Code of Conduct

For maintained school governing bodies

Updated July 2025

Once this code has been adopted, all governors agree to faithfully abide by it.

We will abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life and demonstrate our commitment to ethical governance:

Selflessness
We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity
We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity
We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability
We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness
We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty
We will be truthful.

Leadership
We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff;
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

NGA recognises the following fourth core function of governance:

4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

As individual board members, we agree to:

Fulfil our role and responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school and maintain and uphold our school's religious ethos.
3. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We will fully cooperate with requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, including disclosure and barring checks.
5. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
7. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
9. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
10. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
11. We will fulfil our responsibilities to school staff, ensuring a safe working environment, support for their wellbeing, and acting fairly and without bias.
12. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
13. We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
14. We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and, where we cannot attend, explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
5. We will visit the school and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.

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2. We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities and other schools.
3. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
4. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
5. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.
5. We will practice good ICT security, keep personal data safe and support GDPR compliance.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the register of business interests.
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the register of business interests will be published on the school's website.
5. We will act as a governor; not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, 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 the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school website.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information about Schools), some of which will be publicly available.
8. We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions including suspension or removal from the governing body as a last resort.

Publishing information

1. To ensure our board is transparent and open to the community we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.
2. We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
    a. The structure and remit of the board and any committees, and the full name of the chair of each one
    b. For each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
    c. Their full name
    d. Their date of appointment

Commented [HS1]: New section as printed in the model Code of Conduct on Knowledge.

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e. Their term of office
f. The date when they stepped down (where applicable)
g. The body which appointed them
h. Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
i. Their attendance record at board and committee meetings over the last academic year

Relevant interests include:

j. A business interest in a company that could gain from your position on the governing board
k. Governance roles in other educational institutions
l. Relationships with other governors or members of school staff

3. We accept that the information relating to governors will be published on Get Information About Schools.
4. We accept that the board may collect diversity data to publish on the school's website, which could include information on any of the 9 protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.
5. We understand that providing this information is voluntary and that, if we have already provided this information, we are able to request it be removed from any reporting.
6. We accept that the approved board and committee minutes, and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person.

Social media

Commented [HS2]: New section as per model Code of Conduct Policy on Knowledge.

We will:

1. Abide by any requirements set out in our school's social media policy.
2. Uphold the reputation of our school at all times.
3. Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our school community.
4. Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available.
5. Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards governors, to the chair of governors and the headteacher.
6. Carefully consider how appropriate it would be to accept any friend requests from parents/carers, or to join any parent/carer groups associated with our school.
7. We will not:
   a. Accept friend requests from pupils.
   b. Disclose any information that is confidential or would breach data protection principles.
   c. Make comments online about any members of the governing board or our school community.
   d. Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or our school into disrepute.

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Breach of this code of conduct

If we believe this Code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair of Governors 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.

Should it be the Chair of Governors that we believe has breached this Code, another Governor, such as the Vice-chair will investigate.

Appendix 1: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If we suspect a Governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The Chair will investigate.
- The Chair will hold a meeting with the Governor to discuss the issue. The Governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another Governor will attend to corroborate any decisions.
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
- Further meetings with the Chair to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct.
- Support, mentoring or training for the Governor.
- Making sure the Governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in.
- If there is no improvement in the Governor's behaviour, the Board will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances.

Governors may be suspended if they:

- Are a staff Governor undergoing disciplinary proceedings at the school.
- Are undergoing court or tribunal proceedings that would result in the Governor being disqualified from holding office.
- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the ethos of the school and has brought or is likely to bring the school into disrepute.
- Breach confidentiality.
- 'Bringing the Board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:
- Speaking out publicly against the school.
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community.
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media.

We may remove a Governor from office where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension.
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious.
- They display repeated and serious incompetence.

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- They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values.
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the school.

Adopted by St. Leonard's CofE Primary School on date.

Signed (Chair of Governors):

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We agree that this Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually endorsed by the full Governing Body.

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