

Code of Conduct for NMAT Governing Boards (Non-statutory)



Preamble

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors, trustees and appropriate Trust/Academy committee members in order for the governing boards to properly carry out its work within the Academy/s and the community. Unless otherwise stated, 'Trust' includes the academies, and it applies to all levels of governance.

Once approved by the Trust, the Code will apply to all governors/trustees/relevant committee members.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law and for academies, their articles of association and agreed scheme of delegation.

The Trustee/Governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, ethos and strategic direction for the trust/academies;
- Agreeing the improvement strategy with priorities and targets;
- Meeting statutory duties;
- 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.

As individuals on the board/s 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 develop, share and live the ethos and values of our academy/s.
- We agree to adhere to academy/trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the academy/s.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the academy/s 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 board if we have the authority to do so.
- 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 academies / trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- 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.

This policy will be kept under regular review in light of legal developments and best practice.

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- 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 academy/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in academy activities.
- We will visit the academy/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- When visiting the academy in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- 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.
- 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 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 students, both inside or outside the Trust.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding /trust business arise outside a governing board/s meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing boards vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

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 governing board'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 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 a governing board/s.
- 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.
- 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 school's website.

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Ceasing to be a governor/Trustee/Trust committee member

We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/Trust committee 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 appropriate governing board 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 governance board member will investigate the matter.

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)

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

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.

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

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.

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.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful.

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.

This was approved by the Board of Trustees and adopted by all elements of the Trust's Governance structure.

This policy will be kept under regular review in light of legal developments and best practice.