

A Trusted Governance Improvement Organisation

Shaping Governance: A-Z of Governance

Breaking down key governance concepts into clear, digestible insights

I is for Integrity

Su Turner, our CEO shares her thinking...

Integrity is not just a value, it's the bedrock of effective governance. In schools, where leadership decisions affect the lives of children, families, and communities, integrity must be more than an ideal. It must be visible in every action governors, trustees, and school leaders take. At Shaping Governance, we believe integrity is what turns good governance into great governance. It builds trust, ensures fairness, and keeps children at the heart of every decision.

Why Integrity Matters

Integrity in governance means doing the right thing—even when it's hard, even when no one's watching. It's about being honest, transparent, and accountable. It's about acting without bias, putting the school's mission ahead of personal agendas, and holding ourselves to high ethical standards.

Without integrity, governance risks losing the confidence of staff, families, and the wider community. With it, schools build cultures that are trusted, inclusive, and child-centred.

Su Turner, our CEO, reflects:

> *"At a recent board meeting, governors were discussing admissions which directly affected governors who are also parents. It was a powerful reminder that integrity isn't abstract. It's practical. It means knowing when to step back, recognising potential conflicts, and protecting the fairness of the process. This is where the Nolan Principles come to life.*

The Nolan Principles: A Framework for Ethical Governance

All those in public service are expected to uphold the **Nolan Principles of Public Life**. These seven principles form a clear and trusted framework for ethical leadership:

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- **Selflessness** – Make decisions in the best interests of pupils and the school community.
- **Integrity** – Avoid conflicts of interest and maintain public confidence.
- **Objectivity** – Make decisions fairly and on merit.
- **Accountability** – Be answerable to the public and open to scrutiny.
- **Openness** – Act transparently and share information honestly.
- **Honesty** – Always tell the truth and be clear about your motivations.
- **Leadership** – Model these principles in everything you do.

These aren't just ideals; they're essential tools for building confidence in school governance.

How Shaping Governance Embeds Integrity

We help governing boards and trust leaders turn these principles into practice. Our support builds ethical, inclusive, and child-focused governance cultures through:

- Development sessions that explore ethical dilemmas in real governance contexts
- Tools and frameworks to improve transparency and accountability
- Support to ensure policies and processes are fair, open, and values-led
- Practical guidance on recognising and managing conflicts of interest

Whether you're reviewing your governance approach or dealing with complex decisions, we help you do it with integrity.

Final Thoughts

Integrity is not optional, it's essential. In a time when public trust in institutions is under pressure, schools must lead by example. Governors and trustees have a duty to uphold the highest ethical standards, ensuring that decisions are fair, transparent, and always focused on the best interests of children. At Shaping Governance, we believe integrity is what makes governance not only effective; but trusted, respected, and enduring.

Contact us:
Want to explore how to strengthen ethical governance in your school or trust?

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