



POLICY STATEMENT ON OBSERVING CONFIDENTIALITY WITHIN THE GOVERNING BODY

CONTEXT

For the purpose of this statement confidential Items are defined as follows:

- Business items that are agreed as confidential either prior to or during discussion.
- Business items that are minuted but where the relevant section of the minutes is kept separate from the rest of the meeting minutes – and not made available for public scrutiny.
- Where the minutes that contain the confidential items are circulated to Governing Body members only.
- Business items that relate to specific personnel or financial situations.
- Business items that are not reported to stakeholders.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR OSBERVING CONFIDENTIALITY

- **All** Governing Body discussion is confidential in order to ensure everyone is comfortable about airing their views.
- Minutes will reflect the tenor of discussion and decisions made.
- No verbal reports from Governing Body meetings should be relayed unless agreed by the Governing Body – and absolute clarity of *what* may be reported is vital.
- The Governing Body advocates the 'four wall' principle i.e. discussion stops once participants leave the four walls within which the meeting has taken place. Even conversation between Governors should not continue outside the room as this could be overheard/misconstrued/ deemed divisive.
- On no occasion should Governors divulge the detail of Governing Body discussion – particularly if they disagree with a decision taken.
- Once a decision has been democratically made, all Governors must support that decision – inability to do so compromises the team effectiveness of the Governing Body.
- Governing Body minutes become public documents only after they have been agreed by the Governing Body
- The drawing up and dissemination of such documents should be done in an atmosphere of confidentiality.
- The Governing Body may adopt a code of conduct to which all Governors, current and new, subscribe.
- Although open discussion should remain confidential, the Governing Body should consider ways of keeping the school community informed of its work and of the key decisions it makes.