



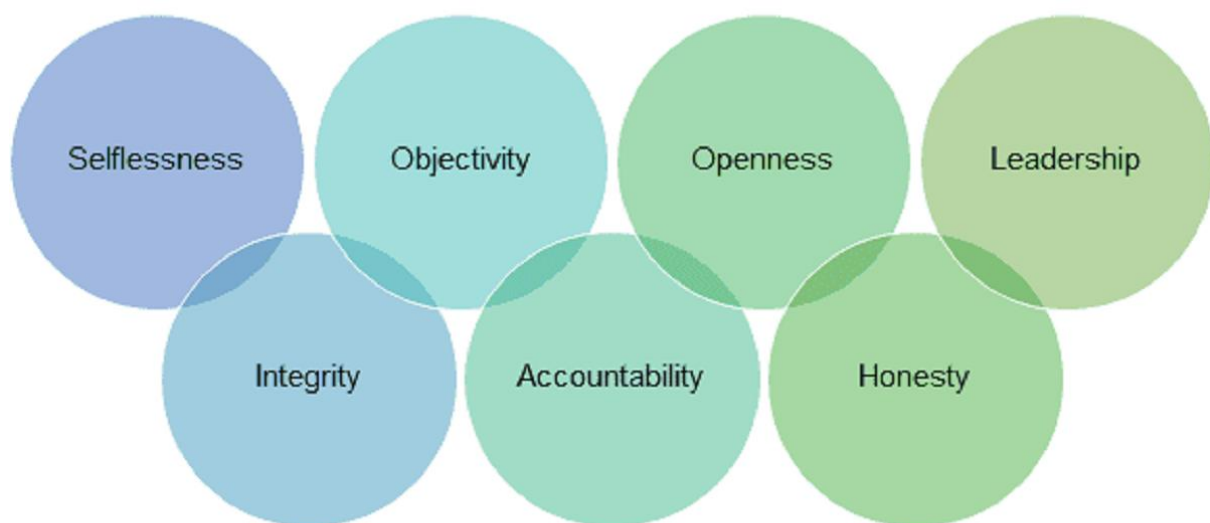
# Code of Conduct for Members, Trustees, Governors, and Committee Members

## 1. Aims

- 1.1 This policy aims to set and maintain standards of professional conduct that we expect all Members, Trustees and Governors to follow.
- 1.2 By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that Members, Trustees and Governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity, recognising that the principles and personal attributes that individuals bring are as important as their skills and knowledge.
- 1.3 The code is based on the Governance Handbook. It should be read alongside the Trust's Articles of Association and the Scheme of Governance and Delegation.
- 1.4 Failure to follow this code of conduct could result in disciplinary action being taken.

## 2. Principles of Governance

- 2.1 It is expected that all those involved in governance of the Trust fulfil their duties in line with The Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).



- **Selflessness** – to act solely in terms of public interest.
- **Integrity** – to 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 to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** - to act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** - to be accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** – to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. To not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty** – to be truthful.
- **Leadership** - to exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. To actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2.2 Those involved in governance should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation, recognising and encouraging diversity and inclusion. They should also understand the impact on effective governance on the quality of education and on outcomes for children and young people.

2.3 In addition, all those involved in governance should be:

<b>Committed</b>	Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve the best possible outcomes for our students. Prepared to give time, skills, and knowledge to developing themselves and others to create highly effective governance.
<b>Confident</b>	Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role in governance.
<b>Curious</b>	Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding of the value of meaningful questioning.
<b>Challenging</b>	Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value, and always driving for improvement.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships with all internal and external stakeholders.
<b>Critical</b>	Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and

development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

**Creative** Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem solving, recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

### 3. Governance Responsibilities

3.1 The core functions of the **Members** are:

- agree and review the Articles of Association which specify the charitable objects and governance arrangements including the appointment, removal and voting rights of Members and Trustees.
- hold the Trust Board to account for the effective and impactful governance of the Trust, protecting the company from failure to uphold the charitable purpose of the organisation.
- receive the Trust accounts and appoint external auditors annually.

3.2 The core functions of **Trustees** are to provide:

- strategic leadership of the Trust - the Board defines the trust vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the Trust's culture and sets and champions the Trust strategy including determining what, if any, governance functions are delegated to the local tier.
- accountability and assurance – the Board has robust and effective oversight of the operations and performance of the Trust, including the provision of education, student welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping the Trust's estate safe and well-maintained.
- engagement – the Board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The Board involves parents/carers, schools and communities so that decision making is supported by meaningful engagement.

3.3 The core functions of the **Local Governing Boards** (LGB) are to:

- ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction for the Academy in alignment with the Trust.
- hold the Headteacher/Principal to account for the educational performance of the Academy, reporting key points from each meeting to the Board of Trustees.
- oversee the performance management the Headteacher/Principal.

3.4 To be an effective governor, as individuals we will:

- understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the Trust Board and the LGB.
- set and maintain an ethos of high expectation and aspiration for everyone in the Academy community, including the conduct and professionalism of the Trust Board and the LGB itself.
- uphold the fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs to our own.

- operate and make decisions in the best interest of students, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders including students, parents/carers, employers and the local community.
- follow the established policies and procedures as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and constitutional documents.
- take responsibility for the self-evaluation of the LGB's performance, constitution and skills set.
- undertake regular training and self-development required to continually improve and to fill any skills gaps needed for effective governance.
- understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the LGB remains accountable.
- comply with relevant guidance, legislation, and our funding agreement.
- act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, understanding that our financial management and decision making will be scrutinised and audited.
- declare all gifts and record them on the gifts and hospitality register.
- work to actively identify and manage risks to the Academy and Trust.

#### **4. Working with others**

When working with others, we will:

- support and strengthen Academy leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, holding them to account for their work.
- respect the role of the Headteacher/Principal and avoid routine involvement in operational matters.
- express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in all our communications with others.
- work together as a board to develop effective relationships with the executive leaders, the Headteacher/Principal, staff, parents/carers, and other 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**

As Members, Trustees and Governors, we will:

- attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will give suitable notice, send apologies, and provide a valid reason for our absence. We understand that absences will be reviewed by the board on a regular basis.
- we will seek consent from the Board for any expected long-term absences from meetings, e.g., maternity leave.
- understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role of a governor and expect to take an active role.
- prepare ahead of meetings reading all papers to ensure we can make informed contributions based on facts, evidence, or experience.
- participate in regular pre-arranged visits to the Academy.

- attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the LGB has a wide range of skills and expertise.

## 6. Openness and transparency

### 6.1 Conflicts of interest

To make sure our Trust Board and delegated committees take impartial decisions and our committees and LGBs offer advice without bias, we will:

- publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all Members, Trustees, Committee and LGB members including associate members.
- declare any potential conflicts of interest or loyalty at the beginning of each meeting and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter.
- act in the best interests of the Trust/Academy and not as a representative of any group.

### 6.2 Publishing information

To ensure our governance arrangements are transparent and open to the communities we serve, we will make certain information publicly available. We accept that the following information will be published, in a readily accessible format, on the Trust's/Academy's website to ensure transparency in accordance with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook:

- The structure and remit of the Members, Board of Trustees and its committees including the LGBs, and the full name of the chair of each.
- For each **Member** serving at any point in the last 12 months:
  - Full name/s
  - Date of appointment
  - Date they stepped down (where applicable)
  - Relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in any other educational institutions.
- For each **Trustee** and **LGB governor** who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
  - Full name/s
  - Date of appointment
  - Date they stepped down (where applicable)
  - The appointing body
  - Relevant business and pecuniary interests
  - Attendance records and Board, Committee and LGB meetings over the last academic year.
- We accept that information about Members, Trustees, Governors, and Committee Members will be published on Get Information About Schools (GIAS).
- We accept that information about Trustees will be published on Companies House.

- We accept that the approved board, committee and LGB minutes and any agenda and papers at a meeting will be made available on request from any interest person.

## **7. Confidentiality**

### **7.1 Sensitive information**

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

- information about sensitive matters.
- information about names individuals such as staff, students, and their parents/carers.
- details of individual Members, Trustees, Governors, and Committee Members' contributions in meetings or how they voted.

Confidential information will never be:

- disclosed to anyone with 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 if we believe a child is at risk of harm.

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

### **7.2 Breaches of confidentiality**

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the relevant Chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further. Members, Trustees, Governors, and Committee Members understand that they may be suspended or removed from their position if they breach confidentiality.

Please see Appendix 1 for breaches of code of conduct.

## **8. Data Protection**

We will follow the Trust's information security process and measures and the 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 channels where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

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

## **9. Social Media**

As a Trust, we will:

- always uphold the reputation of the Trust and its Academies.
- maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the community.
- review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy about the information about us that is publicly available.
- report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards Members, Trustees, Governors, or Committee Members to the Governance Professional.

We will not:

- accept friend requests from students. Any parent with a child at an Academy in the Trust who is involved in governance arrangements will exercise caution if receiving friend requests or invitations to join any private parent groups associated with the Trust or one of its Academies. No other Member, Trustee, Governor, or Committee Member will accept such invitations or join such groups.
- disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles.
- make comments online about any Member, Trustee, Governor or Committee Member, staff member, student or their parents/carers, or any other member of the Coastal Collaborative Trust community.
- post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring the Trust or one of its Academies into disrepute.

## **10. Monitoring arrangements.**

This code of conduct will be reviewed annually in line with any significant changes in legislation. Any changes will be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

### Breaches of Code of Conduct

1. If we suspect that a Member, Trustee, Governor, or Committee Member has breached the code of conduct, or there is cause for concern about an individual's conduct, the following persons will be designated chair with responsibility for investigation of all concerns and allegations:

- The Chair of an LGB will investigate suspected breaches by Governors and will be escalated to the Chair of Trustees when the suspected breach relates to the Chair of an LGB.
- Suspected breaches by a Committee Member will be investigated by the Chair of the Committee.
- Trustees suspected of breaching the code of conduct will be investigated by the Chair of Trustees, or escalated to Members when the suspected breach relates to the Chair of the Trust.
- Members suspected of breaching the code of conduct will be investigated by another Member, supported by the Chair of Trustees.

2. All investigations will follow the procedures detailed below:

#### Stage 1:

The designated chair will investigate and, where appropriate, meet with the Member, Trustee, Governor, or Committee Member to discuss the issue. The meeting will be supported by the Governance Professional who will provide written confirmation of any resulting outcomes and actions such as reminders of expectations or additional support, mentoring and training requirements.

#### Stage 2:

If the breach is considered sufficiently serious, there is no improvement in the individual's behaviour or there is another suspected breach, the matter will be escalated to the Chair of Trustees or to Members as appropriate. The outcome of any such escalation may involve:

- further meetings to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct.
- additional support, mentoring or training.
- withdrawal from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in.
- a request for Trustees/Members to vote on a motion for suspension for up to six months or removal of the Member, Trustee, Governor, or Committee Member. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, other than in exceptional circumstances.

3. Suspensions for up to six months will be considered in the following cases:

- they have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of governance including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not they have been directed to do so.



- they have brought, or are likely to bring the Trust, Academy, or the governance role into disrepute. This may include:
  - Speaking out publicly against the Trust/Academy.
  - behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a meeting or on social media.

4. Removal from office will be considered in the following cases:

- there have been repeated grounds for suspension.
- there has been serious misconduct which will be determined based on the facts of the case, including any actions that compromise the 7 Principles of Public Life.