



# Violet Way Multi Academy Trust

## Code of Conduct for Trustees

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour and conduct expected of all trustees.

### The TrustBoard

The Trust Board is legally responsible for the conduct of the MAT and the schools within the MAT with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

The Trust Board should:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved
- Provide challenge and hold the Headteachers and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety
- Use performance management systems, including the performance management of the Headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
- Contribute to the Trusts self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- Contribute to the schools' self-evaluations and understand their strengths and weakness
- Engage with key stakeholders
- Ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the trust are managed effectively
- Use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.

### Core Functions of the Trust Board

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 set out core functions which the Trust Board must strongly focus on and retain oversight of.

#### 1. Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the MAT and its schools are clearly defined

It is the job of the Trust Board to:

- Set the MAT's strategic framework
- Ensure the MAT has a long-term strategic vision
- Agree the strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the Trust
- Sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them
- Check on progress and review regularly their strategic framework for the MAT in the light of that progress

#### 2. Ensuring that the Headteachers perform their responsibilities for the educational performance of the schools

The Academy TrustBoard is responsible for the appointment and performance management of the Headteachers and will include participation from the Trust Board. Part of their role is to support and strengthen the Headteachers' leadership and to hold them to account for the performance of pupils and staff. This is particularly important in relation to the educational performance of the schools.

### 3. Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

The Trust Board is responsible for making sure the schools' money is well spent. They should do this by ensuring they have trustees with specific skills and experience of financial matters and establish a Financial Forum to ensure financial probity.

**The Trust Board should play a strategic role and leave the running of the schools to the Headteachers they have appointed. The Trust Board must not interfere in the day-to-day running of the schools.**

#### Ways of Working

- The way the Trust Board operates and organises itself should be kept under review annually through skills audits, questionnaires and individual self-review opportunities.
- The Trust Board should consider how to use their powers to delegate functions and decisions to Forums or individual trustees.
- The Trust Board must review the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any Forum of the Trust Board annually.
- The Trust Board must meet at least three times a year.
- The Trust Board must appoint a clerk to advise them on the nature of their functions and duties and ensure the Trust Board operates efficiently and effectively.
- The Trust Chair and Clerk should work together to ensure that meetings are well planned at appropriate intervals and that agendas are fit for purpose.

#### The Headteachers

- The Headteachers' responsibilities include the internal organisation, management and control of their school and the educational performance of the school.
- The Headteacher will deliver the aims of the Trust Board through the day-to-day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy and the delivery of the curriculum.
- It is the Headteachers' legal duty to provide the Trust Board with all the information they need to do their job well. This means they should help the Trust Board access the data published by the DfE and Ofsted. They should also provide regularly a wide range of other management information so that the Trust Board can monitor different aspects of life in the school throughout the year.
- The Headteachers must comply with any reasonable direction of the Trust Board.
- The Headteachers are accountable to the Trust Board for the performance of all his or her responsibilities.

#### The Chair of the Trust Board

- The Trust Board must appoint a Chair to lead and manage the Trust Board.
- The Chair plays a crucial role in setting the culture of the Trust Board and is first among equals, but has no individual power.
- The Chair may only make decisions or act on behalf of the Trust Board if:
  - The Trust Board has delegated that decision to the Chair of the Trust Board
  - The Chair is of the opinion that a delay in exercising a function would be detrimental to the school, anyone who works at the school or any pupil at the school or their parent.

- The Chair is the principle link between the Trust Board, the CEO and the Governance forum. The CEO and Chair should meet regularly at mutually convenient times to discuss trust matters and the Chair should be a critical friend by offering support, challenge and encouragement.
- The Chair should meet regularly three times each school year with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Academy schools.
- The Chair works with the clerk to set Trust Board agendas and approves draft minutes of Trust Board meetings.

### The Vice-Chair

- In the absence of the chair of Governors, the Vice-Chair will take on that role.
- The Vice - Chair should meet regularly three times each school year with the Chairs of Academy schools.

### Chairs of Forums

Chairs of Forums work with the clerk to set Forummeeting agendas and approve draft minutes for those meetings. They have responsibility for ensuring that if a function of the Trust Board has been delegated to the committee or a function of the Trust Board has otherwise been exercised by the committee, it is reported to the Trust Board.

### Trustees

In law, the Trust Board is a corporate Board, which means that no Trustee can act on her/his own without proper authority from the Trust Board. All carry equal responsibility for decisions. If a function of the Trust Board has been delegated to an individual, the individual must report to the Trust Board in respect of any action taken or decision made.

The overriding concern of all Trustees has to be the welfare of the MAT as a whole, regardless of the route by which they were appointed and the type of Trustee they are.

For Trust Boards to carry out their role effectively, Governors must be prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously. They should:

- Prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- Make every effort to attend meetings promptly, regularly and for the full time
- Take responsibility for their own learning, training and development as a Trustee

In addition, they should:

- Work as a member of a team at all times and be loyal to collective decisions made by the Trust Board
- Recognise that all Trustees have the same rights
- Act in the best interests of theMAT and partner schools at all times
- Not do anything that might undermine the Trust Board's statutory requirement to promote community cohesion
- Respect confidentiality
- Listen to and respect the views of others
- Express their own views clearly and succinctly
- Declare any conflicts of interest
- Take their fair share of work/positions of responsibility
- Know, understand and work with the prescribed regulatory framework
- Report any evidence of fraud, corruption or misconduct to an appropriate person of Authority
- Adhere to the seven principles of public life(below) originally published by the Nolan Committee

- Ensure that communication undertaken via social networking sites is comparable to one to one interaction, meaning that all aspects of this code of conduct are taken account of when posting information, messages, pictures or video footage on-line.

## The Seven Principles of Public Life

Recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life 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.

1. **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 material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **Openness** – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
6. **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.
7. **Leadership** – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## The Agreement

### In General

- a) We understand the purpose of the Trust Board and the role of the Headteachers, Chair, Vice-Chair and Chairs of Forums as set out above.
- b) We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life.
- c) We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Trust Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Trust Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- d) We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- e) We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- f) We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Trust Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Trust Board meeting.
- g) We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- h) We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school and to promote community cohesion. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- i) In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Trust Board.
- j) We understand that communication via social networking sites in a variety of formats is deemed comparable to one to one interaction for the purposes of this code of conduct.

## Commitment

- a) We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves the commitment of time and energy.
- b) We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Trust Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups or as nominated governors.
- c) We will prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand.
- d) We will make every effort to attend all meetings promptly, regularly and for the full time. Where we cannot, we will endeavour to explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- e) We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- f) Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Governance Forum, Trust Board and agreed with the Headteacher.
- g) We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- h) We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Headteacher.

## Relationships

- a) We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- b) We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully. The Governor chairing a meeting is responsible for ensuring appropriate conduct at all times, and the other Governors are responsible for supporting the Chair in that role.
- c) We are prepared to answer queries from the Trust board and other Governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- d) We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, The Trust Board and other relevant agencies and the community.

## Confidentiality

- a) We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school.
- b) We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Trust Board meeting.
- c) We will not reveal the details of any Trust Board vote.
- d) We will not reveal the details of discussions in Trust Board meetings or comments made by individual Governors at those meetings.

## Conflicts of Interest

- a) We will record any pecuniary interest that we have in connection with the Trust Board's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- b) We will declare any personal or pecuniary interest in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

## Implementation of this Code of Conduct

- a) We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of conduct by any Governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Trust Board and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors, shall be minuted.
- b) We understand that any Governor whose conduct is minuted twice in twelve months shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute.

- c) We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003 which pertain to qualification and disqualification for the role of school Governor and grounds for suspension.

**The Trust Board of ----- adopted this code of conduct on -----**

### Publication on Website

The following information about each governor/associate member will be published on the school's website:

- Name
- Category of governor
- Which Board appoints them
- Term of office
- The names of any committees the governor serves on
- Details of any positions of responsibility such as chair, vice-chair of the Trust Board or committee
- Attendance record at full Trust Board and committee meetings over the last academic year
- The business interests of governors, details of any other educational establishments that they govern and any relationships between governors and members of the school staff including spouses, partners and relative.