



GOVERNING BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

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

The Governing Board 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

The Governing Board will also adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, which are:-

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.

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Roles and Responsibilities

1. We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the Headteacher.
2. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
3. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
4. 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.
5. We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
6. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
7. 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.
8. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
9. We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.
10. We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
11. We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
12. We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law

13. 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;
14. when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

Commitment

1. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
2. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
3. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to do so.
4. We will get to know our school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the Headteacher.
6. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.
7. We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, dates 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.
8. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor/trustee/academy committee member.
9. In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

1. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors/trustees/academy committee members, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
3. We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
4. 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.
5. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority, other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or students, both inside or outside school.
2. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
3. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
4. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflict of Interest

1. 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 board'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. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
3. 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 board.

Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/academy committee member leaves office

Breach of this code of conduct

1. If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
2. Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

Suspension and Removal

1. If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, we will do so by following the Procedures Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process. Grounds for suspension include acting in a way inconsistent with ethos of the school, breach of the duty of confidentiality to the school or any member of staff or student at the school.
2. We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies who have the power to remove those they appoint.
3. If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor, we will do so by following the Constitution Regulations so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Adopted by the governing board of St Thomas More Roman Catholic Academy on Wednesday,.