the headteacher
 - Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
 - Conducting headteacher appraisal
 - Engaging with stakeholders
 - Contributing to school self-evaluation
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the school, by:**
 - Setting the budget
 - Monitoring spending against the budget
 - Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
 - Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

Governor Code of Conduct

In the text of this code of conduct, the terms 'governor' and 'governors' are understood to refer to all members of the GB, including associate members.

As individual members of the GB we agree to the following:

Role and responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the GB and its core strategic functions, and will strive to fulfil these.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school, safeguard the interests of the school and its pupils in the wider community, and uphold the mission of the school, as expressed in our vision statement: *Within our tradition as a Church of England Primary School, we are committed to making St Mary & St John an inclusive environment, fostering curiosity, spirituality, creativity and respect. At our school we want everyone to be valued, to explore the joy of learning, and to achieve their full potential.* Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the GB has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the GB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the GB or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside GB meetings.
- 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 not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the GB.
- We will actively support and challenge the school leadership team.

- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the GB and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the school.
- We will respect the role of the leadership team and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. 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 agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the GB as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When speaking or writing formally in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.

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 GB, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings, and where we cannot attend we will explain in advance why we are unable to; and we will prepare in advance for meetings, including by reading the relevant papers.
- 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 GB.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (e.g. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance our full name, date of appointment, term of office, category of governor, the name of the body responsible for appointing us, our role(s) on the GB, attendance records and relevant business and pecuniary interests will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools).

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, the clerk to the GB and school staff, both in meetings and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment in which the contributions of all governors are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct, both during meetings and at all other times.
- We will take due account of the views of parents and carers, pupils, staff and other interested parties, and seek to develop effective working relationships with the staff, parents and carers, the local authority, other relevant agencies and the wider community.

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, including after we leave the office of governor.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a GB meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any GB vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately, including after we leave the office of governor.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record, in the school's Register of Business/Pecuniary Interests, any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with GB business, and any interest of people with whom we are connected, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business/Pecuniary Interests will be published on the school's website.
- 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 GB.

Ceasing to be a governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after we leave the office of governor.

Breach of this code

- If we believe this code has been breached we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate. The GB may resort to use of suspension/removal of a governor from the GB; but only after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- If we believe the code has been breached by the chair, another member of the GB (e.g. the vice-chair) will investigate.

Implementing the code

- All governors and associate members of the GB will be given a copy of this code as part of their induction as a governor/associate member.
- Annually, all governors and associate members will review the code (at the first GB meeting of the school year), and agree to follow it.
- The code will be published on the school website and will be made available to view by all governors and associate members on GovernorHub.
- The code will be reviewed and updated, as appropriate, at least every three years.

Principles of Public Life

Finally, we agree as a GB to act in accordance with the seven principles of public life, as set out below.

The seven principles of public life

Originally published by the Nolan Committee (the Committee on Standards in Public Life 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), the seven principles are:

- **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.

Reviewed and updated: September 2021

To be next reviewed: July 2024