

Code of Practice for Governors

Introduction

This is not a statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles and values by which the Governing Body of St. Francis operates.

General

1. Governors of the school have responsibility for the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates. This means they determine, monitor and keep under review such issues. Governors appoint the Head teacher to manage these responsibilities for them and should recognise that the Head teacher, together with the Senior Management Team, is responsible for the implementation of policy, day to day management of the school and delivery of the curriculum.
2. All Governors are appointed with equal status. Their central and common concern should be the welfare of the school as a whole. In this they must always have regard that there is an overriding duty to preserve the Catholic character of St Francis's. This is the prime responsibility of the Foundation Governors.
3. Governors have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times. The overall good of the school will always override Governors personal feelings and individual concerns.
4. As they share responsibility for the employment for all staff, Governors should fulfill all reasonable expectations of a good employer.
5. Governors should consider carefully how their decisions might affect other schools within their local community and the Diocese.
6. The Governing Body should recognise that it is accountable for its decisions primarily to the Diocese, but also to the Local Education Authority and to the parents of the pupils attending the school.

Commitment

7. Being a Governor requires a commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. Individual Governors should have regard to this when agreeing to serve.
8. All Governors should involve themselves actively in the work of the Governing Body and accept a fair share of responsibilities, including service on sub-committees and working parties. They should also seek and accept appropriate training through the attendance of courses and seminars.
9. Regular attendance at meetings of the full Governing Body, sub-committees and working groups is essential. Non attendance can lead to eventual disqualification.
10. Governors should know the school well and take all possible opportunities for involvement in school activities, including contact with pupils and staff.

Relationships

11. Governors should operate as a team in which constructive working relationships lead to effective governance.
12. Governors should develop effective working relationships with the Head teacher, Senior Management Team, Teachers, Staff, Parent Groups, LEA, Diocesan and other relevant agencies where appropriate.

Confidentiality

13. Although decisions reached at Governors meetings are normally made public through minutes or otherwise, regard to confidentiality may need to be exercised in respect of the discussions on which the decisions were based.
14. Individual Governors should observe complete confidentiality in all matters discussed at the Governing Body and especially in relation to matters concerning staff or pupils and also any other matters agreed by the Governing Body. Failure to comply with this confidentiality can lead to disciplinary action.
15. Governors should exercise the highest degree of caution when involved in sensitive issues arising outside the Governing Body, which may have an impact on the work of the Governing Body or the operation of the school.

Conduct

16. Governors should express their views openly within meetings but should ensure that they relate to matters proper for discussion by the Governing Body
17. Governors who wish to raise matters for discussion by the full Governing Body should make a request to the Chairman for the item to be included at the next meeting's agenda, giving at least two days prior notice.

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18. Governors have the right to request any matters discussed at meetings to be recorded in the minutes, subject to confidentiality.
19. Governors must accept collective responsibility for all decisions taken by the Governing Body.
20. When Governors are unable to attend meetings they should ensure that the Clerk to the Governors is notified in advance of the meeting
21. Apart from very specific instances where the Chairman has to act or take decisions on behalf of the Governing Body, Governors should recognise that they have no individual powers and should only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when specifically authorised.
22. All Governors visits to the school should be within a framework that has been established by the Governing Body and agreed with the Head teacher.
23. All such visits, whether formal or informal, must be arranged in advance with the Head teacher or the Senior Management Team.
24. Governors should be aware of the procedures for responding to criticism or complaint relating to the school as given below
 - Any concern or possible criticism about the school should be discussed with the Head teacher in the first instance or in the Head teacher's absence with a member of the Senior Management Team
 - Such matters should only be referred to the full Governing Body on the advice of the Head teacher and in consultation with the Chairman of the Governing Body
25. Finally Governors should take every opportunity to maintain and develop the Catholic ethos and reputation of the school within the local community and the Diocese.