

Bishop Cornish CEVA Primary School

Governor Code of Conduct



Our Mission Statement: To inspire through faith and love, that all may flourish.

Those who do what is right will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
¹³ planted in the house of the Lord,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
¹⁴ They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
¹⁵ proclaiming, "The Lord is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no *wrong* in him." Psalm 92 12:15

The Christian values that we hold as a school permeate throughout all areas of school life.

Friendship, Perseverance, Respect, Compassion, Trust, Justice

Reviewed October 2024

Sitting alongside the Code of Conduct, are statutory policies which must be adhered to, for example, Whistleblowing, Safeguarding and HR policies for ease of reference.

Code of Conduct for School Governing Body.

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. Our Christian ethos places the children at the heart of everything we do and is summarised in our moto 'Esteem and Educate Every Child.'

The Governing Body will strive to work as a team, drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Governing Body will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- The headteacher
- The staff
- The children
- The parents
- The Diocese
- The Parishes and Deanery
- The Local Authority, Saltash Town Council and all other community organisations
- Multi-agency representatives
- Other local schools as well as other Church schools in the Diocese of Truro and Exeter.

Relationships:

Ensure that relationships between governors and with other stakeholders are anchored in principles which flow from the Gospel.

The Governing Body will draw on the core values of the Gospel summarised as follows:

- **Faithfulness and integrity**
- **Dignity and compassion**
- **Humility and gentleness**
- **Truth and justice**
- **Forgiveness and mercy**
- **Purity and holiness**
- **Tolerance and peace**
- **Service and sacrifice.**

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

1. Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
2. Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
3. Meeting statutory duties.

Ensuring accountability, by:

1. Appointing the headteacher
2. Monitoring progress towards targets
3. Performance managing the headteacher
4. Engaging with stakeholders
5. Contributing to school self-evaluation.

Ensuring financial probity, by:

1. Setting the budget
2. Monitoring spending against the budget
3. Ensuring value for money is obtained
4. Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the headteacher.
- The regulations allow the board, should it so wish, to delegate most of its functions to committees or individuals. However it chooses to exercise its functions, the board always acts as a 'body corporate' and remains accountable at the board level in law and to Ofsted for the performance of all its duties and functions. This is why committees and individuals must report back to the full board on any activities they have carried out on its behalf.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board 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.

- 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 procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher.
- We will uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including social media).
- We understand that this document is to be read in conjunction with the Governor Behaviour Protocol document (appendix A).

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 board, 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.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol. Questions submitted via email in advance is also desirable allowing time for the headteacher to fully prepare to answer questions before the meeting commences. Questions submitted via email during a meeting will not be discussed.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will undertake governance training within six months of appointment (Cornwall Learning GO1 New Governors Training followed by GO2 New Governors training subject to availability). We will also commit to governor training on an annual basis. We recognise the need for long standing governors to refresh their training to ensure the governing body is aware of the current education landscape and inspection frameworks.

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 their 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the 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 school
- We understand that all governance documentation is stored securely in the governor area located on the school website. We will not download documents and share outside of the governing body.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately using the school's confidential waste management system. If governors are unable to dispose of documents in school, then an email must be sent to the clerk confirming documents had been disposed of appropriately and detailing method used.
- Social Media - Governors will abide by the school's Social Media Policy and not use social media to make comments about the school, staff, pupils or other parents.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Conflicts of interest

- 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 board'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 will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate following the school's complaints policy; 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 that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate following the school's complaint policy.

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.

Reviewed by the Governing Body of Bishop Cornish CEVA Primary School on 3rd October 2024

Taken from and adapted - www.nga.org.uk

The Bishop Cornish Code of Conduct is to be read in conjunction with the Governor Behaviour Protocols found in Appendix A.

Governor Behaviour Protocol

Bishop Cornish CEVA Primary School

When Governors join the governing board of any school they give an undertaking to always have the achievement and well-being of the pupils and the reputation of the school at heart. They also undertake to strive to be an ambassador for the school; publicly supporting its aims, ethos and values. The Governor Code of Conduct details the expectation that they would never say or do anything that would embarrass the school, the governing body, the headteacher or the staff, this includes through any use of social media.

Problems can occur when Governors lose sight of these undertakings and other specific expectations around the role of Governance, relationships, confidentiality and conflicts of interest. Unfortunately, dealing with such concerns and the resultant breakdowns in relationships can be both difficult and time consuming.

In trying to encourage compliance with the School's Code of Conduct; it is good practice to consider how adherence to the expectations in the code of conduct might be supported. Individuals rarely intend to act in inappropriate or unhelpful ways and failure to tackle issues at an early stage can result in behaviours becoming embedded when a "quiet word" might have prevented circumstances building up into a more serious situation.

This protocol will try to help Governors manage both expectations and behaviours by highlighting trigger points for action and determining the right set of steps to tackle particular concerns. A graduated approach to dealing with issues and infractions will be appropriate with minor issues being dealt with in a swift and supportive manner and more serious infractions with appropriate rigour.

This protocol has been adopted by the Governing Board and will be applied at need - review date will be in conjunction with the Code of Conduct or when significant amendments are required by changes to legislation or statute.

LEVEL 1

This first level of concern might include:

- Misunderstanding of role - acting without mandate in a particular issue
- Failure to maintain confidentiality
- Pursuit of personal agenda through the Governing Board.

The appropriate steps to address such issues would be:

Conversation with the Chair (Vice-Chair if the Chair is the subject)

If actions are being taken that are inappropriate but that might be due to a misunderstanding of the role of Governor and how issues should be brought forward then it might be appropriate for the Chair, Vice-Chair or a longer standing Governor to have a “quiet word” with the subject. The Chair (or Vice) should decide or agree an approach and notes kept of the conversation. Training should be offered if this is deemed to be an issue in the matter.

Informal Mediation / Facilitated Discussion

It can be difficult to initiate discussions and if the Chair (or Vice) does not feel confident of achieving an appropriate outcome without support then the Clerk could be commissioned to facilitate the initial discussion and act as a moderator for the conversation.

LEVEL 2

This second level of concern would include:

- Behaviours being continued even after having been drawn to the attention of the individual
- A serious breach of confidentiality (including breaches in Data Protection)
- Conduct in public or via social media likely to bring the school’s reputation into question.

This elevated level of concern would require more serious sanctions, including:

Letter of censure from the Chair (Vice)

Should inappropriate actions continue or become more serious, a formal letter of censure might be appropriate - it is likely that this would refer to the inappropriate behaviour and act in the same way as a “drawing the line” letter in staff management. The subject should be warned that further action and sanctions could follow should the inappropriate behaviour continue.

Record in the Minutes

If the behaviour were to continue the behaviour should be mentioned without reference to an individual in the minutes to ensure an understanding of required norms. This may

reference code of conduct and general expectations. This may be instigated by the Chair or Vice-Chair but also by any other Governor who is witness to inappropriate behaviour and who has tried to address this through the Chair/Vice without success. The individual would not be identified in the record at this stage.

Mandatory Training

Should behaviour still not be moderated and concerns continue, then an agreement from the Governing Body to require that the individual (or the Governing Board as a whole) attend training that they themselves should deem mandatory. Governors identified the need for all/individual Governors to undertake training in respect of a specific issue. It was agreed that this would be within 4-6 months (subject to training availability).

LEVEL 3

This third level of concern, leading to the more formal consideration of behaviour might include:

- Serious misuse of position to either bully or intimidate individuals
- Aggressively pursuing a personal agenda or viewpoint
- Becoming party to or leading a campaign against the school or a member of staff
- Repeated concerns at level 1 and/or level 2 having to be addressed.

This, higher, level of concern would lead to more serious and more formal actions being taken, for example:

Investigation

If the behaviour being exhibited is particularly egregious then an investigation should be instigated - the Chair might ask the Vice Chair to investigate and draw up a report for consideration by the Governing Body - the subject and other witnesses should be interviewed, statements drawn up & signed and a report with conclusions and recommendations should be prepared. This report may be considered by the Chair (or Vice) and an outcome letter drawn up. One possible recommendation is that a meeting of full Governors should consider the appropriate sanction, if any, that should be imposed on the subject. The subject must have the opportunity to address the allegations.

Formal Mediation

Governors may wish to consider offering a formal mediation stage following the investigation and outcome letter to see if an agreement can be reached before the need to call a full Governors meeting to consider any formal sanction. It would be appropriate to commission a mediator without a current connection to the school.

Suspension

Suspension for a period of time from the Governors could be an appropriate sanction and would need to be made by the full board of Governors. The Governing Board would need to consider the appropriate length of time that any suspension might be applied for.

Dismissal

Dismissal from the Governing Body. This would be likely to be appropriate in extreme and rare cases only. A full meeting of the Governing Board would need to be called to determine this sanction and a second meeting to confirm the decision.

If complaints are received about the conduct of governors, the school's complaints policy is to be followed.

September 2024