

# **St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School**

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Catholic Primary School



## **GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT**

“We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God”

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Catholic Primary School



## Validation Grid

<b>Title</b>	Governing Body Code of Conduct
<b>Author</b>	Barbara Costa
<b>Associate Author</b>	N/A
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Headteacher Barbara Costa Barbara Costa

Chair of Governors Fiona Kerin Fiona Kerin

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## **1. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education Act 2011
- The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012

This policy also has due regard to Department of Education (DfE) guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Governance handbook' 2020
- 'Keeping children safe in education' 2016
- 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006' 2016
- 'The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools' 2017

## **2. The Role of the Governing Body**

The term 'Governing Body' in this document includes the governing body of a Catholic voluntary aided school.

The term 'school' in this document includes a Catholic voluntary aided school.

As a Governing Body, our overarching responsibility lies in ensuring that we comply with our legal and a canonical duty to ensure that the Catholic character of the school is preserved and developed and that this duty permeates everything we do.

We understand that Foundation Governors are required, as the cornerstone of their role, to ensure this objective is achieved. However, all governors have a duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school in order to fulfil the objects set out in its governing documents.

### 3. The Three Core Strategic Functions

Further, in accordance with our legal obligations, we endeavour to operate at a strategic level, leaving the school's senior leadership responsible and accountable for the operational day-to-day running of the school. It is by achieving these aims that we can be sure that our school has effective governance. Our core strategic functions, as a governing body, therefore are in:

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 a Headteacher who is fit for purpose.
- 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.

We understand that the Catholic Church expects Catholic schools to promote and uphold high standards, including academic standards as an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people.

We understand that Canon law requires Catholic schools to be “. . . at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area” and that governors should be mindful of this requirement in all that they do.

We adhere to the Church's social teaching which is a rich treasury of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Several of the key themes that are at the heart of Catholic social tradition and which should permeate through our school are:

- Life and dignity of the human person.
- Call to family, community and participation.
- Rights and responsibilities.

- Option for the poor and vulnerable.
- The dignity of work and the rights of the workers.
- Solidarity.
- Care for God's creation.

#### **4. Collective Responsibility**

As Governors, we agree to our collective responsibilities as follows:

##### Roles and Responsibilities

- We will preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and this responsibility will permeate throughout all of our actions within, and through all aspects of, the school and the local community.
- We will ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed, which includes the provisions of:
  - Canon Law.
  - The Curriculum Directory and Bishops' statements on religious education.
  - Any Diocesan directives relating to schools.
- We will conduct the school in accordance with its Instrument of Government and in particular its mission statement.
- We will support and implement the policies and procedures of the diocese, including the Diocesan Bishop's policies on education, including religious education, and Admissions Guidance issued by the diocese, and the expectations of the Diocesan Bishops issued collectively, specifically the Bishops' memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic schools.
- We will respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the Diocesan Bishop, complying in all respects with diocesan requirements.
- We will protect, promote and serve the Diocese in the ministry of our role as governors faithfully and in particular in compliance with Diocesan Protocols for a committed working relationship between the Diocese and the school.
- We will consider not only the interests of the school, but the interests of other Catholic schools, colleges, academies and of Catholic education throughout the diocese.
- We will undertake to discharge our duties as governors with due care and diligence.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools, colleges and academies.

- We will attend relevant training including diocesan training; governor induction and continuing professional development training, as required by the diocese.
- We understand the purpose of the governing body and our role as governors and the role of senior leadership.
- 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 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 encourage transparency and will act appropriately.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the senior leadership.
- We will adhere to the Nolan principles set out in Appendix I.

#### Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant 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 make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and positively respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to the school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- We will evaluate our effectiveness as a governing body by way of completing a skills audit and a self-evaluation on an annual basis.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for continuous training and development as required by the diocesan education service, and will undertake that relevant training and any mandatory training as may be required by the law.

- We accept, that in the interests of transparency, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website, and anything else as required by law.

#### Relationships

- In all our relationships we shall exercise stewardship and draw on the teachings and example of Jesus Christ in that:
  - All relationships will be built on the core values of the Gospel based on the Beatitudes summarised as: faithfulness and integrity; dignity and compassion; humility and gentleness; truth and justice; forgiveness and mercy; purity and holiness; tolerance and peace and service and sacrifice.
- We will comply with Diocesan Protocols for a committed working relationship between the Diocese and the school.
- We will ensure that we continually communicate with and, where appropriate, seek support and guidance from our diocesan education service.
- 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 chair in 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 diocese, parish, the senior leadership, staff and parents, pupils, the local authority (LA), other relevant agencies, and the local community.

#### Confidentiality

- We will observe confidentiality in all circumstance in particular in relation to matters concerning specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside the school, unless there is a lawful requirement for disclosure.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding the business of the school arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will exercise care and skill when communicating through social media.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.



## Conflicts of Interest

- We will always act in the best interests of the charitable objects set out in the governing documents of the school.
- 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 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.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise .

## **5. Virtual Meetings**

- We will attend virtual meetings if required using the virtual meeting platform agreed by the governing body.
- We will behave appropriately in line with the instructions given by the host of the meeting.
- If instructed by the host we will ensure that our microphones are on mute, unless we are required to make a contribution.
- We will have our cameras switched on.
- If we need to leave the meeting whilst a presentation is taking place then explain this in the chatroom of the online platform so the Clerk can note that we are not present.
- We will ensure that our remote meeting attendance is in an appropriate quiet room and not in a public place.

## **6. Breach of this Code**

- If we believe this code has been breached we will promptly raise this issue with the chair, consult with the diocese, determine the investigatory process (if any); the governing body will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair, will investigate.
- In the event that the need arises to suspend a governor, the governing board will do so by following the established procedures as to ensure a fair and objective process.

- In the event of a resolution being made to remove a governor from office, the following procedure will be implemented:
  - A resolution to remove a governor from office will be included on an agenda and circulated to all members of the governing board.
  - A meeting will be held and the resolution to remove the governor from office will be fully explained.
  - Governors will give due and careful consideration to the reasons given to remove the governor from office.
  - The governor, whom it has been proposed to remove from the governing board, will be given the opportunity to make a statement in response to the resolution to remove them from office.
  - Within 14 days of the first meeting, a second meeting must be held and an item, specifying that the governing board will confirm their decision, included on the agenda.
  - Any elected staff or parent governor who has been disqualified from their role and removed from office will be disqualified from serving as a governor and holding office for a period of five years. This period is taken from the date immediately after the day they were disqualified from their elected role. Given the consequence of the five-year disqualification period, the governing board's power to remove an elected parent or staff governor will only be used in exceptional and serious circumstances which may include the following:
    - Serious misconduct.
    - Repeated serious incompetence.
    - Engagement in conduct which aims to undermine fundamental British value.
    - Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the governing board.
    - Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the school.
  - A governor who has been removed from the governing board has the right of appeal. The governor should exercise their right of appeal by writing to the clerk to governors within ten working days of their removal from the governing board; making clear the reasons for their appeal.
  - On receipt of an appeal, the governing board will establish an independent appeal panel. The appeal panel will comprise of a panel of three governors and membership may include a governor from another school or an appropriate representative from the LA.

## **Appendix I The Seven Principles of Public Life - The Nolan Principles**

(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.

### **The Six Principles of Good Governance in our Code of Conduct**

1. Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and users.
2. Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles.
3. Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.
4. Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk.
5. Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective.
6. Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real.