Case Studies

There are several case studies that you can use as scenarios to identify how you would behave ethically. Alternatively, you may wish to create your own case study, or revisit a case that you have previously considered to re-examine the case under the framework.

Case study 1: Exam Malpractice

Exams are one of the biggest outputs of any school. A huge amount of teaching time and resources is put into ensuring the best possible outcomes from exams. Exam Malpractice is a growing concern in schools, especially when paired with growing attention to school performance and the new Progress 8 scores in secondary schools. This mounting pressure is faced by all of those within schools, including Heads, teaching staff, support staff, and pupils. In June 2018, it was reported that exam malpractice penalties had risen 149% since the following year, whilst the rise in technology has been suggested as the cause of malpractice for students, there is a worry that the combined pressures will cause an increase in exam malpractice and bad practice.

Of course, schools often do not intend to behave unethically – however, schools should ensure that there are policies and practises in place to identify and deter exam malpractice. This ties in with your schools whistle-blower policy. School leaders must ensure that exams are conducted in a fair, ethical and accountable manner. It should also be remembered that examinations, whilst part of the a curriculum are not the sole purpose of education, and schools should balance the need to monitor progress with the safeguarding of children, not adding more pressure to children by undergoing rigorous testing. The delivery of exams should be considered as part of the learning process and challenge and encourage staff and student to improve and excel. Considerations should be made in regards to the exam schedule for both students and staff, and responsibilities of those involved. Clear training and expectations should be provided and communicated. Schools should have a clear route of escalating concerns, and everyone involved should understand their position and requirements to ensure a successful exam season.

Imagine

You have had a busy and tough start to the exam season. A teacher colleague is, in your view, piling pressure onto his students in advance of the exam, continually stressing to them the need to perform at a certain level and the consequences for him and them if they don't. You don't do anything as you agree that the implications for the centre, subject, department, and individual candidates are too great if a good level of success is not achieved. You also fear reprisal from your line manager and the future career of the teacher in question. When the exams start some of the students don't turn up for their exams as they are too stressed. Two students have panic attacks and five students complain that their performance in the exams has been negatively affected by the teacher's attitude. They demand that the school do something to ensure they are not disadvantaged. The school applies for special consideration, but the exam board denies the request, as exam related stress is not a permitted factor.

Were you right?

Selflessness	Putting aside the needs of your role, how can you respond adequately?
Integrity	Are teachers and school staff encouraged to act with integrity? How can you ensure that in the future integrity is maintained?
Objectivity	Can you see that all involved are treated fairly and equally?
Accountability	Is there a clear route to be held accountable? Who is accountable to how? How do you uphold this?

Openness	Is there clear an open communication between students and staff?
Honesty	Can you be considered honest when faced with the exam board?
Leadership	How can leadership be improved to ensure that this situation doesn't happen again? How can you support other teachers?
Trust	Can students trust the school? And trust their teachers?
Wisdom	Can staff and students share their wisdom of an ethically led exam?
Kindness	Can kindness be demonstrated to staff and students within your exam schedule?
Justice	Does your policy help all the children in your local area?
Service	Does your policy build up high-quality education for the future?
Courage	Were you able to act courageously to address the issue?
Optimism	How does your policy help young people to grow into good citizens beyond school?

Case study 2: Pupil behaviour

Modelling the behaviour of a good society to the young by maintaining an orderly, happy and safe school community is a huge responsibility. It takes planning, determination and sheer hard work. Achieving good behaviour makes learning possible for all children. It is life-changing for young people from chaotic, neglectful, cruel or violent homes. Conversely, if it is not possible to recover from behaviour mistakes then such children live on a cliff-edge of rejection, compounding the rejection and trauma of their home lives.

A school should generate reliably good behaviour as its sine qua non. It is not possible to achieve anything of value without it. It should be based upon warm and strong professional relationships between adults and children, highly skilled teaching, robust support services inside and outside school and intelligent, informed reflection. All behaviour is a language of communication so every child deserves an adult who will seek to interpret the language he is using.

The professional skills necessary to develop and maintain good behaviour should be valued in our schools. This is difficult to do well, so short cuts are tempting.

Imagine

You're proud to be revitalising a school in a disadvantaged community and convinced that education is the only route out of poverty for these children. It hurts you to see so many children with poor role models and you take your role as a community leader very seriously. Most of your students have responded well to strict new rules and expectations and you are sure that aspirations have been significantly raised. A new smart uniform is stringently applied, the children get hardly any unsupervised time and are expected to be silent in the corridors and never let their attention stray from their teacher.

Your behaviour policy is one of zero tolerance and parents are expected to sign up to that from the start. If not, you talk to them about more suitable schools, or exclude the child. The compliant majority deserve an orderly school and you cannot tolerate defiance.

Are you right?

Using the framework

Selflessness	Is your policy solely to the benefit of children and young people?
Integrity	Do your conversations with parents about alternative schools demonstrate integrity?
Objectivity	Do you have evidence that this approach will work for children?
Accountability	Are the intentions, outputs and effects of the policy scrutinised by governors?
Openness	Are you sure that disadvantaged parents have access to all the information they need about behaviour?
Honesty	Are you honest with parents about your sanctions?
Leadership	Do you demonstrate the faultless behaviour befitting an adult exemplar of a zero-tolerance policy?
Trust	Can all the young people in your school trust you to act in their best interest?
Wisdom	How will you apply experience, knowledge and insight to your policy?
Kindness	What role do kindness, humanity and generosity of spirit play in your policy?
Justice	Does your policy help all the children in your local area?
Service	Does your policy build up high-quality education for the future?
Courage	Are courage and certainty the same in behaviour management?
Optimism	How does your policy help young people to grow into good citizens beyond school?

Case Study 3: Curriculum

The curriculum is the single largest cost in a school or college, and, alongside keeping children and young people safe, the central function of an educational institution. Taxpayers assume that pupils will leave school with a core of knowledge and skills. These include English language and literature, mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, geography, history, art, music, foreign languages, design technology, religious education and physical education. A school leader must decide what curriculum to provide, why and who to?

Children have a right to knowledge which is useful, interesting, helps them to prosper in life and aids their development. It should have sufficient content to enable a wider world-view and sufficient time for her to absorb and understand what she has learned. It should be broad and balanced, offering experiences in a wide range of subjects.

Children learn at different speeds and in different ways. The art of the teacher is to devise ways of helping every child learn what is necessary as defined above. A child who finds learning difficult will require highly skilled teachers and a closer focus on reduced content.

A school's curriculum should offer the same opportunities to all children, whether they are easy to teach or more challenging. Schools should provide a curriculum to the latter which particularly enables their future success and participation in civil life.

The delivery of a curriculum through its teaching and assessment methods should also reinforce the value of learning as an end in itself and persistence as a desirable character trait. The curriculum is more than assessment: examinations are part of a curriculum, not its sole purpose.

Accountability and funding pressures may also drive leaders' curriculum decision-making.

Imagine

Your 11-16 school has OK results and sits on a 'Good' judgement. You've had a bit of staffing turnover and are trying to work out what the future holds. As the EBacc is going to be compulsory from 2024 you're working towards focusing the curriculum on the 8 subjects with something in every bucket. In order to meet the likely target, you've made sure that English and maths have a large allocation of curriculum time. Given the state of budgets, the range of other options will be small in KS4, but as you've put all of the arts and practical subjects on carousel in KS3, you've saved money that way and have the teachers you need to cover that and an Art group in KS4. You had more choice when you were at school, but there were too many mistakes made in those days.
Are you right?

Using the framework

Selflessness	Whom does the curriculum serve best: learners or the school?
Honesty	Does your curriculum reflect your principles or is it a response to instructions?
Openness	How are curriculum design choices shared with parents?
Objectivity	Why did you decide to do what you do? Is there another way of looking at it?
Integrity	Who or what influences the choices you make?
Accountability	What effect are accountability measures having on your curriculum?
Leadership	Do trustees and governors share your curriculum beliefs?
Trust	Can your young people trust that their education is broad, fair and balanced?
Wisdom	Will your curriculum stand the test of time?

Kindness	Does your curriculum promote joy in learning?
Justice	Do your curriculum decisions work fairly for everyone?
Service	Does your curriculum build up a strong and stable education system?
Courage	What do you do when political or financial pressures complicate decisions?
Optimism	Are you confident your curriculum could change the world for the better?

Case study 4: Using public funds

Public funding of the state education system is a significant investment in the country's future. And with this investment comes the responsibility of school leaders to ensure the money is spent as parliament intends – on the education of children and young people.

School leaders must ensure high standards of probity in the management of public funds.

This means that:

- Public money is spent for the purposes intended by Parliament ("regularity")
- The highest standards of public conduct are maintained, including transparency in financial decisions ("Propriety)
- All spending decisions are an economic, efficient and effective use of available resources ("value for money")
- Agreed budgets are respected and unaffordable longer term commitments are avoided ("affordability and sustainability")
- Proper financial records are kept.

A tight fiscal environment, spending decisions are difficult and fraught with very real moral and ethical considerations.

Imagine

Your large comprehensive 11-16 school is under financial pressure. You are struggling to set a balanced budget. Parts of your school need urgent repair – in some places, the ceilings have been exposed due to water damage over the summer holidays. Your brother-in-law runs a little local building firm and as a favour to you, will do the repairs quickly and at a good price. You decide to ask him to proceed.

One of your English department has unexpectedly left and your English results are a worry. Your chair's daughter has just finished her initial teacher training and the Chair assures you she is very good and would be willing to work for the school as she wants to remain living in the area. This solves an immediate problem for you. You appoint the teacher as she is able to start at the beginning of term. This is in everyone's interests.

You tell your Chair you will not be able to set a balanced budget this year – you are doing as much as you can to make savings, but it is the right of children to have teachers in front of classes and the challenging level of behaviour in the school means that you need a larger than average leadership team with eleven assistant heads, to keep a lid on behaviour. You feel it is your moral duty to refuse to set a balanced budget as this will be to the detriment of the children and young people in your school.

Are you right?

Using the framework

Selflessness	If asked by a parent or member of the public about any of your decisions, are you certain you have acted in all cases in the public interest?
Honesty	If called to account for your decisions, are there any aspects of any of your decisions which would cause you a problem if you had to be absolutely truthful?
Openness	Are you comfortable with your decisions being reported openly?
Objectivity	Why did you decide to do what you do? Is there another way of looking at it?
Integrity	Who or what influences or influenced the choices you made?
Accountability	Are you comfortable reporting your decisions openly to your governing board?

Leadership	Would trustees and governors support your decisions?
Trust	Can parents trust that the decisions you have made are fair and balanced?
Wisdom	Will your decisions stand the test of time?
Kindness	Are your decisions thoughtful and do they serve the wider public interest?
Justice	Do your decisions work fairly for everyone?
Service	Do your decisions contribute to building a strong and stable education system?
Courage	What do you do when financial pressures complicate decisions?
Optimism	Are you confident that your decisions provide assurance about our education system and contribute to public confidence?

Case Study 5: Pupil Well-being

"The importance of well-being has been widely acknowledged over the past twenty years by psychologists. But the concept itself is surprisingly complex."
(21/8/17 post from Psychology Today)

Research findings, political statements and media commentary seem to find consensus around the conclusion that well-being is important and is increasingly fragile in modern society, particularly for young people. The roots of this fragility are less precisely identified but schools and school leaders are often suggested as part of the solution. This raises obvious challenges, particularly when juxtaposed with accountability and financial pressures. It also brings us inexorably back to the question of what schools are for. Should our decisions purely focus on seemingly measurable outcomes that enable accountability measures to be satisfied? Should education be designed to produce and increase economic prosperity and therefore content itself with producing suitably skilled and qualified school leavers in order to best serve economic needs? Or, alongside these aims, should schools be looking to ensure that the well-being of its pupils is also nurtured and grown? What happens when these aims are in opposition to each other and how should school leaders make ethical judgements about their relative value?

Imagine

You are increasingly concerned about the well-being and specifically the mental health of a number of the pupils in your school. Your concern grows for your Y11, 12 and 13 pupils and you feel that preparation for public exams may be a cause amongst others. In-school counselling support has had to be cut over the past years due to financial constraints and referrals to outside agencies including CAMHS has a higher threshold before support can be accessed and a longer lead time. Your pastoral team are increasingly dealing with complex psychological and emotional needs and you are aware that the well-being of your staff team is also an issue to consider carefully.

After some agonising, you decide that you need to keep your focus on successful delivery of your assessed courses and not devote further time, training and resources to the issue of well-being for staff and pupils. However, you intend to reduce the number of GCSE courses your pupils study in order to ease the burden on them. This will have to focus on EBACC subjects and give additional time to English and Maths. Non-EBACC creative courses may disappear. Further, your in-school counsellor, who has seen an increasing caseload of pupils, is leaving the school. Saving this post could help resolving a deficit budget.

Are you right?

Selflessness	Who does your well-being policy and practice best serve – your pupils or your school?
Honesty	Do your well-being priorities reflect your core values or are they a response to external pressures?
Openness	How open should you be regarding the choices you have to make in resourcing (or not being able to resource) your well-being priorities? With staff? Pupils? Parents?
Objectivity	Are your decisions active and intentional in terms of well-being or passive and dictated by external pressures? Or somewhere in between (and where)?
Integrity	What are the key drivers to the decisions you've made? Are you able to act in a way that maintains your personal values?
Accountability	Will external pressures drive decisions (or an absence of them) in this area?
Leadership	What climate for well-being in the school are you creating by your responses and leadership? For pupils? For staff?

Trust	Can young people and staff trust that you are holding their well-being as a priority?
Wisdom	How will you navigate a way forward when resources are limited and needs are ill defined but potentially large?
Kindness	Are you able to create an environment that promotes kindness for young people and staff alongside the pressures of achieving successfully?
Justice	Does the environment you create promote fairness for young people and staff?
Service	Who or what do the decisions you make in terms of well-being serve?
Courage	How have you made your decisions? Have you avoided making decisions because the way forward is difficult to navigate?
Optimism	Are you confident that the course you are setting will be of long term benefit for those in your school community?

Case Study 6: SEND

The 2015 SEND Code of Practice entitles all children and young people with SEND to timely and personalised support to achieve their aspirations. Children, young people and their families should have an active voice in any decisions that are made.

Pupils with SEND are more likely to experience poor outcomes against a range of indicators, such as attainment, attendance and exclusions, when compared to their peers without SEND. Delivering timely and effective targeted support to children and young people with SEND can be transformational.

Many additional needs can be catered for through quality first teaching, however some pupils will require additional or different support to their peers to reach developmental milestones and expected attainment targets.

It is widely accepted that initial teacher education does not consistently prepare new teachers to be confident teachers of SEND – despite expectations laid out in the professional standards. It is also widely accepted that mainstream schools are increasingly required to support young people with complex needs who previously may have attended special schools.

Schools face financial challenges which impact on the budgets available to put CPD in place to support staff development, hire support staff, and commission specialist support. Local services have also come under strain, with delays for assessment of need common and EHCP processes often protracted and burdensome.

Imagine

Midway through the school year a new pupil joins the school. This is the third school that they have attended in as many years. The child's parents meet with you before they start and seem anxious as they tell you about their previous experiences – their child was bullied by other pupils, frequently left to work alone in the corridor and placed on a part time timetable in their previous school.
The child joins the only class in the year group, which already has 29 pupils, 3 of whom have Education, Health and Care plans. The class teacher is an NQT who receives support from a teaching assistant in the mornings. 1 of the children with an EHCP in the class has 1-2-1 support.
Baseline assessments suggest that that new pupil has significant gaps in their learning and may have some communication needs and a specific learning difficulty and will require further assessment.
Over the first few weeks it become clear to the class teacher, support staff and SENCo that the child will require significant additional support to thrive at school. The SENCo has put some interventions in place, such as a literacy group during assembly time, but is unable to redeploy any support staff at this point. The child frequently disrupts learning time within the class and does not appear to be making progress. The SENCo is not confident that the LA will provide additional support and has a high workload.
The parents are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the situation, contacting the head and class teacher almost daily to complain about the quality of teaching. The child has started refusing to attend school and becomes distressed at the start of the school day.

The class teacher feels overwhelmed and has asked for additional support or for the child to be moved to a different class, their mentor has expressed concern about the impact of the new pupil on their teaching and the learning experience of the wider class.

How would you proceed?

Using the framework

Selflessness	What role can you play in addressing the parents' concerns in a constructive way? The teachers? The pupils?
Integrity	Have you ensured that your staff have the resources, training and information that they need to support children with SEND?
Objectivity	Is the school's SEND Information Report clear about how the school approaches support for pupils with SEND?
Accountability	Do you understand the school's duties as outlined in chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice?
Openness	Have the school fully involved the parents in decisions about support for their child?
Honesty	How can a strong case be made to the Local Authority about the need for additional resources, and the impact of the current situation on the school?
Leadership	Does leadership of SEND within your school start and finish with the SENCo, or extend across all leadership roles?
Trust	Do you trust your SENCo and staff to deliver high quality SEND provision?
Wisdom	How do you support your staff, who are frustrated with the situation, to focus on securing a good outcome for the child and the other children in the class?
Kindness	How can you ensure that the parents, staff and children feel heard and understood in this situation?
Justice	How are the needs and experiences of all children, staff and the parents addressed moving forward?
Service	What steps do you need to take to ensure that children with SEND thrive at your school?
Courage	Are you prepared to take the lead on difficult discussions with the parents and staff if needed?
Optimism	Does the school have a strong understanding of what good SEND provision looks like?

Case Study 7: Setting leadership pay

It is the governing board's role to set the pay policy for the organisation, whether in a maintained school, an academy trust or as required by the scheme of delegation for specific responsibilities within a multi academy trust. This should include the policy for the pay of leadership staff.

The governing body of a maintained school has a statutory responsibility to put in place a pay policy for its teaching staff, including the headteacher. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced a model pay policy. The policy must reflect the requirements of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which is usually revised annually. The governing board needs to ensure that any decisions to give discretionary pay awards are in line with this policy.

Academy trusts are responsible for their own pay and conditions policies. Although many trusts have adopted the STPCD, the DfE also produce exemplar pay policies based upon real policies being used by academies.

Imagine

a) *You, as chair of the governing board, have received a letter from the DfE asking you to justify your senior leadership pay as you have a member of staff earning above £150,000. Can the board justify this level of pay? If not, can this be rectified? OR*

b) *Your long standing headteacher/senior executive leader, whose pay is at the top of the headteacher group, in their discussion with you (the chair of the governing board) suggests that s/he is now looking to move on to a larger institution where s/he will command a great salary. You consider that the offer of a recruitment and retention allowance might be appropriate, but is that right and should that be the full 25% allowable under the STPCD? What should you do this with information?*

What will you do?

Using the framework

Selflessness	Is your pay policy – and this particular decision - solely to the benefit of children and young people?
Integrity	Are the right people involved in making the decision? Is the pay decision unduly influenced by the postholder?
Objectivity	Do you have evidence that: a) This level of pay would be required to recruit a senior leader? b) You will be unable to replace this leader at the current salary? Is this truly a corporate board decision, or one influenced by the leader/chair relationship?
Accountability	Are you sure that public money is being best used? Would the process for setting senior pay stand external scrutiny?
Openness	Do you publish your pay policy? Is the pay decision one you would be happy justifying to parents, staff and if necessary a journalist?
Honesty	Are you (the chair) honest with the rest of the governing board, senior leaders and staff about how leadership pay is set?
Leadership	Does the high level of pay fit with the values and ethos of the school/trust?
Trust	Can the young people in your school trust you to act in their best interest?

Wisdom	How do you apply experience, knowledge and insight appropriately to your decision?
Kindness	Is this a request or an ultimatum? All other things being decided, what is the kindest way to deal with either?
Justice	Is the policy fair to all staff? Does it include a pay ratio?
Service	Does your policy and this decision reflect that this is public service and not the private corporate sector?
Courage	Are you brave enough to go ahead with an evidence based and values-led decision?
Optimism	Is the decision based on a positive view of those who work in the public sector?

Case Study 8: Whistleblowing

It is important to remember that whistleblowing is relevant to all organisations and every individual who works within them. If there is a risk of something going seriously wrong or someone behaving in a corrupt or inappropriate manner, usually the first people to realise or suspect that this might happen will be those who work in or with the institution. The danger is that those with concerns remain silent because they fear the consequences of speaking out.

Whistleblowing can involve contacting groups outside the school, however the Commission for Standards in Public Life points out that it is 'far better for systems to be put in place which encourage staff to raise worries within the organisation'.

Culture is sometimes defined as 'the way we do things around here'. As leaders we need to grapple with the challenge of creating a climate where governors, parents, staff and pupils feel able to ask questions and raise concerns. Rather than being a sign of weakness, a willingness to address difficult issues in an open and transparent manner is a sign of strength.

Imagine

You have been in post for one year as a headteacher. Your examination officer comes to see you in May to register their concern about GCSE practical work in one of the school's most successful departments. Although, the department has a history of achieving some of the best grades in the school, the examination officer is very concerned that the amount of time spent completing the practical examination breaches the strict time limit set by the Exam Board. Equally the quantity of help offered to students during the examination goes beyond that permitted. The examination officer thinks that the Board should be informed, though this is likely to lead to a significant reduction in the grades awarded to the students concerned. He tells you that he had already shared his concerns with your predecessor, but no action was taken. However, he is confident that you will do the right thing.

What do you do?

Leadership	What climate are you creating in the school through your response?
Accountability	Will concerns over performance measures prevent you from doing the right thing?
Honesty	Can you condone or accept behaviour that has been explicitly rejected by an external body?
Integrity	How can you act in a way that maintains your personal values and those you promote to the school community?
Trust	Parents, governors, staff and pupils trust you to do the right thing. How can you be faithful to that trust?
Service	Who is your first responsibility to?
Courage	What pressures might prevent you from doing the right thing?
Optimism	What long-term benefits might arise from taking a decision that is initially difficult?

Case Study 9: Teacher Workload

Teachers are a schools biggest asset and its biggest cost. Young graduates filled with zeal to help children and change the world for the better consider teaching as a career. Those who make it into the classroom retain that motivation and, despite the inherent difficulty of the task, find the mutual energy of being with children and young people a life-enhancing experience. Good teaching is the single most effective way schools improve achievement and life-chances for all young people.

Many of these valuable young colleagues leave teaching within five years. They are joined in the ranks of ex-teachers by those who struggled in the classroom over many years, by those who cannot balance teaching with their right to a family or personal life and those who move into para-teaching posts while remaining committed to education.

Good teachers combine strong intellectual expertise with outstanding interpersonal skills and a love of children. They are front-line models of all that a good democracy wants from its next citizens. Losing teachers, or not being able to recruit good teachers, is a seriously risky democratic deficit.

Teachers quit for three reasons: behaviour, pay and workload, especially workload. They cite practices and requirements for which they can see no justification in improved service to children. They complain of a focus on compliance, with planning and assessment burdens which expect almost 100% of a teacher's time, inside and out of school. They feel that their professional skills are neither valued nor given time to develop. They can neither improve as teachers nor enjoy the personal life of a respected professional. Worst of all, they complain about managerial frenzy, panic and inaccessibility.

Many investigations in recent years cite school leaders' fear of accountability measures driving them to make unmanageable demands of their teachers. Given that accounting bodies such as Ofsted consistently refute this imputation, how might school leaders stop, listen, reflect, change their teachers' working lives and save them in the profession for the long-term?

Imagine

A new Head, you have taken over a school which is struggling and which has experienced turbulence in recent years. You've found it hard to recruit the optimum mixture of staff and you feel that you have three incompatible groups. There are young and enthusiastic teachers who work long hours. There are less competent teachers who you are not sure you can improve, and there's a larger group you find really irritating. They are quite good at the job, get reasonable results but show no enthusiasm for the kind of work-rate that the younger ones have. They won't change the school.

You are thinking of a plan to promote the latter, when you receive some terrible news: your two brightest young things have resigned. One wants 'to travel', the other has taken a worse-paid post in a charity. You invite them for a cup of tea to try to persuade them to stay and are shocked to discover that they cannot take the pace 'you expect' and suggest they 'cannot live like this'.

What will you do?

Using the framework

Selflessness	What is in the best interest of young people?

Honesty	Can you honestly review your opinions and actions in regards to the school? Are you sure that you cannot use the older teachers to change the school? Is it just easier to use young ones?
Openness	What will you do now you have had this conversation? How might others share the discussion?
Objectivity	Look closely at your expectations. What is the problem?
Integrity	To whom do you feel obliged that makes you act this way?
Accountability	Which aspect of accountability has made you act this way? What accountability do you bear for sustaining young teachers in the profession?
Leadership	How do you feel about your leadership of this issue?
Trust	Do you reproach yourself? What motivated you to lead in this manner?
Wisdom	What insight have you got from this? What will inform future decisions?
Kindness	Could you have been kinder?
Justice	Will the teaching force you are left serve the needs of all young people?
Service	What structures will you put in place to help keep young teachers teaching?
Courage	How will you talk to all your staff about this?
Optimism	What can you do to recover from this blow and greet the future with optimism?

Case Study 10: Assessment

Statutory assessment at the end of key stage 2 is an important part of primary education. It's a chance for pupils to show that they have been taught the essentials of numeracy and literacy that they will need to succeed in secondary school and later life. Results also feed into the accountability system, and fear of this system can drive behaviour of leaders. Worries about securing the 'right' key stage 2 results can lead to schools reducing time spent teaching wider curriculum subjects in favour of extra sessions on literacy and numeracy. Children should, of course, be encouraged to do well, but over-focusing on English and maths both narrow the curriculum and lead to pupils feeling pressure to perform well for the school.

Imagine

Your primary school is currently rated 'good' by Ofsted, and is due another inspection within the next 12 months. The school was 'requires improvement' several years ago, but with a rigorous approach to teaching maths and English, key stage 2 results have improved. You worry that results still hover around what Ofsted would find acceptable. Although you are aware of recent messages from the Secretary of State and HMCI about performance data being 'the start of the discussion' and 'no one piece of data leads to intervention' you're not entirely convinced. Your strong assumption is that this summer's key stage 2 results will have a substantial bearing on the outcome of the inspection.

Your internal assessment data tells you that the current year 6 cohort is not as strong as that of the previous two or three years. You fear that key stage 2 results could dip, and that this dip could see the 'good' rating for which you've all worked so hard slip back to 'requires improvement'. As a head brought into the school to turn things around and secure sustainable 'good' judgements, you worry that governors will lose confidence in you if this happened.

As a result, you're considering a last push for year six to secure the best chance of good scores. This means cancelling PE for the spring term and replacing it with maths booster classes. Other subjects will be squeezed in order to improve grammar and spelling. An outing will be cancelled, and children sent home with revision booklets at Easter and a strongly-expressed 'request' that parents supervise its completion. Its not going to be much fun until late May.

Are you right?

Using the framework

Selflessness	Whom does the year 6 approach to assessment serve best: the pupils or the school?
Honesty	Does your approach to statutory assessment reflect your vision for the school, or is it based on other considerations?
Openness	Have you consulted parents and carers on your plans?
Objectivity	Why did you decide to do what you do? Is there another way of looking at it?
Integrity	Are you too influenced by consideration of your own position as head?
Accountability	Are you sure that accountability is not overly driving your assessment approach?
Leadership	How will you convince trustees and governors that your approach is right?
Trust	Can your pupils trust that their year 6 education is going to be broad and balanced?
Wisdom	Is this approach going to benefit the year 6 pupils in the longer term?
Kindness	Is this approach going to cause some pupils unnecessary stress?

Justice	Will this work fairly for everyone? – including disadvantaged children who might miss out most if the curriculum is narrower?
Service	Does this serve your community in the best way?
Courage	Are you sure that you're doing what is right as opposed to what you think people want?
Optimism	Are you confident that your assessment choices will serve pupils better in their future education and career?

Case study 11: Pupil grouping and attainment

Education systems internationally range from the entirely comprehensive to systems where children are channelled into different pathways during primary years. Those systems which segregate early tend to perpetuate large socio-economic gaps, with disproportionate numbers of children from particular social backgrounds on some pathways. In the UK the vast majority of state schools are comprehensive to 16 – the approach suggested by OECD evidence to facilitate both social inclusion and student outcomes.

Schools must balance equality of entitlement and the learning needs of all their students. Deciding how to group pupils for learning is a basic curriculum management decision so a school must have principles by which classes are organised. In the UK, a relatively high number of schools adopt forms of attainment grouping in the form of setting and streaming (known elsewhere as 'tracking'). Research consistently finds that pupils from low socio-economic groups, and some minority ethnic groups are more likely to be placed in low attainment groups. Pupils in those groups make less progress that those in higher groups: pupils in low groups may be subject to double disadvantage. Low-attaining groups often have poorer resourcing, low expectations, self-fulfilling labelling, a narrowed and less demanding curriculum, tiered examinations which cap attainment and less expert teaching. These damage equality of opportunity and social mobility.

All children have a right to teaching and curricula which are stimulating and stretching, and equal access to high-quality, subject-expert provision. They have a right to be supported to realise their potential. A social justice perspective suggests that in order to ensure quality of opportunity, those disadvantaged at the beginning of education should have additional help and resources to mitigate their unequal starting point. The evidence suggests that streaming and setting has the opposite impact.

Imagine:
You are aware of the Education Endowment Foundation findings on setting and streaming. Your school has a long history of streaming, and the Head of Physics is a particular advocate. You have looked at your data, and found that Ever6 pupils are indeed over-represented in the bottom stream, and are making poorer progress. So you wish to take steps to move away from streaming. However, you are also highly aware of the shortage of Physics teachers, and the desirability of retaining your experienced Head of Physics. She is influential, and the last thing you want is a disgruntled science department given current recruitment challenges – losing subject experts would affect more pupils, including even some of those in the bottom stream. You decide that you will leave existing grouping practices in place for a year or two until conditions change.
Are you right?

Using the framework

Selflessness	Is your grouping policy solely for the benefit of children and young people?
Integrity	Have you inappropriately played yourself under an obligation to the Head of Physics?
Objectivity	Do you have evidence that your approach will work for children? Are you informed by research findings?
Accountability	Are the intentions, outputs and effects of the policy scrutinised by governors?
Openness	Are you sure that disadvantaged parents have access to all the information they need about your grouping policy?

Honesty	Are you honest with parents about the experience children have?
Leadership	How sure are you that you have the best policy?
Trust	Can all the young people in your school trust you to act in their best interest?
Wisdom	How will you apply experience, knowledge and insight to your policy? Are you satisfied with the answer you give yourself?
Kindness	Is your policy humane? Is it kind?
Justice	Does your policy help all the children in your school?
Service	Does your policy build up high-quality education for the future?
Courage	What prevents you from considering or changing your policy? Whom do you fear?
Optimism	How does your policy help change the world for the better?

Case Study 12: Your own case study

There is no better opportunity to put your own practice into analysis than using your own case study. You may choose to provide a case study that you have experience (the expelling of a pupil for example), or make up a case study based on worries you have at your institution (a budget concern, or if your head teacher is coming close to retirement). A (non-exhaustive) list of possible case studies are provided below. Please choose a case study that would refer to your position (i.e. if operational, do not use at governing board level).

When working through your own case study, it is not only important to recognise successes, but also improvements. Whilst you might feel that you behaved ethically on an exclusion board previously; what aspects might not have been considered at the time, which in the future you may wish to include in your decision making? When presenting the case study, write out the 'imagine' scenarios as above (whether this is a real or imagined case study), proposing an ethical dilemma (a budget concern referring to the loss of support staff). Use the blank framework below to consider what questions can be asked to examine decision making. Discuss with others how you would examine the case and work through the case study as if it was an item at your board.

The categories below and the framework should help to inform all questioning and ethical decision making at your school/trust.

Selflessness	
Honesty	
Openness	
Objectivity	
Integrity	
Accountability	
Leadership	
Trust	
Wisdom	
Kindness	
Justice	
Service	
Courage	
Optimism	

Possible case studies

- Dismissing a member of staff (for any reason)
- A budget concern
- Head teacher stepping down
- A bad Ofsted report, referring to poor governance (or another aspect)
- Closure of a nearby school
- Joining a MAT
- Pupil Exclusion
- Lack of diversity (teachers or board level)
- Request for flexible working
- Responding to parental complaint
- School is identified as 'coasting'.
- Recognising gifted and talented pupils
- Breach of GDPR
- Admission policy
- Careers provision: other providers