



# A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNING BODY

St Paulinus Catholic Primary School 2016/17

## Our Mission

*"Inspiring all to live, learn and love in the light of Jesus"*

(I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12)

## Introduction

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the Governing Body and individual governors will operate.

The Governing Body accepts the following principles and procedures:

## General

1. We have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
2. We recognise that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy and internal organisation and management of the school, and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.
3. We accept that all governors have equal status, and although appointed by different groups (i.e., parents, staff, Local Authority, Diocese) our overriding concern will be the welfare of the school as a whole.
4. We have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so.
5. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of, the employer.
6. We will encourage open government and shall be seen to be doing so.
7. We will consider carefully, how our decisions may affect other schools.

## Commitment

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

9. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Body, attend meetings regularly, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including membership of committees or working groups.

10. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.

11. We will ensure that our individual and collective needs for training and development are consistently monitored, and opportunities to undertake relevant training and development are sought.

## Relationships

12. We will strive to work as a team. Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the governing body will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- The headteacher
- Staff
- Children
- Parents
- The Diocese (i.e. The Vicariate for Evangelisation/Office for Education and Schools)
- Our parish and local communities
- The Local Authority
- Multi-agency representatives
- Other local schools, including Catholic and other VA, and community schools
- Local educational organisations / businesses / etc.

13. In forming, building and sustaining good working relationships governors will strive to:

- Remember that we are typically representative of the *category* of governor to which we are appointed or elected. We are not representatives of those *groups*, e.g. a representative parent, not a representative of the parents.
- Work as members of a team in which all governors contribute and constructive working relationships are actively promoted, forming the governing body which functions with corporate responsibility and accountability.

• Develop an open and honest relationship with the headteacher 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 relationships between governors and with other stakeholders are anchored in the principles which flow from the Gospel. The governing body will draw on the guidance

offered in 'Christ at the Centre'<sup>1</sup> that whilst not definitive, the core values of the Gospel are based on the Beatitudes and 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<sup>2</sup>

## Confidentiality

14. We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the Governing Body in meetings and from our visits to school as governors.

15. We will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.

16. We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the Governing Body.

## Conduct

Governors have a general duty to act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school at all times. Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the governing body will strive to behave professionally at all times.

Governors 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. Governors' actions at all times should reflect our responsibility to secure the Catholic ethos of the school.

Governors 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 life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.

Governors should reflect on how we are perceived by stakeholders in all we say and do, both as individual governors and as a corporate body.

Governors 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.

Governors should express views openly at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or any individual governor or delegate to do so.

Governors will not speak out against majority decisions in public or in private outside the governing body. The intention is to protect the reputation and authority of the governing body and the school in the public domain.

<sup>1</sup> Christ at the Centre: a summary of why the Church provides Catholic Schools, Rev. Marcus Stock, The Diocesan Schools Commission of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 9

- Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.

- Governors will respond to criticism or complaints about the school and / or its staff by referring to the school's Complaints Procedure adopted by the governing body for the correct procedure to be followed, and will advise the complainant accordingly.

- Governors will record in the register of pecuniary interests any pecuniary interest we might have in connection with the governing body's business.
- Governors will be expected to declare an interest in any item of business and withdraw from the meeting while it is under discussion.

- Governors will always undertake visits within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.

## Suspension

17. If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

## Removal

18. We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies which have the power to remove those they appoint.

19. If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor or removing the Chair, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

As a member of the governing body of (*insert school name*) School

- \* I agree to abide by the principles set out in this document.<sup>3</sup>

- \* I agree to details of my office as a governor being published on the school's website as required by statute.<sup>4</sup>

Signed .....

Date .....

<sup>3</sup>For a more detailed treatment of the principles highlighted in the present document including the legal status of school governors, please consult the following documentation: 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors', Department for Education and Skills, Crown Copyright, 2006, 'Diocese of Leeds Governors Handbook', The Office for Education and Schools, January 2010, 'Schools of Discipline', Diocese of Leeds, 2008.

<sup>4</sup>The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained School Statutory Guidance August 2015 requires for each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months: • their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body's instrument of government), • relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including: • governance roles in other educational institutions; • any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives); and • their attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year.