



Opportunity, Work together, Nurture

GOVERNANCE CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved by the Trust Board, 19 September 2023

This code of conduct has been approved by the Board of Trustees of OWN Trust and applies to all individuals, at all levels, involved in the governance of the trust and its member schools.

This document should be read in conjunction with OWN Trust's Scheme of Delegation and any terms of reference for the relevant individual Local Governance Committees, executive committees or working groups.

It is a legal requirement that everyone involved with governance, at trust or school level, must make application for an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate and Section 128 check, within 21 days of appointment or election. Failure to apply, or refusal of clearance, will invalidate any appointment or election. (The Police Act 1997 and later amendments and DfE Statutory Guidance)

It is a legal requirement that all trustees, local governors and Members completes a safeguarding training module within three months of appointment or election. Failure to do so will invalidate any appointment or election. (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022)

It is a contractual requirement of our Risk Protection Arrangement with the Education & Skills Funding Agency that all trustees, local governors and Members completes a cyber-security training module on appointment and annually thereafter.

A CULTURE AND ETHOS

1. We are committed to transparency in our objectives, operation and decision making. We encourage open governance and accept that our names, category and term of office, appointing body, any specific responsibility, and declarations of interests will be published on the Trust's/school's websites and some of this information will also be published on the Department for Education's GIAS (Get Information About Schools) website.
2. We will uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life ("the Nolan principles"):
 - **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
 - **Integrity** – Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
 - **Objectivity** – In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
 - **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
 - **Openness** – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
 - **Honesty** – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
 - **Leadership** – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
3. We will support and promote OWN Trust's charitable objects:
 - to advance education in the United Kingdom, for the public benefit.
 - to promote the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation ... for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and the object of improving the condition of life.

4. We recognise that all decisions and actions of the Trust Board or Local Governance Committee are corporate decisions and actions.
 - We accept collective responsibility for, and will support, these decisions/actions even where these do not coincide with our personal views.
 - We accept that we have no legal authority to speak or act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so.
5. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
6. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice. We will not discriminate against anyone on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment/gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation and we will seek to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
7. In so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
8. We are mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our schools and trust. Our actions within the school and the local community, and on social media, will reflect this.
9. We provide robust challenge in holding the leadership and management of the trust and its member schools to account.
10. We agree to adhere to the school's and trust's rules, policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
11. If we believe the actions of the Trust or its member schools, or an individual within the structure, conflicts with the Seven Principles of Public Life, or may place pupils at risk, we will raise these concerns with the Chair of the Local Governance Committee, the Headteacher, the Chair of the Trust, the Governance & Compliance Manager or the CEO of the Trust as appropriate. If these concerns are not appropriately addressed, we are prepared to bring these to the attention of the relevant authorities.

B COMMITMENT

We recognise that serving as a member of the Trust Board or Local Governance Committee involves a significant commitment in time and energy.

1. We will be active in the work of the Trust or Local Governance Committee and accept our fair share of responsibilities. We commit to attending all meetings where possible and where we cannot, we will send apologies and explanation in advance.
2. We will get to know our school/s well by visiting and taking opportunities to involve ourselves in their activities and reporting back to fellow local governors/trustees.
3. We acknowledge the importance of training and development as part of our role, and undertake to develop knowledge and skills and keep them up to date.

C RELATIONSHIPS

1. We will work as a team.
2. We will express our views openly, courteously and respectfully and will support the chair and our fellow trustees and local governors in ensuring appropriate conduct both in and outside of meetings.
3. We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
4. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust/LGC, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

D CONFIDENTIALITY

1. We will at all times observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential by the Trust or LGC or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, trustees or local governors, and financially and/or commercially sensitive information.
2. We will exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a Trust or Local Governance Committee meeting.

3. We will not reveal the details of any Trust or Local Governance Committee vote.
4. We accept that our duty of confidentiality in some matters may endure after we have stepped down from the Trust or Local Governance Committee.

E CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. We will record any pecuniary or other business interest we have in connection with the trust or its member schools (including those related to people we are connected with), in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will withdraw from the discussion/decision for that part of the meeting.
2. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's and trust's websites.
3. We will declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
4. We recognise that the duty of all trustees and local governors is to act in the best interests of the school and the trust as a whole. We do not consider ourselves to be representatives of any group or interest, including the group that elected/appointed us.

F BREACHES OF THIS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair of the Trust or Local Governance Committee, as appropriate, who will investigate. Sanctions may include suspension or removal as a last resort, if it has not been possible to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
2. Where we believe it is the Chair that has breached this code, we will raise this issue with the Trust's Governance & Compliance Manager who will arrange for an appropriate person on the Trust or Local Governance Committee to investigate.