



# ST RICHARD REYNOLDS CATHOLIC COLLEGE

ST RICHARD REYNOLDS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ST RICHARD REYNOLDS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

## Code of Practice for Governors

This code sets out the expectations of and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to carry out properly its work in the College and the community. It is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but contains a common understanding of broad principles within which the governing body and individual governors agree to operate.

Under English law, governing bodies of Catholic schools have a corporate responsibility to ensure that their schools are managed in accordance with the Diocesan Trust Deed and the school's Instrument of Government as well as complying with all other legal requirements. The governing body is responsible for understanding, maintaining and developing the distinctive nature of a Catholic school within the Church's mission of education and in awareness of the contribution the Church makes to society through this mission.

### **The purpose of the governing body**

We are entrusted by the Diocese with the ministry of school governance and will always act in recognition of the love of Christ for all members of the College community and one another.

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the College, the implementation of policy and the operation of the curriculum. Governors are responsible for determining, monitoring and keeping under review, the policies, plans and procedures within which the College operates.

The governing body is the accountable body of the College. The Governing Body is responsible for the conduct of the College and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful College which provides them with an outstanding Catholic education and supports their well-being.

### **The three core functions of the governing body**

- To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- To hold the Principal to account for the educational performance of the College and its pupils; and
- To oversee the financial performance of the College and make sure its money is well spent.

## **The governing body:**

- ◆ Sets the strategic direction of the College by:
  - Setting the values, aims and objectives for the College;
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives;
  - Setting targets; and
  - Agreeing the College improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.
  
- ◆ Challenges and supports the College by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework;
  - Progress towards targets;
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the College improvement strategy; and
  - The budget and the staffing structure.
  
- ◆ Ensures accountability by:
  - signing off the College's own self-evaluation report;
  - holding the Principal to account for the performance of the College;
  - ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate; and
  - making available information to the community.
  
- ◆ Appoints and performance manages the Principal who will deliver the aims (through the day-to-day management of the College, implementation of the agreed policy framework and College improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

For the governing body to carry out its role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

## **The role of a governor**

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made; and
- although appointed or elected through different routes (i.e. Diocese, parents, staff, Local Authority, governing body), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the College as a whole.

## **Governor undertakings**

All governors are required to observe the following undertakings and to carry out their duties in accordance with them.

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the Principal as set out above;
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix;

- 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 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 governance and will act appropriately;
- 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 meeting;
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our College. Our actions within the College and the local community will reflect this; and
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the College we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.

### **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 will explain fully in advance why we are unable to;
- We will get to know the College well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in College activities;
- When we visit the College we will only do so by prior arrangement with the Principal. Any visits will be undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the Principal;
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training and notify the clerk of training undertaken. Governors should update their CPD online records accordingly;
- We will cascade knowledge gained during training for the benefit of other governors; and
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Principal.

### **Relationships**

- 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 our role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times;
- 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; and
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Principal, staff and parents, local parishes, the Dioceses of Westminster and Southwark, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the local community.

### **Confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside the College;
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding College business arise outside a governing body meeting;
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote; and
- We will refer any enquiries from parents regarding the education of their children to the leadership team.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests; (which will be published on the College website in grid format) and
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

### **Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body; and
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school governor, Schedule 6 of the College Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 and Schedule 4 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, relating to the disqualifications from the role of school governor (held as a separate document).

**Signed by the Chairman:**



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**Undertaking:**

As a member of the Governing Body, I undertake to abide by its code of practice; I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the College at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the College, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the College, the Governing Body, the Principal or staff.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix: 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.