

Code of Practice for Members of a Church of England Governing Body

1. Rationale

The purpose of this code of practice is to enable the governing body to:

- Fulfil its primary role as the strategic leaders to make sure every child gets the best possible education
- Build a productive and supportive relationship with the head teacher and staff in promoting the Christian ethos of the school while holding them to account for school performance

2. Legal Framework

- The Governing body is a corporate body. Governors have no authority to act individually
- All governors have equal status and, although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, the central concern must be the welfare of the school

3. Role and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction ensuring that the school has identified what the Christian ethos means for the school in its context and community
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- Holding the head teacher and senior leadership team to account for the educational performance of pupils and the performance management of staff
- Ensuring the school meets statutory requirements and additional functions and responsibilities depending on its category

4. Commitment

Being a governor:

- Involves participating fully in the work of the governing body so that individuals accept a fair share of the responsibilities and duties, including service on committees and working parties. Individual governors should be prepared to serve on at least one committee
- Requires regular attendance at meetings of the full governing body and committees
- Requires getting to know the school well, getting involved in school activities and undertaking at least 2 monitoring visits per year
- Requires considering seriously individual and collective training and development needs and using any designated funds to address them

5. Confidentiality

Governors should:

- Observe confidentiality routinely as a matter of course, but particularly when explicitly asked to do so, for example regarding matters concerning staff, children or their parents/carers
- Keep discussion about decisions confidential even when decisions themselves are made public through the minutes of meetings
- Exercise prudence when invited to respond in discussions and informal talk outside governing body meetings. Refrain from passing individual comment but encourage issues to be brought to the attention of the headteacher or governing body (depending on the nature of the issue) through the proper channels
- Any media contact should be directed to the Diocesan Communications Officer

6. Relationships

The governing body will strive to:

- Develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, children, parents, other local schools, the Diocese, the local community, the Local Authority and those legal bodies which act as stakeholders in the school

In forming, building and sustaining good working relationships governors will strive to:

- Remember that they are typically representative of the category of governor to which they are appointed or elected. They are not representatives of those groups e.g. a representative parent, not a representative of the parents
- Work as members of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted, forming the governing body which functions with corporate responsibility and accountability and that all relationships are built on trust
- Develop an open and honest relationship with the head teacher and all school staff; acting as a 'critical friend' to the school, ensuring a balance is struck between offering challenge and support

7. Conduct

Governors have a general duty to act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school and will strive to behave professionally at all times:

- Governors will aim to discharge their duties in a manner that maintains and develops the positive Christian ethos of the school and its reputation in the local community and wider educational community. Governors' actions at all times should reflect the responsibility to secure the positive Christian ethos of the school
- Governors should reflect on how they are perceived by stakeholders in all they say and do, both as individual governors and as a corporate body and conduct their duties in line with the vision of the hope, wisdom, dignity and community
- Governors should consider carefully how their decisions and actions might affect others, whether they are individuals employed by the school, children or adults who are part of the school community, other schools in the locality or the wider community
- Governors should express views openly at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or any individual governor delegated to do so
- Governors should not speak out against majority decisions in public or in private outside the governing body. The intention is to protect the reputation and authority of the governing body and the school in the public domain. If governors have a concern they should speak to the Chair of Governors or the Diocese
- Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically authorised to do so
- Governors will respond to criticism or complaints about the school and/or its staff by referring to the school's Complaints Procedure adopted by the governing body for the correct procedure to be followed and will advise the complainant accordingly
- Governors will record in the Register of Business Interests any pecuniary interest they might have in connection with the governing body's business
- Governors will be expected to declare when they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business and withdraw from the meeting while it is under discussion
- Governors will undertake school visits only in consultation with the headteacher
- **On application, all Foundation Governors sign to they have read and agree to adhere by the above 'Code of Practice for Members of a Church of England Governing Body' of the Diocese of Hereford.**
- **All Church of England Maintained schools in Hereford Diocese strongly advised to adopt this Code of Practice for all members of their Governing Body to abide by.**