

CHANGE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Trustee Code of Conduct

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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all trustees to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that trustees carry out their role with honesty and integrity, and help us to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The code is based on [the Governance Handbook](#). It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our Articles of Association and Scheme of Governance).

Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, trustees will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

2. The 7 Nolan principles of public life

As trustees, we will follow these [principles](#) set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

- **Selflessness** – we will act in the public interest
- **Integrity** – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests
- **Objectivity** – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
- **Accountability** – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
- **Openness** – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
- **Honesty** – we will be truthful
- **Leadership** – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens

3. Trustees' responsibilities

The 3 functions of our board are to:

- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the schools and its pupils
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the trust
- Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure money is well spent

In order to do this effectively, as individuals we will:

- Understand the responsibilities of trustees as directors under company law and trustees under charity law
- Fulfil the expectations of a good employer and the contract of trust between the employer and those who are employed
- Understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the board and those of the executive/school leaders
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself

- Preserve and develop the character of the trust
- Not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, the local community and the local authority)
- Follow the trust's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the trust as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the trust's constitutional documents
- Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our board's performance, constitution and skillset
- Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills we need for effective governance
- Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full board
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation and our funding agreement that sets out how we must manage our trust's money, and procure goods and services
- Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited
- Declare all gifts worth more than £25.00 and record them on the gifts and hospitality register. We will not accept bribes
- We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the trust

4. Working with others

We will:

- Support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, and holding them to account
- Respect the role of the executive/school leaders and avoid routine involvement in operational matters
- Respect each other's views
- Work together as a board to develop effective relationships with stakeholders
- Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders
- Follow the [Equality Act 2010](#), and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything we do

5. Commitment to governance

We:

- Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice
- Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role
- Understand that work should be shared among members and that all trustees are expected to take an active role

- Will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions
- Will attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the board has a wide range of skills and expertise

6. Openness and transparency

Conflicts of interest

To make sure our board takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all trustees including associate members
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter

Publishing information

To ensure our board is transparent and open to the community we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.

- We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
 - The structure and remit of the members, board of trustees, committees and local governing bodies, and the full name of the chair of each one (where applicable)
 - For each member, trustee and local governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - Their term of office (trustees and local governors only)
 - The date they stepped down (where applicable)
 - The body that appointed them (trustees and local governors only)
 - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
 - Their attendance record over the last academic year (only for trustees at board and committee meetings and local governors at local governing body meetings)
- We accept that the information about members, trustees and local governors will be published on Get Information about Schools
- We accept that the information about trustees will be published on Companies House
- We accept that the approved board minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person unless agreed as confidential items

7. Confidentiality

In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. We will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:

- Information about sensitive matters

- Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents)
- Details of individual trustees' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted

Confidential information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

Breaches of confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Trustees' understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended.

8. Data protection

We will follow the trust's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Personal data breaches

We will inform the trust's data protection officer immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

9. Social media

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the trust at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards trustees to the chair of trustees and the CEO

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the trust
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the board, local governors or school community

- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the trust into disrepute

10. Monitoring arrangements

This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the board of trustees.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Gifts and hospitality
- E-safety
- Data protection

Appendix 1: breaches of the code of conduct

If we suspect a trustee has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- The chair will investigate
- The chair will hold a meeting with the trustee to discuss the issue. The trustee can bring a friend to the meeting. Another trustee will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the chair to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the trustee
 - Making sure the trustee withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in
- If there is no improvement in the trustees' behaviour, the board of trustees will vote on a motion to suspend them for up to 6 months. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Trustees may be suspended if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board of trustees (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the board) and
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the academy trust or the office of the trustee into disrepute

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media

We may remove a trustee from office where:

- There have been repeated grounds for suspension
- There has been serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- They display repeated and serious incompetence
- They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining fundamental British values
- Their actions are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions interfere with the operational efficiency of the trust

Appendix 2: Vision, Purpose, Values and Ethos Statement

Our Vision:

“Aiming High – Changing Lives”

To develop a sustainable, growing organisation that is based upon **mutual partnership** and **shared values** to ensure that all children within the Partnership get the best possible provision leading to the best possible educational and wider outcomes.

Our Purpose:

HIGH PRINCIPLES	CHILD-CENTRED	SAFE & SECURE
<p>We will operate in accordance with our Articles of Association and ensure that our VISION, PURPOSE, VALUES and ETHOS are at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p><i>Aiming High – Changing Lives</i></p>	<p>We will value children’s creativity and individuality, and listen attentively to their views, opinions and feelings.</p> <p><i>Everyone has the right to respect</i></p>	<p>We will keep our children safe, secure and cared for.</p> <p><i>Everyone has the right to feel and to be safe</i></p>
BRILLIANT CURRICULUM	QUALITY OUTCOMES	NEXT STEP READY
<p>We will ensure that high standards in English and Mathematics are at the heart of a creative curriculum that equips children with the knowledge and skills through experience deep and profound learning for life.</p>	<p>We will aim to provide first-rate teaching in all lessons that enables children to learn and achieve extremely well.</p> <p>We will support children’s holistic development and work hard to overcome barriers to achievement and build their self-belief and self-confidence</p> <p><i>Everyone has the right to learn</i></p>	<p>We will ensure that children leave primary education ready, willing and able to successfully take the next step in their learning and the next step in their lives.</p>

Our Core Values:

All our academies have shared Core Values that we expect to be demonstrable in everyone’s attitudes, behaviours and actions:

- **HOPE** – to be confident in our expectations of all that we can to achieve individually and together.
- **TRUST** - to develop relationships that are built on reliability, openness, honesty and living out the Core Values.

- **RESPONSIBILITY** - to have good judgment and the ability to make good choices and decisions.
- **RESPECT**- to show positive consideration for people and the planet; to be kind, tolerant and understanding.
- **COURAGE**- to have ability to try new things, overcome fear to undertake challenges; to be morally brave: being generous, fair, forgiving and compassionate.
- **PERSEVERANCE** - to show a 'growth mindset' despite difficulties, failures or obstacles; to seeing challenges as the opportunity to grow knowledge, skills and positive attitudes.

Ethos Statement:

Our ethos is based around the adoption of “Three Rights” and contextualises our Purpose and Core Values.

- The Right to feel and to be **SAFE**
- The Right to **LEARN**
- The Right to **RESPECT**

The Right to feel and to be SAFE

- ✓ We commit to making every school within CHANGE Schools Partnership a place where the children will feel and be safe.
- ✓ We will prepare children well to help them to stay safe for life beyond the school campus and online.
- ✓ We have a strong, child-centred staff team who will also show their own humanity.
- ✓ Our academies will be a relentlessly positive, safe and welcoming places to be; our staff will be both interesting and exciting. We will endeavour to sort out children’s concerns and worries responding to what they say to us.

The Right to LEARN

- ✓ We will aim to provide first-rate teaching in all lessons and strive for excellence in everything that we do;
- ✓ We will ensure that high standards in English and mathematics are at the heart of a broad and exciting curriculum;
- ✓ Each academy will be an unthreatening place of mutual respect where the children will receive personalised learning and will feel valued.
- ✓ We will encourage the children and celebrate their successes and efforts through striving for the highest quality outcomes.
- ✓ We will ensure that children leave primary education ready, willing and able to successfully take the next step in their learning and the next step in their lives.

The Right to RESPECT

- ✓ Children will be greeted by a friendly face every day and our staff will model positive, respectful relationships to them.

- ✓ The children will be given time to talk and we will thank them for their efforts and attitude.
- ✓ We will show interest in the child and actively listen to them. The children will have a voice at whichever academy they learn at and we will provide a supportive environment for them to learn and grow as human beings.
- ✓ We will support children's holistic development and work hard to overcome barriers and build their self-belief and self-confidence;
- ✓ We will be fair and consistent to every children and our academies will be places where there are smiles seen and laughter heard.

Appendix 3: Signed Declaration

Trustees/Governors will sign the Code at the first Board or Governing Body meeting of each school year.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Board of Trustees/Governing Body* I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the Trust at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the Trust, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the Trust, the Board of Trustees/Governing Body, the CEO/Headteacher or staff.

Signed:

Printed Name:

Position:

Date:

**Delete as appropriate*