



## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MEMBERS, TRUSTEES AND GOVERNORS

- No trustee or governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full trust board or governing body;
- All trustees and governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made by their board, and
- Although appointed through different routes (e.g. co-opted, parent or member appointed), the overriding concern of all trustees and governors has to be the welfare of the trust as a whole.

### General

- We understand the purpose of governance to ensure;
  - Clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
  - Hold the headteachers to account for the educational performance of the schools, their pupils, and the performance management of staff
  - Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life (listed below).
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when given the delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak individually when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the members, trust board and the local governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our trust, our actions will reflect this.
- We will strive to uphold the Trust's reputation in our private communications (including social media).
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the trust we will follow the procedures established by the trust.

### Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office in a governance role involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- If acting as directors, we will not go beyond our duties or act outside of the powers of authority conveyed on us, and acknowledge that were we to do so we could be held liable to the school and/or third parties.
- If acting as trustees, we accept that we may be held responsible up to the limit in the articles of association, were the school/trust to go bankrupt.
- We will make full efforts to attend all relevant meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to.

- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocols.
- We will get to know the trust well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in academy activities.
- Any visits to academies will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the trust and agreed with the Headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Headteachers.

### **Relationships**

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We recognise that the roles of members, trustees, governors, staff member and volunteers in academies are different. Where I am also a staff member and/or volunteer in school I will maintain the separation of my roles.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **Confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside the academies.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with any aspect of the trust in the Register of Business Interests (that will be published on the website).
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We will act in the best interests of the trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, dates of appointments, terms of office, role on the trust or local governing bodies, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor /trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the website.
- We accept that information relating to board/local governing body members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors/trustees (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

### **Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the trust board or governing body should seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes constructively.

- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another trustee or governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any trustee or governor shall be raised at a meeting of the trust board or governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstances removal from the governing body.

## **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

*(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations.)*

### **1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Trustees and governors will sign the Code at the first meeting of each school year.

**Undertaking:**

As part of the governance of the trust I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the academies and the trust, publicly supporting their aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the Trust or the Academies.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date: .....