

Code of Conduct for MAST Local Governing Boards

2018 /19

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from academy committee members, known as local governors, in order for the Trust and local governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community.

Once approved by the MAST board, the Code will apply to all local governors.

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

The local governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Ensuring the vision, values, and objectives for the trust are upheld
- Monitoring the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties as explained within the scheme of delegation

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Monitoring the educational performance of the school/s and progress towards agreed targets
- Monitoring the spend and impact of specialist funding
- Performance managing the headteacher with the Trust board
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

As individuals on the local governing board (LGB) we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the LGB and the role of the executive leaders and Trust board.
- 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 LGB and Trust Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.

- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Trust board and LGB, or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the LGB meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have delegated responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools, including those of our trust family.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school and Trust. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the Trust board.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the Trust board, LGB and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the CEO and headteacher and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- We agree to adhere to the MAST rules and policies and the procedures of the Board and LGB as set out by the relevant governing documents and law, including the use of school email addresses for all communication purposes and adherence to the GDPR/Data Protection policy;
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a local governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the LGB, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on Trust committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the Trust board and LGB schedule.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a local governor.

- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake mandatory induction training and at least 3 relevant training courses over the course of the academic year.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the local governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of local governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to local governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (GIAS).

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other local governors and trust board, the clerk and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from the trust board and other local board members 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.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Trust board, CEO, Headteacher, Trust LGB's, staff and parents, the local authority, DfE, EFSA, RSC and other relevant agencies and the community.

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 school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside of a local governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any local governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately in accordance with Trust online safety policy and protocols.

Conflicts of interest

- 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 local 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 will declare any change to our pecuniary or other business interests as soon as possible or within 14 school days of the change

- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school and 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 school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the local governing board.

Ceasing to be a local governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a local governor

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, reporting findings to the Trust Board; the Trust 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 governing board member, such as the vice chair will investigate and report to the Trust board.

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. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material 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 that 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.

Adopted by the governing board of [name of school] on [date].