



Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust

**DIOCESE OF NORWICH EDUCATION
AND ACADEMIES TRUST**

LOCAL GOVERNING BODY

CODE OF CONDUCT

SEPTEMBER 2020

This code sets out the expectations of and commitment required from governors in order for the local governing body to properly carry out its work within the academy and the community.

Upholding the Objects of the Company

Members of the Local Governing Body have a duty to uphold the Objects of the Company (Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust) stated in the Articles of Association, principally:

- to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing Academies which shall offer a broad and balanced curriculum and which:
 - (i) shall include Church of England Academies ("**Church Academies**" and each a "**Church Academy**") designated as such which shall be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Church of England both generally and in particular in relation to arranging for religious education and daily acts of worship, and
 - (ii) may include other Academies whether with or without a designated religious character; but in relation to each of the Academies to recognise and support their individual ethos, whether or not designated Church of England.

Where an Academy is designated as or recognised as a Church Academy, in relation to the ethos and religious education provided at the academy the Directors shall have regard to any advice and follow any directives issued by the Diocesan Corporate Member.

The governing body has the following core strategic functions:

- **Establishing the strategic direction, by:**
 - Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the trust
 - Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
 - Meeting statutory duties

- **Ensuring accountability, by:**
 - Appointing the executive leaders
 - Monitoring the education performance of the schools and progress towards targets
 - Performance managing the executive leaders
 - Engaging with stakeholders
 - Contributing to school self-evaluation

- **Ensuring financial probity, by:**
 - Setting the budget
 - Monitoring spending against the budget
 - Ensuring value for money is obtained
 - Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

- **Ensuring that other key players with a stake in the organisation get their voices heard by:**
 - Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.
 - Reaching out to the school's wider community and inviting them to play their part.
 - Using the views of stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance
- Supportive of the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the Trust

As individuals on the local governing body we agree to the following:

Roles & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the Local Governing Body (LGB) and the role of the executive leaders.
- We understand how the role of the LGB differs from and works with others including the headteacher and executive leaders and the trust board.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the LGB has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the LGB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the LGB or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decision outside the LGB meeting.
- 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.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the schools within the trust. Our actions within the trust 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 executive leaders.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the LGB and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- 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.
- We agree to adhere to the trust's rules and policies and the procedures of the LGB as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- 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
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the LGB.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a 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 committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance (or as soon as is practicable) why we are unable to attend.
- We will get to know the schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in trust/school activities.
- We will visit the school/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the senior executive leader/headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the LGB.

- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the LGB, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the academy's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools).

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 the trust.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a trust board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any LGB vote.
- We will ensure that we use an individual confidential email address when sending and receiving information relating to the business of the LGB.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

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 trustees/governors, the clerk to the Local Governing Body/Trust Board and all trust 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 will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities' any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life (see page 8) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other 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 executive leaders, headteachers, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

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 Body's business in the Declaration of Pecuniary and Personal 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 accept that a register of Pecuniary and Personal Interests will be published on the academy/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 trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

Ceasing to be a governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

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; the local governing body should only use suspension 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, a Trust officer will investigate.
- 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 governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We are aware of the provisions in the Scheme of Delegation which pertain to the resignation and removal of a governor and to the grounds relating to the disqualifications from the role of governor.

Meetings Charter

Individual governors do not have authority in the school. It is the decisions of all the governors together that carry authority. The activities governors undertake outside meetings can be seen as preparation for the times when the local governing body 'goes live' – in a meeting.

It follows that if a governing body is to carry out its functions well, its meetings are crucial. Governors, Headteachers and Clerks are expected to subscribe to the following meetings charter in order to give the local governing body the best chance of coming to informed, collective decisions.

As a governor I expect:

- people to attend regularly and be punctual
- an agenda and relevant documents to reach me at least seven days before every meeting
- an agenda that makes clear the purpose of each item
- a Chair who keeps to the agenda, paces the meeting so that time is given to each matter in proportion to its importance, draws on all members for contributions and keeps discussions to the point
- my contribution to be heard and others to contribute to the discussion
- the decision-making process to be quite clear
- governors to work together and not to be stubbornly partisan
- governors to take collective responsibility for decisions
- minutes that summarise views succinctly, record decisions accurately and are made available, in draft form, soon after each meeting.

Others can expect me to:

- attend regularly and be punctual
- read the agenda, minutes and other papers before the meeting and note items I want to say something about
- bring my papers to the meeting
- make relevant and positive contributions
- listen carefully to what others say
- accept my share of collective responsibility, even for those decisions I do not personally agree with.

Seven Principles of Public Life

Governors should be mindful that in exercising governing body functions they must act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the trust; and be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties.

Similarly, governors should be aware of and accept the seven principles of public life, as set out by Lord Nolan and applying to anyone, locally and nationally, who is elected or appointed as a public office-holder. They are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

(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.