

**Russell Lower School**  
**Code of Conduct for Governing Body**  
**Approved: Summer 2022**  
**Next Review: Summer 2025**

Once this code has been adopted by the governing board, all members agree to faithfully abide by it.

**We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:**

**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.

*This code is also aligned with the **Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education** (see Appendix 1)*

**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

**In carrying out these functions, the governing body wants to highlight the importance of:**

### **Stewardship**

- We are passionate about leaving things better than when we found them
- We will pioneer innovative and better ways to do things
- We will protect and enhance our reputation and legacy at all times
- We will find ways to positively impact all of the communities with which we interact
- We value sustainable progress

### **Striving for Excellence**

- We will use our energy, skills and resources to deliver the best, sustainable results
- We aim for flawless delivery and to learn from our mistakes
- We take pride in the work of the Governing body
- We actively contribute to the performance, engagement and development of fellow Governors and others within the school
- We want to create an environment to attract and retain the best people who share our values

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### **Ensuring stakeholder engagement:**

Enabling other key players with a stake in the organisation to get their voices heard by:

- Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.
- Reaching out to the school's wider community and inviting them to play their part.
- Using the views of stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures.

### **As individual board members, we agree to:**

Fulfil our role & 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.
3. We agree to adhere to school policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We will work collectively for the benefit of the school; *we accept that we have no legal authority to act individual, except when the board has given us delegated authority*
5. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
6. We will consider how our decisions may affect the school and local community.
7. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
8. 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.
9. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.

10. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
11. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
12. We will strive to uphold the school's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
13. 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 and take responsibility for 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/communities.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
4. 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 board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

### **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 pecuniary and other 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 board, 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.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

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**Adopted by:** Russell Lower School Governing Body

11<sup>th</sup> July 2022

This code of conduct will be reviewed annually and it will be endorsed by the full governing board.

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Appendix 1

### **The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education**

*The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.*

1. Selflessness School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. Integrity School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. Objectivity School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. Accountability School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. Leadership School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

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Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **Trust:** *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*  
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **Wisdom:** *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*  
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

- c. **Kindness:** *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*  
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- d. **Justice:** *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*  
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
- e. **Service:** *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*  
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.
- f. **Courage:** *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*  
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
- g. **Optimism:** *leaders are positive and encouraging*  
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.