

TRUSTEES CODE OF CONDUCT



BISHOP RAMSEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

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Review Body:	Trust Board
Person Responsible:	Mrs F. Nwanodi



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1. Introduction

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school Governors, Trustees and Associate Members in order for Veritas Educational Trust's (the Trust) governing boards to properly carry out their work within the academies and the community. This is not a statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the Trust Board, its Committees and the Trust's Local Governing Boards (LGB) and LGB Committees operate. The Scheme of Delegation specifies the respective responsibilities of those involved in the governance and management of the Trust's academies and this information can be found as follows:

- Paragraph 3.3 – Role of the Trustees and the Trust Board
- Paragraph 3.4 – The Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Team
- Paragraph 3.5 – Role of the Heads & Chairs Forum
- Paragraph 3.6 – The role of the Governors and the Local Governing Bodies

2. Purpose

The key purpose of the Trust Board (Board) and the Trust's LGB is to help the Trust's academies provide the best possible education and opportunities for pupils within the ethos of 'providing an outstanding education in the context of human achievement and flourishing'. All Trustees, LGB Governors and Associate Members will uphold the Christian ethos of the Trust and its Church of England academies, and the values which underpin our faith, whilst fulfilling the core strategic functions of the Trust's governing boards.

With regards to academies within the Trust that are not Church of England academies, whether with or without a designated religious character; all Trustees, LGB Governors and Associate Members will recognise and support these academies individual ethos whilst fulfilling the core strategic functions of the Trust's governing boards.

3. Governing Board's core strategic functions

Whilst the Trust Board is the Trust's ultimate decision-making body, all the Trust's governing boards contribute to the governance of the Trust. The Trust's governing boards have the following core strategic functions with specific levels of responsibility varying according to the Trust's Scheme of Delegation:

Establishing strategic direction, by:

- i. setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust;
- ii. agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets; and
- iii. meeting statutory duties.

Ensuring accountability, by:

- i. participating in the appointment process of the Chief Executive Officer or headteacher of an academy;
- ii. monitoring progress towards targets;
- iii. performance managing the lead executive/headteacher;

- iv. engaging with stakeholders; and
- v. contributing to school self-evaluation.

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- i. setting the budget;
- ii. monitoring spending against the budget;
- iii. ensuring value for money is obtained; and
- iv. ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

4. As individuals on the Trust's governing boards, we (Trustees, LGB Governors and Associate Members) agree to the following:

A. Role & Responsibilities

1. We have responsibility for the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the Trust's academies operate. This means we determine, monitor and keep under review such issues. Trustees in conjunction with LGB Governors appoint Trust academies' (Executive) Headteachers (or Heads of School) to manage these responsibilities for them and we recognise that (Executive) Headteachers, together with their Senior Management Teams, are responsible for the implementation of policy, day-to-day management of Trust academies and delivery of the curriculum.
2. In particular, we should ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare. This should include an effective Child Protection policy, a staff Code of Conduct, and Online and E-Safety, which should amongst other things address acceptable use of technologies, and staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media.
3. Across Trust academies as a whole, Trustees are appointed with equal status as Trustees and Directors of Veritas Educational Trust. All LGB Governors are appointed with equal status as LGB Governors on the Local Governing Board. The central and common concern for Trustees and LGB Governors should be the welfare of pupils.
4. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice at all times, as described in the seven principles of public life. (Refer to Appendix 1 for the Nolan Principles.) The overall good of the school will always override our personal feelings and individual concerns.
5. We share responsibility for the employment for all staff, and we will fulfil all that is reasonably expected of a good employer.
6. We shall consider carefully how our decisions might affect other academies within our local community.
7. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Board or LGB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
8. We accept corporate responsibility for all decisions made by the Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside meetings of the Trust's Board, LGB or Committee meetings.

9. We recognize that we are accountable for our decisions and are also accountable to the parents of the pupils attending Trust academies and the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS).
10. We will actively support and challenge the lead executive / headteacher.

B. Commitment

11. We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor / Trustee / Associate Member requires a commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. We have taken regard of this when agreeing to serve.
12. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Board / LGB and accept our fair share of responsibilities.
13. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to. We understand that regular attendance at meetings of the Board / LGB is essential and that non- attendance can lead to eventual disqualification.
14. We will get to know the Trust's academies well and take all possible opportunities to attend Trust school events and visit Trust academies in liaison with the (Executive) Headteacher in accordance with the Governors' School Visits policy.
15. All such visits, whether formal or informal, must be arranged in advance with the (Executive) Headteacher.
16. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
17. We accept that in the interests of open government, 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.
18. In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to Governors / Trustees / Associate Members will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's (DfE) national database of governors (Get Information About Schools).

C. Relationships

19. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted and lead to effective governance.
20. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Central Leadership Team of the Trust, the Headteacher, senior management team, teachers, staff, parent groups, the local parish and the LDBS and other relevant agencies where appropriate.

D. Confidentiality

21. We will observe complete confidentiality in all matters discussed at the Board, LGB or Committee meetings, especially in relation to matters concerning staff or pupils and also any other matters agreed by the Board / LGB. Failure to comply with this confidentiality can lead to disciplinary action such as suspension.
22. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding academy / trust business arise outside a Board, LGB or Committee meetings.
23. We will not reveal the details of any Board, LGB or Committee vote.
24. The requirements of confidentiality in points 20, 21 and 22 cover all forms of verbal and

written communication, including the various forms of social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

E. Conflicts of Interest

25. 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 Board, LGB or Committee'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.
26. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the academy / Trust's website. Failure to reveal information to enable the Trust and its academies to fulfil their responsibilities may be in breach of this code and statutory requirements.
27. We will declare any pecuniary interest—or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest—in a matter under discussion at a meeting at the start of any meeting. We will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
28. We will act in the best interests of the Trust and the Trust's academies as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the LGB.

F. Conduct

29. We will express our views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other Governors / Trustees / Associate Members and will ensure that within meetings our views relate to matters proper for discussion by the Board / LGB.
30. If we wish to raise matters for discussion by the Board / LGB we will make a request to the Chair for the item to be included on the next meeting's agenda. This should be done in advance of the agenda being prepared.
31. We have the right to request any matters discussed at meetings to be recorded in the minutes, subject to confidentiality.
32. When we are unable to attend meetings, we will ensure that the Company Secretary or Clerk is notified in advance of the meeting so that apologies can be recorded.
33. We accept that in very specific instances the Chair, or in the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair can act or take decisions on behalf of the Board / LGB.
34. We are aware of the procedures for responding to criticism or complaints relating to the Trust's academies that are outlined in the Trust's Complaints Policy. We encourage such complainants to adhere to the policy and we will not get involved, in the event that a complaints panel needs to be formed.
35. We will take every opportunity to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Trust's academies within the local community.
36. Any communication (email or otherwise) with members of the Trust's school staff will be copied to the Chief Executive Officer and the Headteacher of the school in question.

G. Breach of this code of conduct

37. If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair of Trustees or the Chair of Governors and (s)he will investigate; the Board / LGB will only use suspension / removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

38. Should it be the Chair of Trustees or the Chair of Governors that we believe has breached this code, another Trustee or LGB Governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

I have read and accept this code of conduct.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 1: 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.