CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR

Members of the Local Governing Bodies

of Schools in Laetare

CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct has been approved and adopted by the Board of Directors for use by all members of Local Governing Bodies of schools within the Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust. It takes into account the needs of Laetare CMAT, Gaudete Trust and other Religious Orders.

on 1st September 2026

and will be reviewed on 1st September 2027

Chair of the Board of Directors: Stephen C Horsman

Executive Team: Jonathan Jones

Commitment to Equality:

We are committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard.

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- This document will be uploaded to the Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust website, the Gaudete website and each school's website.

Definitions:

In this document:

The term **'Local Governing Body'** refers to the body with delegated authority in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation for conducting the School on behalf of the Religious Order Trustees or Gaudete Trust as appropriate and Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

The term **'Governor'** means a member of a Local Governing Body of Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

Where the term **'School(s)'** is used, it includes:

- Religious Order schools and Gaudete schools within Laetare Catholic Multi Academy Trust;

'Canon Law' is the code by which the Catholic Church regulates itself and in the context of this document refers to the Code of Canon Law 1983 and any Particular Law such as legislation of the Bishops' Conference, directives of the Diocesan Bishop and legislation of the School's Religious Order (if any).

The Role of The Local Governing Body

As a Local Governing Body, our overarching responsibility is to ensure that we comply with our legal and canonical duty to ensure that the Catholic character and charism of the school is preserved and developed. This duty permeates everything that we do.

We understand that Foundation Governors are required, as the cornerstone of their role, to ensure this objective is achieved. However, ***all*** Governors have a duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character and charism of the school in order to fulfil the objects set out in its governing documents.

(1) OUR THREE CORE STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS:

In accordance with our legal obligations, we will operate at a strategic level, leaving the school's senior leadership responsible and accountable for the operational running of the school. It is by achieving these aims that we can be sure that governance is effective.

Our core strategic functions are to:

1. Ensure clarity of Catholic vision, charism, ethos and strategic direction;

2. Hold the appropriate senior leadership to account for the educational performance and Catholic character and charism of the school and its pupils; and for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, including the performance management of its staff; and

3. Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent.

We understand that the Catholic Church expects Catholic Schools to promote and uphold high standards, including academic standards, as an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people.

We understand that Canon 806§2 requires that Catholic Schools are at least as academically distinguished as other schools in the area and that Governors should be mindful of this requirement in all that they do.

(2) ADHERENCE TO THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES, CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING & THE CODE OF CANON LAW

In carrying out our functions we will adhere to the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

- **Selflessness** – acting solely in terms of the public interest and not in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family or our friends.
- **Integrity** – taking all steps to not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence us in the performance of our official duties.
- **Objectivity** – in carrying out public business, being impartial and making choices fairly and on merit.
- **Accountability** – acknowledging that we are accountable for our decisions and actions to the public and submitting ourselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to our office.
- **Openness** – being as open and transparent as possible about all the decisions and actions that we take and giving reasons for our decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

- **Honesty** – being truthful in everything we do and declaring any private interests relating to our public duties and taking steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- **Leadership** – at all times promoting and supporting these principles by our leadership and example.

Furthermore, we will always abide by the Church's social teaching, which is a rich treasury of wisdom about building a just society, and ensure that our School is imbued with the key themes that are at the heart of Catholic social tradition, namely:

- **Dignity**
- **Solidarity**
- **The common good**
- **The option for the poor**
- **Peace**
- **Care for creation**
- **The dignity of work and participation**

(3) WE AGREE TO OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES AS FOLLOWS:

Role & Responsibilities

1. We will preserve and develop the Catholic character and charism of the school, and this responsibility will imbue all of our actions within, and through all aspects of, the school and the local community;

2. We will ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed, which includes the provisions of:

   - **Canon law**
   - **Any documents issued by the Religious Order or Gaudete as appropriate.**
   - **The Religious Education Directory and Bishops' statements on religious education;**
   - **Any directives issued by the Diocesan Bishop.**

3. We will conduct the school in accordance with the Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation and in particular its mission statement;

4. We will ensure compliance with company law, charity law, data protection legislation and other applicable statutory duties where relevant. In addition, compliance with education legislation, safeguarding law, employment law, equality legislation.

5. We will ensure the highest priority is given to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and take responsibility for providing strategic oversight of safeguarding arrangements. This will include disclosure and barring checks.

6. We will support and implement the policies and procedures of the religious order/Gaudete Trust and take note of those of the Diocesan Bishops issued collectively, specifically the Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools;

7. We will respond to the needs of the Catholic community as a whole;

8. We will protect, promote and serve the religious order in the ministry of our role faithfully;

9. We will consider not only the interests of the school, but the interests of other Catholic Schools and of Catholic education throughout the Laetare Multi Academy Trust and Gaudete Trust;
10. We will undertake to discharge our duties with due care and diligence;

11. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;

12. We will attend relevant training including diocesan training, induction training and continuing professional development training, as required by the religious order and/or the Gaudete Trust;

13. We understand the purpose of the Local Governing Body and our role and the role of senior leadership team;

14. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Local Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Local Governing Body when we have been specifically authorised to do so;

15. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Local Governing Body. This means that whilst within meetings dissent may be recorded and if one felt unable to support a decision, if necessary, consider resignation, we will not speak against majority decisions outside of Local Governing Body meetings;

16. 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 which includes the promotion of staff wellbeing, we will strive to be an employer of choice;

17. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school, we will follow the procedures established by the Local Governing Body

18. We will actively support and challenge the senior leadership holding leaders to account for educational performance, scrutinising performance information, understanding outcomes for different groups of pupils and using evidence to provide informed challenge.

19. We will uphold the reputation of the school, the religious order or Gaudete, Laetare CMAT and Catholic education as a whole at all times and to that end carefully consider and monitor our personal use of social media to protect confidential information when communicating publicly;

20. If we have been appointed as a Foundation Governor, we recognise and accept our responsibilities and we have signed the Declaration & Undertaking, from the Religious Order/Gaudete trust as appropriate. We have returned the signed copy to the clerk.

21. We will provide oversight of risk and internal control within the school, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, and provide assurance to the Trust Board on significant financial, operational and governance risks.

Commitment

1. We acknowledge that accepting office involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy;

2. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Local Governing Body and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on panels or working groups;

3. We will arrive at meetings well prepared including reading all papers in advance;

4. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and make positive contributions thereat, and where we cannot attend any meeting, we will explain in advance why we are unable to;

5. We will get to know the school well, and where appropriate to our appointment, we will positively respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities;

6. Where appropriate to our role, we will visit the school, with all visits to the school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Local Governing Body;

7. We will evaluate our effectiveness as a Local Governing Body by way of completing a skills audit and a self-evaluation form on an annual basis, we will also ensure that our effectiveness is regularly externally reviewed;

8. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for continuous training and development as required by the Laetare CMAT and the religious order/Gaudete Trust and will undertake that relevant training and any mandatory training as may be required by law;

9. We accept that in the interests of transparency, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Governor, where appropriate, and the body responsible for appointing us, will be published on the school's website and anywhere else as required by law.

Relationships

1. In all our relationships we shall exercise stewardship and draw on the teachings and example of Jesus Christ in that:

All relationships will be built on the core values of the Gospel based on the Beatitudes summarised as:

- faithfulness and integrity;
- dignity and compassion; humility and gentleness;
- truth and justice;
- forgiveness and mercy;
- purity and holiness;

- tolerance and peace;
- and service and sacrifice.

2. We will ensure that we continually communicate with and, where appropriate, seek support and guidance from any education officer appointed by the religious order or Gaudete;

3. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted;

4. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications;

5. We will support the chair in ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times;

6. We will be prepared to answer queries from others 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;

7. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the religious order, parish(es), diocese, the senior leadership, staff and parents, pupils, the local authority, other relevant agencies, and the local community.

8. We will follow the Equality Act 2010 recognising the importance of diversity, inclusion and fairness in in all that we do.

Confidentiality

1. We will observe confidentiality in all circumstances, in particular in relation to matters concerning specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside the school, unless there is a lawful requirement for disclosure; This includes avoidance of commenting publicly on complaints, internal governance matters or individual cases. We will not bring the school, Trust or governing body into disrepute, and will always protect confidential information when communicating publicly.

2. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding the business of the school arise outside of Local Governing Body meetings;

3. We will exercise care and skill when communicating through social media;

4. We will not reveal the details of any Local Governing Body vote.

Conflicts of interest

1. We will always act in the best interests of the charitable objects set out in the governing documents of the school.

2. We will record any pecuniary or other business interest including those related to people with whom we are connected 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.

3. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.

(4) BREACH OF THIS CODE

1. If we believe this code has been breached, we will promptly raise this issue with the Chair, consult with the religious order, or Gaudete, if appropriate, and Laetare and determine the investigatory process (if any); the Local Governing Body will only use suspension and/or removal, which is at the absolute discretion of the religious superior for foundation appointments, as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

2. If we believe it is the Chair that has breached this Code, the Vice Chair, will investigate unless the Vice Chair is connected in which case another member of the Local Governing Body will be appointed to investigate.

Signed……

Dated…….

Acceptance of this Code is confirmed by signature annually by every Local Governor (at the beginning of each academic year), but Local Governors are not released from their duties under the Code by any failure to so sign.

Signed copies of this Code from each Local Governor should be retained by the Clerk.

E signatures are acceptable.