



All Saints Schools Trust

Governors Code of Conduct 2020 - 2022

(This policy has been drafted having regard for the school's Christian ethos.)

	Date	Signed
Agreed by Trust Board:	Autumn 2020	Melanie Barrow CEO
		James Hargrave Chair of Trustees
Fressingfield Governors	September 24 th 2020	Garry Deeks Chair
Review date:	Autumn 2022	

Governors' Code of Conduct

Rationale:

The Governing Bodies of the schools within All Saints Schools Trust recognise the importance of ensuring that the Governing Body fulfils its role and responsibilities and works as a unit to implement its core strategic functions which include:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Aims:

This code, which is reviewed and agreed regularly, sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors at our school in order for the Governing Body to properly carry out its work and statutory functions.

It is our understanding that this is not a legal document but an agreement between Governors which sets out responsibilities as well as Governors expectations of each other. We believe that the ability of our Governing Body to work together for the good of the school depends essentially on trust and an understanding of our common purpose.

Governors are encouraged to consider the commitment they make when consenting to this Code of Practice particularly in relation to the need to preserve confidentiality and to avoid conflicts of interest at all times.

Key Principles:

Governors should:

- support the aims and objectives of the school in the wider community
- work co-operatively with other governors in the best interest of the school
- attend the meetings of the Governing Body and its committees
- have an equal right to participate and to state their views whilst respecting the views of others
- be loyal to the decisions made by the Governing Body
- respect the confidentiality of those items of business that have been designated as confidential, do not disclose what individuals have said or how they have voted

- withdraw from meetings where they have any direct personal interest in the business being discussed
- participate in training.

As Individuals on the Governing Body We Agree to the Following:

Roles and Responsibilities:

- We have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates
- We recognise that the Head Teacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, day to day management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum
- We accept that all governors have equal status, and although appointed by different groups (parents, staff, Trust, Community) our overriding concern will be the welfare of the school as a whole
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so
- 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 individuals. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Body meeting.
- 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 open government and will act appropriately in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life as published by the Nolan Committee. (Appendix A) as well as the 7 principles and personal attributes outlined in the Competency Framework for Governance (Appendix B).
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the school, the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the Christian ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body in the School Complaints Procedure.
- We will actively support and challenge the Head Teacher.

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.

- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to do so.
- We will get to know the school well and respond positively to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school on a regular basis. All formal visits will be arranged in advance with the staff, agreed with the Head Teacher and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Body in its Governor Visits Policy. Following our visits, we will submit a Governor Visit report to the Head Teacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake any relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our names, terms of office, register of interests, roles on the Governing Body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website and submitted to any national database specified by the Department of Education.

Relationships:

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Head Teacher, staff and parents, ASST, the other Trust schools, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications.
- We will answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed
- We will support the Chair in ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.

Confidentiality:

- We will observe complete confidentiality on all matters related to our role as governor including where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Governing Body meeting whether in person, in correspondence or on social media.
- We will not reveal the details of any Governing Body vote.

Conflicts of Interest:

- We will act only in the best interests of the school as a whole at all times regardless of having been elected or appointed by a particular group.

- 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 acknowledge that social networking is a personal choice but, owing to its public nature, we will consider carefully the possible implications of participation in any forum in which the school or the governors are mentioned.

Training and Development:

Governor training is important. It develops effective teamwork and increases governors' knowledge and understanding of their role.

In the light of this, all governors agree to attend an induction course for new governors and participate in a regular programme of training and development.

Breach of this Code of Conduct:

It is hoped that the Governing Body will only need to consider this option as a last resort, for having understood and agreed this Code of Conduct, it is assumed that governors would not knowingly breach it. However,

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair who will investigate.
- Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, the Vice Chair will investigate.

The Governing Body will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

The Suspension of Governors:

In certain prescribed circumstances the Governing Body can decide to suspend a governor for a period of up to six months. The Governing Body can only suspend a governor if one or more of the following grounds apply.

- The governor is paid to work at the school and is the subject of disciplinary proceedings in relation to his or her employment.

- The governor is the subject of any court or tribunal proceedings, the outcome of which may be that he or she is disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor under Schedule 6 of the Constitution Regulations.
- The governor has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the school's ethos or religious character and has brought, or is likely to bring, the school, the Governing Body or his or her office of governor into disrepute.
- The governor is in breach of his or her duty of confidentiality to the school, the staff or to the pupils.

The Governing Body can vote to suspend a governor on any of the above grounds but does not have to do so. The Governing Body will only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Any motion to suspend will be specified as an agenda item of a meeting for which at least seven clear days' notice must be given. Before the Governing Body votes to suspend a governor, the governor proposing the suspension must give the reasons for doing so. The governor who is proposed for suspension must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before withdrawing from the meeting for a vote to take place.

A governor who has been suspended will be given notice of any meetings and will be sent agendas, reports and papers for any meetings during his or her suspension.

A governor who has been suspended cannot be disqualified from holding office for failure to attend meetings under Paragraph 5 of Schedule 6 of the Constitution Regulations.

Removal of Governors:

The Governing Body has the right to remove co-opted governors or appointed or elected parent or staff governors. It will however only exercise this power in exceptional circumstances where the actions or behaviour of the elected governor warrant removal rather than suspension. It will not be used simply to remove dissenting or challenging voices. Some examples of situations which may give rise to removal include where:

- there has been repeated grounds for suspension
- there has been serious misconduct
- a governor displays repeated and serious incompetence
- the governor has engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

- the governor has demonstrated conduct that is inconsistent with the ethos or religious character of the school and has brought or is likely to bring the school, the Governing Body or their office as a governor into disrepute
- the governor has demonstrated a serious failure to cooperate with the governors or the Governing Body as a whole and there has been an irretrievable breakdown in relationship between the governor and the Governing Body
- the actions of the governor are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Governing Body, distracting it from its core strategic functions; and/or the actions of a governor interfere with the operational efficiency of the school thereby wasting a significant amount of Head Teacher and/or senior leadership time.

Foundation governors may only be removed from office by the appointing body. Should that decision be taken, the appointing body will give written notice of the removal to the clerk of the Governing Body and to the governor concerned.

Trust governors may be removed from office by the Trust and must give written notice of the removal to the Clerk of the Governing Body and the governor concerned.

Ex-Officio Foundation governors may be removed from office by the Governing Body if requested to do so by the person named in the Instrument of Government as the person entitled to make such a request. That person must give the clerk and the governor concerned written reasons for the request.

Procedure for Removal of Governors:

Removal of a co-opted, parent, staff or ex-officio foundation governor by the Governing Body is effected by a resolution of the Governing Body but only if:

- the removal is confirmed by a resolution passed at a second meeting of the Governing Body not less than 14 days after the first meeting;
- the removal of the governor has been specified as an item on the agenda of both meetings and;
- the following additional conditions are satisfied:
 - where the governor concerned is an ex-officio foundation governor, the additional condition is that the Governing Body considers the reasons for removal and gives the governor concerned the chance to make a statement in response
 - where the governor concerned is a co-opted governor or elected parent or staff governor or an appointed parent governor, the governor proposing the

removal must at the meeting give reasons for the proposal and the governor concerned must have the chance to make a statement in response.

Where at all possible, a governor who is being proposed for removal will be provided with written details of the case against them ahead of any meeting as well as details of how their case will be handled and the timeframes involved. They will also be given sufficient time and support to respond.

In the event that a governor wishes to appeal against the decision to remove them, an independent panel will be convened which may include governors from other schools and/or a diocesan representative.

New and Prospective Governors:

This Code of Conduct will be provided to all new governors as part of their induction process.

Period of Review:

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed every two years.

Appendix A

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.

Appendix B

Committed - Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

Confident - Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.

Curious - Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

Challenging - Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.

Collaborative - Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.

Critical - Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

Creative - Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.