

Acorn Multi Academy Trust

Code of Conduct for Academy Trustees

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from trustees in order for the trust board to properly carry out its work within the schools and the community.

The purpose of the trust board

The trust board is the Multi Academy Trust's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the schools and for promoting high standards. The trust board aims to ensure that children are attending successful schools which provide them with a good education and support their well-being.

The trust board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the Multi Academy Trust
- Agreeing the Trust improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the Executive Head/CEO
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the Executive Head/CEO
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to MAT self-evaluation
- Holding the CEO to account for the performance of the MAT

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

For Trust Boards to carry out their role effectively, trustees 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.

In law the trust board is a corporate body, which means:

- No trustee can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full trust board;
- All trustees carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed through different routes, the overriding concern of all trustees has to be the welfare of the Multi Academy Trust as a whole.

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the trust board and the role of the CEO as set out above.
- 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.
- 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 government and will act appropriately.

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- 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.
- 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 our schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the schools we will follow the procedures established by the trust board.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive Headteacher/CEO

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 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.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the trust board and agreed with the Executive Head.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, 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. Additionally we accept that the DfE will collect information about us for the national governor database (Edubase).

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 governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will provide reports on our work, as appropriate, to the clerk to disseminate to the governing board in a timely manner.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other trustees 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 CEO, Heads of School, staff and parents, the community, diocese and all the stakeholders.
- We actively seek and listen to the views of the children – The Pupil Voice

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 business arise outside a trust board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any trust board vote.

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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 trust 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 accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the 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 Multi Academy Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected by that group to the governing board.

Breach of this code of practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the trust board 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, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any trustee shall be raised at a meeting of the trust board, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of trustees, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the trust board.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life).

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.

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The Trust board of Acorn Multi Academy Trust adopted this code of practice in Sept 2016.
Trustees will sign the Code at the first trust board meeting of each school year.

Undertaking:

As a member of the Trust Board I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the schools at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for Acorn Multi Academy Trust, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the MAT, the Trust Board, the Executive Head, heads of school or staff.

Signed

Printed name

Date: