



St. Mary & St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS

**This Code of Conduct has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body of St. Mary
& St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School**

on Thursday 15th October 2020

and will be reviewed – October 2021

Signed by the Chair of the Governing Body

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Meikle'.

Mrs Sarah Meikle

As a member of the Governing Body¹ of the School² I undertake that I:

- Will preserve and develop the Catholic character of our School.
- Will not act in any way that is detrimental and/or prejudicial to the interests of Catholic education in the Diocese and the School.
- Have read, understood and will adhere to this Code of Conduct and to the declarations in the Appendices to this document.
- Have read and understood the criteria for appointment and, to the best of my knowledge can confirm I am eligible for appointment.
- Declare that I am not disqualified by law from appointment as a director/governor.
- Agree to DBS checks and any other relevant checks being conducted that may be required by law or good practice.
- Understand that any refusal to do so will result in the termination of any appointment.
- Consent to the information given by me being held and processed by the academy trust company/governing body and/or the Diocese, [or religious order] including the sharing of data with third parties where required, in accordance with any [diocesan [or religious order]] policy.

Signed by the Governor³:

Dated:

Printed Name:

Type of Governor:

¹ The term 'governing body' in this document includes the governing body of a Catholic voluntary aided school or college and the board of directors of a Catholic academy trust company and the local governing body (or any other body operating at a local level) of such academy trust company, where appropriate.

² The term 'schools' includes Catholic voluntary aided schools and Catholic academies and Catholic sixth-form colleges

³ The term "governor(s)" includes reference to director(s) in academy trust companies

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GOVERNING BODY:

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.

Canon law 806S2 requires that Catholic schools (which includes academies) are "...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.

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure 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 1) life and dignity of the human person 2) call to family, community and participation 3) rights and responsibilities 4) option for the poor and vulnerable 5) the dignity of work and the rights of workers 6) solidarity and 7) care for God's creation⁴.

The purpose of this governing body is to ensure that these values permeate all aspects of school life.

OUR OVERARCHING RESPONSIBILITY:

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

We understand that Foundation Directors and Governors are required, as the cornerstone of their role, to ensure this objective is achieved. However *all* directors and governors have a duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school in order to fulfil the objects cited in the Trust Deed and Instrument of Government of the school or the Articles of Association of the academy.

OUR THREE CORE STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS:

As a Governing Body we must:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of our school and its pupils; and for the internal organisation, management and control of our school, including performance management of staff; and
3. Oversee the financial performance of our school and making sure its money is well spent.
4. Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

⁴ <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>

AS GOVERNORS WE AGREE TO OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AS FOLLOWS:

Role & 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 respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the 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 any Memorandum of Understanding with our diocese.
- We will undertake to discharge our duties as governors with due care and diligence.
- We will ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with the Trust Deed and Instrument of Government of the school or the Articles of Association of the academy which includes the provisions of:
 - Canon law;
 - The Curriculum Directory and Bishops' statements on religious education; and
 - Any Diocesan directives relating to schools
- We will conduct the school in accordance with its Instrument of Government or Articles of Association and in particular its mission/ethos statement;
- We will support and implement the policies and procedures of the diocese, including the Bishop's policies on education, including religious education, and the directives issued by the Bishops collectively, specifically the Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Schools [and the Bishops' expectations and guidance on Admissions];
- We will consider not only the interests of the individual school, but the interests of other Catholic schools and colleges and of Catholic education throughout the diocese;
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will attend relevant training including diocesan training; director/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 the headteacher.
- 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 headteacher.

- We will adhere to the seven principles of public life set out in Appendix II.

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 governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups where required.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know our school well and positively respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit our school, with all visits to the school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will evaluate our effectiveness as a governing body by way of completing a skills audit and a self-evaluation form 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.
- 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 director/governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on our 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 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 sacrifice⁵
- We will comply with any protocol/memorandum of understanding with our diocese (if appropriate)
- 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 their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.

⁵ *Christ at the Centre: a summary of why the Church provides Catholic schools* Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

- 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, headteacher, staff and parents, pupils, the local authority, other relevant agencies, and the local community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe confidentiality in all circumstances in particular in relation to matters concerning specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school, unless there is a lawful requirement for disclosure.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business 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 / transparency

- We will always act in the best interests of the diocese and 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 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.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors, some of which will be publicly available.

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 (which is at the absolute discretion of the Ordinary [or religious superior]) 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.

We are reminded of the declaration that Foundation Governors signed on appointment as set out in Appendix I (the basic principles of which are agreed by all of the governing body).

Appendix I

Foundation Director/Foundation Governor Declaration †:

I am a committed Catholic in good standing with the Church

I am a Catholic priest in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

I wish to offer to protect, promote and serve the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle in the ministry of foundation governor and in compliance with any Memorandum of Understanding with the diocese.

I have read and understood the criteria for appointment and, to the best of my knowledge am eligible for appointment.

In offering to serve as a foundation governor in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, I undertake that I will serve the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle faithfully in this ministry. If appointed, I declare that I will be able and willing to give priority to my duties as a governor and will undertake to discharge those duties with due care and diligence.

I will undertake:

- To preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school or college to which I am appointed;
- To respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the Bishop, complying in all respects with diocesan requirements
- To 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; and
 - Any Diocesan directives relating to schools/colleges;
- To conduct the school in accordance with its Instrument (and Articles) of Government or Articles of Association and in particular its ethos statement;
- To become familiar with, to support and implement the policies and procedures of the diocese [and the religious order], including the Bishop's policies on education, including religious education, and the directives issued by the Bishops collectively, specifically the Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Teachers in Catholic Schools and the [Admissions Guidance], and to represent those policies and directives to the governing body;
- To consider not only the interests of the individual school, but the interests of other Catholic schools and colleges and of Catholic education throughout the diocese;
- To respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole as represented by the Bishop;
- To attend relevant training including diocesan training; governor induction and continuing professional development training, as required by the diocese
- In all actions, serving as a witness to the Catholic faith.

I declare that I am not disqualified by law from appointment as a governor. I confirm that I agree to a barred list check being made on me or any subsequent checks that may be required by law or good practice. I understand that any refusal to do so will result in the termination of any appointment. I consent to the information given on this form and other information collected with it being held and

processed by the Diocese, including the sharing of data with third parties where required, in accordance with diocesan [or religious order] policy.

I undertake that I shall tender my resignation as a governor if my circumstances change so as to contravene the diocesan expectations at any time during the tenure of office or if, in the opinion of the Ordinary my resignation would be in the best interests of Catholic education.

I understand and accept that the appointment and removal of foundation governors is at the absolute discretion of the Ordinary and that, because of the nature of the decision-making process, the Ordinary will not normally be able to engage in any discussion or correspondence with me and/or any third party where my nomination does not result in my appointment.

†This declaration is also required from you on appointment and is set out in the Director/Governor Nomination Form

Appendix II

The Seven Principles of Public life

(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