

# **Archdiocese of Birmingham**



## **St John Paul II Multi-Academy**

### **Holy Cross Catholic Primary School**

#### **Code of Practice for Academy Committee Representatives**

# INSERT SCHOOL NAME

## Academy Committee Code of Practice

### 1. Rationale

1.1 The purpose of this code of practice is to enable the academy committee representatives to contribute to the school securing its mission and sustaining its ethos as a Catholic school, as well as ensuring the school provides a quality educational experience for all its children and achieves high standards.

1.2 The mission of our school is:

**INSERT SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

### 2. Legal Framework

2.1 The Academy Committee is a corporate body. Academy Committee representatives have no authority to act individually. The powers and authority of the academy committee are only those delegated by the board of directors of the Multi-Academy Company.

2.2 All Academy Committee representatives have equal status, and although representatives are appointed and elected by different groups, the central concern must be the welfare of our school as a Catholic school, conducted in accordance with the Diocesan Trust Deed.

### 3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Academy Committee's responsibilities are different to those of the board of directors and are delegated to them by the board of directors. The delegated functions relate to<sup>1</sup>:

- the Catholic life;
- the day-to-day life of the school; the health and safety arrangements; the implementation of the school's curriculum plans; the arrangements for teaching and learning;
- the culture and traditions of the school as a unique community with a specific school, parish, community and locality, identity and history;
- communication and the appropriate formation of relationships with parents of pupils attending the school to work with and support them in their role as primary educators of their children;
- engagement with the parish priest and local Church and parish community to work with and support them as they contribute to the religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural formation of the pupils in the school;
- relationships with other local schools, agencies and businesses, as well as the wider neighbourhood community, that enhances the quality of education provided by the school for its pupils;

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<sup>1</sup> See section 7 of the scheme of delegation for a full description of the functions of the academy committee.  
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- providing evaluative feedback and supporting evidence to the Directors on the impact and effectiveness of both the Company's and the school's collective and individual: aims and objectives; policies; targets; and plans.
- 3.2 The academy committee has a strategic role. As agent of accountability, on behalf of the Catholic community and the communities of the school. The Academy Committee ensures that the strategic framework and policies of the board of directors are implemented in the school.
- 3.3 Ensuring the implementation of the strategic framework of the board of directors includes:
- Setting the local aims and objectives of the school, with regard to the powers delegated to them.
  - Ensuring that the common policies and procedures of the multi-academy are adopted in the school.
  - Ensuring there are plans and procedures in place to secure those policies, targets and priorities.
  - Giving challenge and support to the Principal and ensuring he/she performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school.
  - providing evaluative feedback and supporting evidence to the Directors on the impact and effectiveness of both the Company's and the school's collective and individual: aims and objectives; policies; targets; and plans.
  - Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.
- 3.4 In its strategic role the academy committee is accountable to:
- The Trustees who own the school, for the school's effectiveness as a Catholic school.
  - The Board of Directors.
  - The Catholic community, and the wider community, who entrust their children to the schools within the multi-academy, for the outcomes achieved by their children, in all aspects of their being.
- 3.5 The Principal is responsible for:
- Acting, as professional adviser to the Academy Committee and in consultation with other principals in the multi-academy, as professional adviser to the Board of Directors, and for providing the information they need to carry out their legal duties.
  - Advising on and implementing the strategic framework agreed by the Board of Directors and Academy Committee, which includes:
    - In consultation with the other principals in the Multi-Academy, formulating and drafting aims and objectives, policies and targets for consideration by the Board of Directors.
    - Formulating and drafting local aims and objectives, policies and targets within the remit of and for consideration by the academy committee.
    - Implementing policies set by the Board of Directors and the Academy Committee.
    - Leading their school towards agreed targets.
    - Reporting on progress towards the agreed aims, objectives and targets.
    - Discharging delegated responsibilities on behalf of the Board of Directors and the academy committee.

- The internal organisation, management and control of the school, including the implementation of the curriculum and the day to day running of the school.
- The educational performance of the school.

## **4 Commitment**

4.1 We acknowledge that being an Academy Committee representative:

- Involves committing significant amounts of time and energy.
- Involves participating fully in the work of the Academy Committee so that individuals accept a fair share of the responsibilities and duties, including service on committees, working parties or as 'named representatives'.
  - Individual Academy representatives will be expected to be on a minimum of one standing committee
- Requires regular attendance at meetings of the full Academy Committee and subcommittees.
- Requires getting to know the school well and responding to opportunities to visit and get involved in school activities.
- Requires considering seriously our individual and collective training and development needs and using any designated funds to address them.
- Requires knowledge and understanding of our role within school procedures.

## **5 Confidentiality**

5.1 We understand that being an Academy Committee representative requires that we:

- Observe confidentiality routinely as a matter of course, but particularly when explicitly asked to do so, for example regarding matters concerning staff, children or their parents/carers.
- Keep discussion about decisions confidential even when decisions themselves are made public through the minutes of meetings.
- Exercise prudence when invited to respond in discussions and informal talk outside academy committee meetings, and instead of passing individual comment, encourage issues to be brought to the attention of the principal, the local academy committee or board of directors (depending on the nature of the issue) through the proper channels.
- Exercise care that any discussions do not prejudice any formal procedures.

## **6 Relationships**

6.1 Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Academy Committee representatives will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- The Principal
- Staff
- Children
- Parents
- The Board of Directors
- The Diocese (i.e. Diocesan Education Service)
- Multi-agency representatives
- Our parish and local communities

- Other local schools, including Catholic and other VA, VC and Community schools and Academies.
- Local educational organisations/businesses etc.

6.2 In forming, building and sustaining good working relationships academy committee representatives will strive to:

- Remember that we are typically representative of the *category* of academy representative to which we are appointed or elected. We are not representatives OF those *groups*, e.g. a parent representative expresses their views using their experience as a parent, not representing the views of the whole parent body of the school.
- Work as members of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted, forming the Academy Committee which functions with corporate responsibility and accountability.
- Develop an open and honest relationship with the Principal and all school staff, acting as 'critical friend' to the school, ensuring a balance is struck between offering challenge and support.
- Ensure that effective relationships are built on trust and opportunities to network effectively and efficiently.
- Ensure that Gospel values underpin the relationships between academy representatives and with other stakeholders. The Academy Committee will draw on the guidance offered in 'Christ at the Centre' that whilst not definitive, the core values based on the Beatitudes may be 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

## 7 Conduct

7.1 Academy Committee representatives have a duty to act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness honesty and leadership<sup>2</sup>, in the best interests of the school at all times. Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the academy committee will strive to behave professionally at all times.

- Academy representatives will aim to discharge their duties in a manner that maintains and develops the Catholic ethos of the school and its reputation in the parish, local community and wider educational community. Academy representatives' actions at all times should reflect our responsibility to secure the Catholic ethos of the school.
- Academy representatives should consider at all times, how we exercise stewardship, both as individuals and as a corporate body, which should manifest and be faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, and Gospel values.
- Academy representatives should reflect on how we are perceived by stakeholders in all we say and do, both as individual academy representatives and as a corporate body.

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<sup>2</sup> The 7 principles of public life.  
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- Academy representatives should consider carefully how our decisions and actions might affect others, whether they are individuals employed by the school; children or adults who are part of the school community; the parish; other schools in the locality; or the wider community.
- Academy representatives should express views openly at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the academy committee or any individual academy representatives delegated to do so.
- Academy representatives will not speak out against majority decisions in public or in private outside the academy committee. The intention is to protect the reputation and authority of the academy committee and the school in the public domain.
- Academy representatives, through their minutes, must be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and in particular be prepared to explain their actions and decisions to interested parties.
- Academy representatives will only speak or act on behalf of the academy committee when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- Academy representatives will respond to criticism or complaints about the school and / or its staff by referring to the school's Complaints Procedure adopted by the Academy Committee for the correct procedure to be followed, and will advise the complainant accordingly.
- Academy representatives will record in the register of pecuniary interests any pecuniary interest we might have in connection with the academy committee's business.
- Academy representatives will be expected to declare an interest in any item of business and withdraw from the meeting while it is under discussion.
- Academy representatives will always undertake visits within the framework established by the academy committee and agreed with the Principal. (See Section 10)

## **8 Structure of the Academy Committee**

- 8.1 The Academy Committee must appoint a clerk with a view to their efficient functioning and must have regard to advice from the clerk as to the nature of academy committee functions.
- 8.2 The Academy Committee will work efficiently and effectively in the best interests of the school by organising itself into a committee structure so that it can fulfil its statutory responsibilities, including ensuring the statutory right of appeal, through appropriate full delegation of powers and statutory functions to either:
- a committee
  - an Academy Committee representative or
  - the Principal.
- 8.3 The Academy Committee will be structured as follows:
- Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee
  - Curriculum and Ethos Committee
  - Admissions
  - Principal's Appraisal
  - Occasional Committees as sanctioned by Board of Directors  
Eg Pupil Disciplinary

- 8.4 There is an expectation that all committees will function with a view to securing the Catholic ethos of the school, as well as ensuring the school provides a high quality educational experience for all its children. Catholicity will not be viewed as a 'bolt-on' extra to be considered separately, instead the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church and Gospel values will underpin all the aspects of the work of the Academy Committee.
- 8.5 Full delegated powers, including delegated decision making powers, will be given to the subcommittees enabling them to be fully effective.
- 8.6 The Academy Committee must review the delegation of its statutory functions annually. The subcommittees will have clear terms of reference.
- No vote on any matter may be taken at any meeting of a subcommittee unless the majority of members of the subcommittee present and voting are academy committee representatives.
  - Observers will be allowed to attend meetings in order to promote a willingness to serve the community as an academy representative, or to extend the professional development of middle and senior managers. Observers are not members of the subcommittee and will not be allowed to vote.
  - TOR to state Quorum
- 8.7 There is an open-door policy for subcommittees. Any Academy representative who has an interest in any specific matter being discussed may attend any meeting with the agreement of the chair of that subcommittee. Whilst this option is useful, it is important to avoid a situation where most Academy representatives attend all or most subcommittee meetings. This defeats the benefits of the smaller debating forum that subcommittees provide.
- 8.8 Chairs of subcommittees will be elected by the subcommittees at the first meeting of the year, and not the full Academy Committee. However, the Academy Committee has the power to remove chairs of subcommittees.

## **9 Meeting Structure and Management**

- 9.1 By working through an effective and efficient committee structure the Academy Committee will strive to keep the number of full Academy Committee meetings to the minimum of three per academic year, which in normal circumstances will be one a term.
- 9.2 An annual meeting plan (for academy committee and subcommittee meetings) which identifies all planned meetings; dates and times; expected items in line with the annual cycle of business (e.g. policy review, results, budget setting) will be published in advance of the start of each academic year.
- 9.3 Thought will be given to the timing of meetings, including holding them during the working day or at the end of the school day, rather than the evening. Where possible subcommittee meetings may be held back to back to facilitate attendance at two subcommittees in one evening, with a rotation of timings to ensure each subcommittee takes turns at having an earlier start.
- 9.4 Whilst aiming for a tight regular meeting structure the academy committee retains the flexibility to hold additional full Academy Committee meetings in special circumstances (for example, Ofsted, etc.). Ad hoc subcommittees which deal with specific procedural issues will only meet when necessary, in a manner determined by the academy committee.
- 9.5 A clerk to the Academy Committee must be appointed. The Academy Committee will use the services of a professional clerk at the meetings of the full academy committee and at

subcommittee meetings. The investment in professional clerking is viewed as a way to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the academy committee as a whole by ensuring that meetings are properly organised and supported. (Note: staff representatives including the principal, cannot be appointed as clerk to the academy committee or a subcommittee on which they serve. They can however, clerk the 'odd meeting' in the absence of the clerk.)

- 9.6 The clerk will have a clear job description, a contract for sufficient hours and will be appropriately trained. The role and hours of the clerk will be reviewed annually.
- 9.7 The clerk will produce agendas and minutes for meetings.
- 9.8 The clerk will send out agendas, minutes and any reports or other papers to be considered at the Academy Committee /subcommittee meeting at least seven clear days in advance to appropriate people
- 9.9 The chair of the Academy Committee, chairs of subcommittees, the Principal, all other Academy Committee representatives and the clerk will subscribe to the following expectations so that the academy committee representatives, whether working corporately or in subcommittee, will achieve informed, collective decisions in an effective and efficient manner that meet the legal requirements.
  - The Principal will agree which subcommittee meetings it is appropriate for him/her to attend and whether or not the Vice Principal or another senior leader will take responsibility for support some subcommittee meetings. This will contribute to the professional development of other leaders within the school.
  - There will be an expectation that the chair (in the Academy Committee and in subcommittee meetings) manages the meeting to keep discussion focused; matters in proportion; draw on all members' contributions; and with due attention to the following points.
  - In advance of full academy committee meetings the chair and Principal will discuss and agree the agenda before it is published by the clerk, giving 7 days notice of the meeting.
  - All agenda items should be submitted through the clerk to the meeting and the agenda should be clear and purposeful.
  - In order to be effective meetings need to be quorate. The quorum for an academy committee meeting is 50% of the membership (not including vacant positions).
  - Apologies will be considered at full academy committee meetings, not simply accepted.
  - All meetings will have a maximum length of 2 hours.
  - Academy representatives will be expected to be punctual and meetings will start at the agreed time.
  - The latest finish time for evening meetings will be 8.30pm
  - All academy representatives must properly prepare for meetings by reading papers in advance and giving thought to the issues to be discussed. All papers circulated in advance of the meeting should be taken as read.
  - There will be a '15 minute' limit for discussion of each agenda item, unless the academy committee or subcommittee agree otherwise for a specific agenda item.
  - Where any academy representative is unavoidably late, agenda items should not be re-run.
  - 'Any Other Business' will be limited to genuinely urgent matters that need to be addressed by the members of the group.



- Academy representatives will be expected to make relevant and purposeful contributions; understand how to challenge others in a constructive way; listen to others; and accept collective responsibility, even in relation to decisions individuals do not personally agree with.
- Decisions will be taken by vote on a simple majority.
- The decision of the Academy Committee to allow alternative arrangements for Academy Committee /subcommittee members to participate or vote at meetings remotely by telephone, conferencing or other prescribed methods must be strictly adhered to.
- In full Academy Committee meetings there will be no rehearsing the debate already had by subcommittees. Subcommittees will be trusted to carry out their responsibilities and only report decisions to full academy committee meetings.
- Minutes will record key matters discussed; summarise the key points discussed; record decisions and / or agreed actions accurately. The detail of the discussion and how individual academy representatives vote is confidential. The minutes will be made available, in draft form, within 7 days of the meeting, thus ensuring they are proof-read with a good recollection of the meeting. Confidential matters should not be recorded in minutes that are published in the public domain.
- Minutes will be reviewed, amended as necessary and signed by the chair at the next meeting.

## 10 Visiting the School

10.1 School visits are an essential part of the Academy Committee representatives' role. Effective and well organised visits can provide the academy committee with a strategy for monitoring the effectiveness of policies.

10.2 Before the visit it will be important for the Academy Committee representative concerned to:

- Clarify the purpose.
- Discuss and agree the agenda with the principal well in advance; be clear what is being observed.
- Make sure that the date is suitable for the purpose identified.
- Receive and discuss with the principal any supporting information, e.g. Ofsted report, SEF, School Development Plan, performance data, relevant lesson plans.
- Discuss with the class teacher integration into the lesson.

10.3 During the visit it will be important for the Academy Committee representative to:

- Be aware of the timetable for the visit and aim to adhere to it, but be flexible.
- Decide with the teacher how they will be introduced and their role in the classroom.
- Be sensitive to the fact that the teacher is there to teach, so talk to the teacher when it is appropriate.
- Remain focused on the purpose of the visit in conversation with the teacher.
- Be discrete in your note taking, it can be disconcerting.
- Be courteous and polite, not critical.

10.4 After the visit it will be important for the academy committee representative to:

- Discuss what was observed with the class teacher and use the opportunity to clarify any matters.
- Make notes as soon as possible while they are fresh in the mind.
- Discuss what was observed with the principal.

- Be prepared to take on board others comments and explanations.
- Reflect on what was observed and experienced.
- Write up the draft report for the academy committee, using the standard proforma, and share it with the principal and any staff involved before agreeing the final copy.
- Remember to communicate a personal 'thank you' to the teacher concerned.

10.5 The written report, using the standard proforma, will include:

- Who made the visit, when and why.
- The purpose of the visit and observation.
- Who they met and what was observed.
- Any observations relevant to the functions and policies of the academy committee.
- Any positive comments.

## **11 Implementing the Code**

11.1 There is an expectation that anyone serving as Academy Committee representative will adhere to this Code of Practice.

11.2 In the unlikely event of a serious breach of this Code of Practice, by behaving in a manner that would be inconsistent with the school or multi-academy ethos, the academy committee or the board of directors have the right to hold an individual academy committee representative to account (The academy committee should seek advice from the Diocesan Education Service).

Agreed/Adopted: October 2014

Review on: October 2015

Final copies distributed to: All Academy Committee Representatives, Clerk of/to Academy committee and Clerk of Board to Directors

*N.B. This model code draws on a sample code published in 'Welcome to Governance' which was published by the National Governors' Council (note this is now part of 'The National Governors Association'). The model code also draws on a document produced by Warwickshire LA 'Warwickshire Advice on Partnership in Primary School Governance'. Other LA models have been considered including those published by Coventry and Sandwell LA.*

*An electronic copy is available on request from the DES or from the DES website.*

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