St Andrew's CofE Primary School
Governors Code of Conduct,
Principles and Procedures Policy

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Adopted on
Tuesday 12th March 2019, Reviewed November 2026

OUR COMMITMENT

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

2. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, attend regularly, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.

3. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities. **(Appendix 1** - Developing a Code of Conduct for Governors' School Visits, gives an outline of issues to consider when governors make a planned visit to school).

4. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development.

OUR CONDUCT

1. The governing body, students, parents/carers, headteacher and staff make up the school. We as governors are one important element in the partnership.

2. As a governing body we are committed to raising the educational standards of our school by working together in partnership with the staff and the Local Authority (LA).

3. We recognise that we are accountable to the wider community. We are elected or appointed by different groups - including parents, teachers, the

LA and others within the local community. Although we are not delegates, the governing body reflects the community it serves and we undertake to take proper account of its views.

4. We will act at all times in accordance with the law and the policy decisions that we have taken.

5. We will only act in our capacity as a governor when carrying out duties approved by the governing body.

6. As a governing body we will nominate a Shropshire School Governors' Council (SSGC) liaison governor.

7. As governors we will not seek to use our position to gain an unfair advantage, financially or otherwise, for any other person or ourselves.

8. We will each complete and keep up to date a Register of Business Interests form, kept at the school, which allows for the annual declaration of business interests.

9. We understand that our chair or vice-chair must resign (as chair or vice-chair) if they become employed (ie paid) to work at the school.

10. Regardless of our personal views, we will act at all times fairly, without prejudice, and in accordance with the principles laid down by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (**see Appendix 2).**

RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE HEADTEACHER

1. We have the responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the aims, broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates and we will do this by working closely with the headteacher.

2. We recognise that the headteacher has his/her own statutory responsibilities which are set out in his/her conditions of service and that he/she is responsible for the implementation of the policies we agree, for the day to day management of the school and the implementation of the curriculum. **Appendix 3** gives illustrations of the divisions of responsibility which have been found to work in practice.

3. We have a right to clearly presented information which enables us to see that the school is running effectively and efficiently and to ensure that it fulfils its legal responsibilities. The headteacher's accountability to the governing body is exercised by the provision of a report of information, and

bringing to the governing body appropriate proposals for consideration and decision.

4. The governing body and headteacher will treat each other with mutual respect.

5. We expect our chair and/or vice-chair and the headteacher to maintain regular contact to discuss the conduct of the school and to agree the agendas for our meetings.

6. We expect the headteacher to apply to the chair for leave of absence if this is sought for personal reasons under teachers' local conditions of employment. Such leave will be granted, subject to the demands of the service. The headteacher need not seek leave to be absent from the school premises for duties relating to his/her responsibilities (eg attendance at residential courses, accompanying pupils on a residential visit). In other cases where the headteacher wishes to apply for discretionary leave, the chair may agree this on a paid or unpaid basis.

   NB: Teaching staff apply to the Personnel Committee for discretionary leave of absence outside those provided for in the Personnel Handbook, where the responsibility has <u>not</u> been delegated to the headteacher.

7. If we have any concerns about members of staff, we will raise them confidentially with the headteacher. If we have concerns about the headteacher we will raise them confidentially with the chair who will seek advice and assistance from the Corporate Director. We will not raise such concerns at governing body meetings.

8. We expect our chair and headteacher to be open and frank with one another about their expectations of their working relationship.

9. If our chair or headteacher considers that their working relationship is breaking down and the differences causing this cannot be resolved between them, either of them should refer the matter to the Corporate Director for assistance and resolution.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

1. We recognise that we only have the power to act as a whole governing body; therefore individual governors have no power to act without the authority of the governing body. However, we also recognise that, in certain circumstances, the chair (or the vice-chair in the chair's absence) has the power to take urgent action (as defined in the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013). He/she will report such actions to our next meeting of the governing body.

2. We recognise that our effectiveness and efficiency are assessed as part of the Ofsted inspection which is subject to wider public scrutiny.

3. We recognise that our strength as a governing body lies in the qualities and aptitudes of our members, and in our ability to work together as a team. Each governor has an equal status and the right to participate, to state his or her view while respecting the views of others.

4. We can only participate in making decisions by attending meetings. We commit ourselves to attending meetings regularly. If we cannot attend we will send notification in advance with a reason for our absence.

5. We accept collective responsibility for making new governors feel welcome at their first meeting. We will ensure that we introduce ourselves and arrange for an experienced governor to support new members.

6. We will declare an interest in any item on the agenda as required by Regulation 16 and the Schedule to the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 and leave the meeting room while the matter is being discussed.

7. At our autumn term meeting, the election of chair will be presided over by the clerk and the election will be determined by a vote.

8. We understand that governing body meetings are not public meetings. Non-governors may be present by invitation of the governing body or chair (subject to ratification by the governing body). The minutes of our meetings record the key issues discussed, our decisions and an indication of the actions to be taken. Our minutes are a public document and part of our accountability.

9. We will co-operatively aim to reach decisions by consensus. Where there is disagreement we may vote on an issue to reach a decision.

10. Once the governing body makes a decision, we all undertake to stand by it when discussing the school with any other body or interest.

11. We will not raise issues at governing body meetings relating to individual pupils or person complaints against individual members of staff, including the headteacher.

12. We recognise that any issue relating to the conduct or employment of a member of staff is confidential.

13. We will only raise issues of 'any other business' if they are urgent and have been cleared by the chair, after consultation with the headteacher, before the start of the meeting.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS

1. We recognise that people who come into contact with the school have the right to make a complaint.

2. We will always observe the legal requirements for dealing with complaints regarding admissions or exclusion procedures, Special Educational Needs (SEN), the curriculum and religious worship.

3. We will **always follow our published complaints procedure** established by the governing body in responding to general criticisms or complaints relating to the school. **(See Appendix 4).**

4. We will not discuss the substance of the complaint with either the person who wishes to make it or at a governing body meeting, particularly if it relates to a member of staff or a pupil.

5. Depending on the issue, **the person raising a concern will be advised to first raise it** following agreed procedures. For example if the complaint is about X the person first speaks to Y.

the issue - X	**first speak to - Y**

Curriculum/class issue	Class teacher (primary) / Head of year (secondary)
Pupil behaviour	Class teacher (primary) / Head of year (secondary)
Member of staff	Headteacher
Admissions	Headteacher or Local Authority (LA). In a Voluntary Aided school, the Chair of governors
Headteacher	Chair of governors
A governor	The governor concerned/chair of governors
The governing body	The Chair of Governors
Local Authority (LA)	Relevant Local Authority (LA) officer

6. We recognise that the outcome of a complaint should only be discussed at a governing body meeting if the finding leads to a recommendation that affects our responsibilities.

7. We recognise that in our role as parents, staff or members of the wider community we may wish to raise complaints. We will deal with this in a personal capacity and not as a governor.

8. If the Complaints Committee of the governing body hears a complaint, its membership should be a balanced one reflecting a cross section of governors.

9. In reaching its decision on a complaint, the Complaints Committee should take account of any advice they receive from the headteacher, all legitimate interests with the school and the relevant school policy, before reaching their decision. The headteacher and the complainant should be invited to attend the meeting to present their views, concerns and actions.

10. The Education and Inspection Act 2006 gives OfSTED the power to investigate complaints from parents and carers about their child's school. Parents have to first demonstrate they have gone through the appropriate complaints procedure at a local level before approaching OfSTED.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. Where the governing body has determined that an item is confidential we undertake to support the confidentiality of governing body discussions and decisions. We will only determine that an item is confidential if there is good reason for it. This will include items about matters listed in **Appendix 5**.

2. Non-governors will be asked to leave if confidential matters are discussed, unless requested to take part in discussion.

3. The way that each governor votes, and opinions linked to an individual governor or information regarding a named individual will always be regarded as confidential, unless there is a recorded vote (*a 'recorded vote' is where each governor declares how they wish to vote and this information is recorded in the minutes by the clerk).*

4. Unless we decide they should be confidential, all minutes and reports to the governing body, or its committees, are public papers after the next meeting of the committee or full governing body has considered and signed them and will be available at the school to anyone wishing to inspect them.

5. We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the governing body.

DATA AND INFORMATION HANDLING

1. The governing body ultimately has corporate responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with the legislative requirements relating to the use of information and ICT security. To ensure that the school fulfils these requirements, the governing body has adopted a policy which provides information, advice and guidance (the School's Information and ICT Security Policy).

2. However governors as individuals also have a personal responsibility to ensure that sensitive information relating to staff and pupils remains confidential. Ways of ensuring this happens include:

   - do not take sensitive documents home with you from meetings. Leave them at school to be destroyed;

   - do not leave paperwork in your car to either be stolen or even read through the window;

- do not discuss sensitive matters, either on the telephone or face to face, in places where you could be overheard;

- do not pass information on to a third party, no matter how much you trust them.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The way people communicate is changing, with the increasing use of the internet and electronic communication being a norm. Easy to use tools such as social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, MSN to name a few, make it a simple task to have conversations online and for people to share information, experiences and knowledge. Whilst this can be an incredible opportunity for governors to communicate and collaborate more effectively, it is one that comes with risks and governors must be aware of the implications of participating online. The following should be borne in mind to ensure that risks are limited:

- the ease of publishing online means that it could be very easy to write something inadvertently that brings the school into disrepute;

- although a governor might be acting as an individual, the fact that he/she is known to be a governor could mean that his/her actions might be criticized. Remember that **you are an ambassador for your school** and wherever possible, disclose your position as a governor of your school. However you may not communicate as an 'accredited' representative unless you are authorised to do so;

- remember that an online discussion between some but not all members of the governing body undermines the collective knowledge and joint responsibility which could lead to a two-tier governing body i.e. those participating online and those not;

- never give out personal details such as home addresses or phone numbers;

- remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply;

- you may wish to spend some time searching the web for mentions of your school. You might find that a local blogger has been writing about you or perhaps parents have started a Facebook group. Bookmark anything you

find, or subscribe to automatic updates. If people are expressing concerns or are misinformed, bring this to the attention of the headteacher or the chair of governors who may wish to leave a response to clarify the issue.

The guiding principles for online participation really are no different to communicating in any other medium and the seven principles of public life are a very good starting point.
See Appendix 2 for further details.

Appendix 1

Developing a Code of Conduct for Governors' School Visits

It is not always easy for governors to set aside time to visit school but visits can be very productive when they are well structured and complement the school development planning and monitoring process. We must recognise that visits can be stressful for both staff and governors unless everyone understands what is expected of them. Building trusting relationships are key to ensuring that visits are a valuable experience for all concerned. The development of an agreed code of conduct for governor visits can help foster good governor/staff relationships and encourage governors to get first hand knowledge of their schools, and to monitor and evaluate the school's progress on the school development plan in other ways than at meetings. Here are some suggestions to help governing bodies develop an agreed framework:

1. A programme of governor visits could be drawn up in consultation with the headteacher and staff.
2. A visit should have a clear purpose, e.g. to observe a new development, talking with the literacy co-ordinator about improvements being made in school, to see the use of the new IT suite in action. The date and time should be agreed with the named member of staff concerned. Without careful planning school visits achieve little.
3. Governors should be given sufficient background information so they can make the visit a successful and positive experience.
4. Governors should register they are on the school site, as do all school visitors. A governor visit book would serve to monitor the pattern of visits that take place. Governors record the focus of the visit, the link to the school improvement plan, who they visited and a brief reflection on what was monitored and what took place. A suggested record is on the Shropshire Learning Gateway Governor Services website area
5. In the case of classroom visits, governors are not assessing teacher performance, They are not qualified to judge the quality of what they see, nor is that their role to do so, this should be clearly understood by governors and staff. Governors should make arrangements to meet with the class teacher before the visit, so they know what will be happening during the lesson and what kind of approach would be most appropriate.
6. Take advantage of informally talking to pupils and staff.
7. Always thank the class teacher after the visit pointing out what you appreciated about the class and lesson. Discuss the visit with the

headteacher before leaving to help put your experience into context and to prepare to report back to the governing body.

8. Remember to maintain confidentiality at all times.

Report back to the governing body either verbally and in writing so that the monitoring is formally recorded in the minutes along the following lines:

- When the visit took place.
- The reason for the visit and link to school improvement.
- Observations relevant to the function and policies of the governing body.
- Any recommendations/issues.

Appendix 2

Standards in Public Life

Selflessness

We will take decisions solely in terms of the interest of the school and the community it serves. We will not seek to gain financially from our decisions, nor will we take decisions from which our friends or family financially benefit.

Integrity

As individuals we will not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out our business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, we will make our choices on merit.

Accountability

We will be accountable for our decisions and actions to the wider community served by the school and we will submit ourselves to a level of scrutiny appropriate to our office.

Openness

We will be as open as possible about all our decisions and actions. We will give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

Honesty

We will declare any private interests relating to our public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interests of the school.

Leadership

We will promote and support these principles through our leadership and example.

Ref: 'Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life', The Nolan Committee, 1996

Appendix 3

CURRICULUM: an example of the division of response between the governing body and the Headteacher	
The Headteacher:	**The governing body:**
draws up the school curriculum plan within the overall statutory framework and the policy framework set by the governing body;	determines a policy for delivering a broad balanced curriculum within the statutory framework in consultation with the headteacher, including a policy on sex education;
ensures its implementation; and	satisfies itself that requirements for the delivery and assessment of the National Curriculum are being met and that Religious Education provided; and
is responsible for day to day decisions on the curriculum.	ensures that appropriate monitoring arrangements are in place and that outcomes are being evaluated through reports from the headteacher.

STAFFING: an example of the division of responsibilities between the governing body and the headteacher	
The Headteacher:	**The governing body:**
Makes proposals for a staffing structure;	determines the staffing complement;
selects staff within the limits of delegation agreed by the governing body;	determines the staffing complement;
manages and leads the school staff;	appoints headteacher and deputy as required by law and participates in other staff appointments according to its own procedures;
handles discipline, grievance and first line management in the first instance, within the terms of statutory requirements, instrument and any standing orders where they exist, and the staff discipline and grievance procedure established by the governing body;	draws up the procedures for the pay, conditions, discipline, suspension and dismissal of staff in accordance with the statutory requirements in the instruments;
submits reports to the governing body or the staffing committee, as required; and	sets the pay for headteachers and deputies and adopts and implements a pay policy for all staff;
manages, in the first instance, consultations with staff and professional associations on behalf of the governing body.	

FINANCE AND BUDGET: an example of the division of responsibilities between the governing body and the headteacher	
The Headteacher:	**The governing body, in consideration of its ultimate responsibility for the budget:**
draws up the proposed budget options for: - delegated funds; - special purpose grants; and - other anticipated income, for consideration and approval by the governing body;	discusses and adopts the budget (with any amendments which are agreed);
incurs expenditure within delegated limits, once the budget has been agreed; and	agrees limits of delegation and the power to transfer between budget headings (virement); and
submits regular monitoring reports of expenditure against budget to the governing body, or finance committee.	monitors expenditure against budget and evaluates outcomes;
	these functions, apart from approval of the budget, may be delegated to a finance committee where one exists to work with the headteacher.

Ref: Roles of Governing Bodies and Headteachers – DfEE 0168/2000

Appendix 4

Handling Complaints

All complaints must be handled with care.

1. In drawing up policies and procedures for handling general complaints, the following principles should be considered:

   - the desirability of settling differences informally;

   - the need for more formal mechanisms for dealing fairly and effectively with complaints which have proved impossible to settle informally;

   - ensuring that parents, staff and governors know what the procedures are.

2. Governing bodies will **have adopted a policy** which guides them through the handling of complaints covering the following points:

   - It is helpful to make it clear to whom complaints should be made in the first instance. In most cases, this will be the headteacher. The chair of the governing body should be the first person to approach only in cases which could involve disciplinary or legal action against the headteacher.

   - Governors approached by a complainant should refer him or her to the headteacher or the chair as indicated above.

   - If discussions between the headteacher and the complainant prove fruitless, the complainant should be told of his or her right to make a formal complaint and how it can be made.

   - Formal complaints to the governing body should be made to the chair. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the matter is referred to the Complaints Committee. No governor can be accused of prejudice by ensuring that:

     - an individual governor does not deal with the complaint; ○ the complaint is quickly referred to the relevant committee; ○ the complaint is not reported to the whole governing body until it is resolved, and then not in detail;
     - all parties to the complaint are given a fair hearing;
     - the decision of the Complaints Committee is given in writing to the complainant.

   - Individual complaints should not be raised at full meetings of the governing body, unless the meeting is part of the complaints procedure.

Appendix 5

Confidentiality

The following information should always be treated as confidential (ie **not** for discussion outside of the meeting):

1. Any personal information relating to a member of staff at the school. For example this would include information relating to a member of staff's state of health, their pay or personal grade, their performance objectives, their domestic circumstances, or any complaint that may have been made by or against them.

2. Any information relating to a candidate involved in the selection process for appointment to a job at the school, or the de-selection process in the event of the need to reduce the number of staff at the school.

3. Any information relating to a member of staff in connection with the governing body's discipline and grievance procedures.

4. Any information relating to a pupil or his/her parent(s).

5. Any information relating to a contract between the Authority (on behalf of the school) or school and a supplier for the purchase of goods and services.

6. Any information relating to any consultations or negotiations in a labour relations matter.

7. Any information relating to legal proceedings by or against the Authority (if relating to a matter which involves the school) or the school.

8. Any information which the governing body deems to be confidential.

Governors who do not comply with these arrangements about confidentiality may face legal action.