



# Our Lady of Muswell Catholic Primary School

[www.ourladymuswell.haringey.sch.uk](http://www.ourladymuswell.haringey.sch.uk)

One community Love of Learning Making time for God

## OLM Code of Practice for School Governors 2018/19

Governors will be asked to review this document and sign it on an annual basis, at the first meeting in the autumn term.

Our vision is to be the outstanding governing body of an outstanding Catholic school. We are inspired by our mission statement: **One Community, Love of Learning, Making Time for God** and are committed to inclusion and the celebration of the wide range of cultures within our community, whom we seek to reflect in our membership. As professionals we operate in accordance with values of **The Gospel**, integrity, honesty, good faith and natural justice and above all in the spirit of God's love. This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work in accordance with these values and **The Governors' Handbook**, within the school and the community. This code is not exhaustive or closed but is a means to set out the spirit and expectation of those appointed to the board of governors. Over time this may expand as the requirements of the school and the requirements of governance as guided by Ofsted and NGA evolve.

### The purpose of the governing body

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that all of the children at OLM are attending a successful school that provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

### Our governing body:

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
  - Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
  - Setting statutory targets
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure

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- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
  - Progress towards targets
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - The budget and the staffing structure
- Ensures accountability by:
  - signing off the school's own self-evaluation report
  - responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
  - holding the headteacher to account for the performance of the school
  - ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
  - making information available to the community
- Appoints and performance manages the headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, all 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 through different routes (foundation, parents, staff, Local Authority), the overriding concern of all governors at all times has to be the welfare of the school as a whole with the children at the centre of that.

### **General**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher as set out above
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix 1
- 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 government and will act appropriately.

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- 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 or make any reference to how any vote was cast or split.
- 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 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 correct procedures established by the governing body.
- We will set FGB and other dates as required at the last meeting of the previous academic year for the full year ahead, all dates to acknowledge the requirement to finalise minutes no less than one full week before the FGB to allow for the GB Clerk to disseminate them to governors and to allow governors sufficient time to absorb them before the FGB meeting.
- We will create and maintain a list of all OLM's current policies, who the accountable 'owner' of each policy is, when they were last reviewed and a schedule outlining when each policy must next be reviewed. Where appropriate we will have a standing agenda item to review one policy (as required) at every FGB meeting to ensure continued up to date policies and all governor familiarisation with these policies.

## Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We understand that there is an expectation that we will attend all meetings and failure to do so will impact upon the collective work of the GB and the individual workload that other governors have to carry.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and always accept **our fair share** of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups. This will include taking on at least one subject link responsibility in accordance with the guidelines set out in Appendix 1. Where we have not accepted our fair share of responsibilities we will expect to be challenged by other governors. Where work or personal circumstances mean we cannot fulfil our fair share of responsibilities or play an active role in the FGB we will stand down as governor in a timely manner to allow our place to be taken by a governor who is able to make these commitments.
- We acknowledge that our contribution cannot be limited to attendance at meetings with no other measurable input into the work of the governing body.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend we will provide written notification to the clerk sending our apologies. The minutes of the meeting will note these apologies but **not** accept them in line with guidance from the DfE.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training

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- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the head teacher.
- When we take any decision to stand down as a governor we will, except where not possible for valid reason, give ample notice to the GB to allow our position on the governing body to be filled in a seamless manner and to ensure that there are not long term vacancies on the GB while the necessary paperwork is secured and correct procedure followed to bring in our replacement. Wherever possible notice of our intention to stand down will be no less than two months, three months if our resignation crosses the school summer holiday.
- Where we are not in attendance for two consecutive FGB meetings we will communicate with the CoG/other governors our absence as necessary and expect to be challenged if we don't.

### **Strategic work**

- We will take a proactive role in any strategic meetings (usually held three times a year at the beginning of each term), and fully acknowledge and agree to carry a workload attached to the area of work we have been assigned to and/or the strategic work of the FGB. We accept that attendance at meetings does not in itself constitute a workload
- Agendas will be agreed in a timely manner and minutes produced no later than one full week before the next FGB.
- The Chair (and other governors as necessary) will drive meetings proactively and keep to time schedules while still allowing for full debate and participation by all governors. Agenda lengths will be tailored to support these objectives.

### **Relationships**

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships and professional courtesy are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors or wider school community.
- We will support the chair in his/her role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all other 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the head teacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will be mindful of the impact our conduct has on other governors and on the ability of the FGB to act strategically and appropriately and take full responsibility to ensuring our work supports this.
- We will actively engage ourselves in all meetings and will limit the use of or reference to mobile phones or emails to emergency use only and will take the courtesy to inform the Clerk and Chair if we expect to have to take an emergency call or email during a meeting.

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## **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 school
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.

## **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 and understand that these details will be published in a readily accessible format on the school website
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which is a direct or conflict of interest or 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 will use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;
- Should it be the chair that is involved in breach of code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice or its spirit 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.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 17 and schedule 4 to the Regulations of the Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools (August 2015), which pertain to the reasons for disqualification from the role of school governor

**The Governing Body of OLM adopted this code of practice 21 October 2015.** Governors will sign this Code at the first available governing body meeting of each academic year, usually to be the first meeting of the academic year in September or October.

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**Undertaking:**

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of our children and the reputation of our school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for our school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass our school, the Governing Body collectively or any individual governor, the Headteacher or staff.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018

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**Appendix 1: 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.

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