Governance Code of Conduct

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As Members/ Trustees / Governors we will focus on our strategic functions:

1. Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff.
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent, ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.
4.

As individuals we agree to:

Uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life

We will conduct ourselves in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles):

- **Selflessness**: We will act solely in the interests of the Trust, its schools and pupils.
- **Integrity**: We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation that might influence our work and will declare any conflicts of interest.
- **Objectivity**: We will make decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence available.
- **Accountability**: We will be accountable for our decisions and actions and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- **Openness**: We will act transparently and make information available unless there are lawful reasons not to do so.
- **Honesty**: We will be truthful in all our dealings.
- **Leadership**: We will promote and uphold these principles through our own behaviour and challenge conduct that falls below these standards.

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management and support and strengthen Trust leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders and holding them to account.
2. We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in the Scheme of Delegation.
3. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our Schools and Trust. We will act as Ambassadors for the Trust.
4. We agree to adhere to Trust/School policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
5. We will work collectively for the benefit of the Trust and Schools.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
7. We will consider how our decisions may affect the schools and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
9. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or the Trust values or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
10. We will only speak or act on behalf of the Trust / Trust Board and Local Academy Committees if we have the authority to do so.
11. We will fulfil the Trust's responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
12. We will actively identify, evaluate and monitor strategic risks facing the Trust and its schools and ensure appropriate assurance is provided to the Trust Board.
13. We will support regular governance self-evaluation and contribute to reviews of governance effectiveness, board composition, succession planning and skills development.
14. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
15. We will strive to uphold the School's / Trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
16. We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality, inclusion and opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings (and at least a minimum of 2 per year) and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities and partake in regular monitoring visits to conducts our duties and improve stakeholder engagement.
5. As Governors on the Local Academy Committees (LACs), we will organise monitoring visits to the schools and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff or the Governance Professional in advance and observe School and Trust Board protocol.

6. When visiting the school, we understand that we are not there to make judgements on teaching practice. We are there to observe and collate evidence to enable us to report on our agreed brief for the day.
7. As Members and Trustees, we may visit meetings held by the Trust and LACs and prior notice will be given.
8. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
9. We will participate in induction training, prioritising training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.
10. We will participate in governance reviews, skills audits and succession planning activities to support continuous improvement and strengthen governance capacity across the Trust.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with the executive team, school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/ communities.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with Trust Board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will support the Chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.
4. LACS: we will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.
5. Trustees: We will engage with and be accountable for those governing at local level (LACs).
6. LACS and Trustees: will work collaboratively and establish effective working relationships.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of the School/Trust when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. Confidential information will never be used for the purpose other than what it was collected and intended for.
5. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.
6. We will communicate using the Trust email address and store files securely in the Trust SharePoint cloud drive or via Governor-Hub.
7. We will practice good IT security, keeping personal data safe and supporting GDPR compliance.
8. We will adhere to the Trust's Adult Acceptable Use Policy at all times.
9. Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the Trust Board's business, and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests annually.

2. We will also declare any conflict at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the School/Trust's website.
5. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles and responsibilities, attendance records and relevant business and pecuniary interests will be published on the Trust's website.
6. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information About Schools), some of which will be publicly available.
7. We accept that the Board may collect diversity data to publish on the Trust's website which could include information on any of the 9 protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. We understand that providing this information is voluntary and that no individual data will be made available.
8. Members and Trustees: we accept that information will be published on Companies House.
9. We accept that the approved board and committee minutes and agenda may be made available to any interested person.
10. We will act in the best interests of the Trust/School, and we will act as a whole and not as a representative.
11. We will declare gifts, hospitality or benefits received in connection with our governance role in accordance with Trust policy.
12. We will not accept gifts, hospitality or benefits that could reasonably be perceived as influencing our judgement, independence or decision-making.
13. We will comply with the Trust's Anti-Bribery arrangements and will not offer, request or accept any improper inducement.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

The Board expects all Members, Trustees and Governors to adhere to this Code of Conduct at all times.

Where concerns arise regarding a potential breach:

1. The matter should, wherever possible, be raised with the Chair of the relevant Board or Committee.
2. The Chair will consider the concern and determine whether an informal resolution is appropriate or whether a formal investigation is required.
3. Any investigation will be conducted fairly and proportionately, allowing the individual concerned an opportunity to respond.
4. Following consideration of the findings, appropriate actions may include:
    - Informal discussion and clarification of expectations;
    - Training, mentoring or support;

- Formal recording of concerns;
- Restriction of a governance responsibility where appropriate;
- A recommendation for suspension or removal in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.

Examples of conduct that may constitute a breach include:

- Repeated failure to attend meetings without reasonable explanation;
- Failure to declare relevant interests or conflicts;
- Breach of confidentiality;
- Conduct likely to bring the Trust, its schools or governance structures into disrepute;
- Failure to uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life;
- Serious misconduct or behaviour inconsistent with the values of the Trust.

Related Policies and Governance Documents

This Code should be read alongside:

- Articles of Association;
- Scheme of Delegation;
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Mobile Phone Policy
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- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;