

Introduction:

The Board of Trustees has the overarching responsibility for the core strategic functions:

- Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff;
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent;
- ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

Trustees are also responsible for ensuring the trust complies with charity and company law, as well as its own funding agreement with the Secretary of State. The Trustees are the statutory governors of the academies in the trust. The Trustees also approve each of the trust's major strategies.

To enable the Board to fulfil these functions it delegates specific responsibilities to committees; this document applies to all individuals appointed to the following:-

Education & Standards Committee
Finance & Resources Committee

Remuneration & HR Committee

Chairs Forum
Local Governing Bodies (LGB) (including all sub committees)
Risk & Audit Committee

Our commitment:

Once this code has been adopted, all board members agree to faithfully abide by it.

Trustees: We agree to follow the [charity governance code](#)

Those governing at local level: We recognise and support the principles set out in the [charity governance code](#)

We will abide by the Principles of Public Life:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

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

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will apply the highest standards and will:

1. act within our powers
2. promote the success of the trust
3. exercise independent judgement
4. exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
5. avoid conflicts of interest
6. not accept benefits from third parties
7. declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

As individuals on the Board of Trustees or as individuals on a committee with delegated responsibilities we agree to :

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our [scheme of delegation](#).
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our trust.
- We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust and local community.
- We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the trust board if we have the authority to do so.
- **Trustees:** We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints, we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
- **Those governing at local level:** We will act as the local ambassadors for our trust.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a trustee, committee or LGB member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Board of Trustees, committee or LGB, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance 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 protocol.
- We will get to know the academies well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in academy activities.
- We will visit the academies, with all visits arranged in advance within the framework established by the Board of Trustees or LGB.
- When visiting the academy in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a trustee, committee or LGB member.
- We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

- We will develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community/ communities.
- ***Those governing at local level:** We will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.
- ***Those governing at local level:** We will establish effective working relationships with trustees.
- ***Trustees:** We will engage with and be accountable to those governing at local level.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect 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 trust or academy.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding academy/trust business arise outside a Board of Trustees, committee or LGB meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Board of Trustees, committee or LGB vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- To ensure that we meet Data Protection and GDPR requirements, we will only use a University of Brighton (@brighton.ac.uk), an academy specific or a Trust (@brightonacademiestrust.org.uk) email account for any matters related to Trust, Board of Trustees, committee or LGB business.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the Board of Trustees, committee or local governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the academy/trust's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Board of Trustees, committee or local governing body.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the Trust or academy's website.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

Ceasing to be a trustee, committee or local governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a trustee, committee or LGB member leaves office

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the Board of Trustees, committee or LGB will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another trustee, committee or LGB member, such as the vice chair will investigate.