

Model code of conduct for trust boards

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Confederation
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The voice of school trusts

The DfE's [Academy trusts: Governance guide](#) expects effective boards to create and maintain a code of conduct. Breaching the code could result in the removal of a trustee or committee member.

This model code is provided as a base for school trusts to use as part of their governance and assurance work. It includes both individual and corporate commitments and reflects the needs of good governance for trusts both as charities and organisations responsible for the spending of public funds.

Trustees and committee members individually commit to:

- Attend meetings, and be committed, accountable, and active
- Uphold the values and decisions of the trust and be an ambassador for the trust in all aspects of public and personal life, including on social media
- When undertaking duties as a trustee, ensure that anything that is said or written reflects the policies of the trust (even where this is different to private views)
- Observe confidentiality
- Avoid conflicts of interest and where a conflict arises, declare any interests in proposed transactions or arrangements (including those related to people with whom we are connected)
- When undertaking duties as a trustee, work collaboratively and corporately with other trustees to fulfil the obligations of board membership
- When undertaking duties as a trustee, understand the responsibilities of trustees as directors under company law and trustees under charity law
- Promise to be the guardian of the charitable objects (the purpose) of the trust
- Fulfil the expectations of a good employer and the contract of trust between the employer and those who are employed
- Keep informed about the trust, its strengths, challenges and opportunities, its connection to and relationship with the schools and communities it serves
- Hold the executive to account in a respectful and purposeful way
- Agree to step down from their positions if unable to fulfil these expectations.

The trust board and committee members corporately commits to the [Seven principles of public life](#):

- **Selflessness:** all our decisions are taken in the public interest
- **Integrity:** we will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends
- **Objectivity:** our decisions are taken impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias
- **Accountability:** we are comfortable submitting ourselves to external scrutiny
- **Openness:** we take decisions in an open and transparent manner
- **Honesty:** we are truthful in our actions, decisions and reporting

- **Leadership:** we demonstrate the highest standards of public life in our individual and corporate behaviour

The trust board and committee members also adopt the [Academy Trust Governance Code](#):

- **Fundamental principle.** The academy trust's directors are aware of and meet Seven principles of public life, understand the legal, regulatory and contractual obligations they must meet, and have regard to the statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- **Principle 1: Delivering the academy trust charitable objects.** The academy trust's articles of association set out the academy trust's charitable objects and how those must be fulfilled. the board is clear about its aims and ensures that they are being delivered effectively and sustainably.
- **Principle 2: Leadership.** The academy trust is led by an effective board that provides strategic governance in line with the aims and values of the academy trust and engages effectively with its members.
- **Principle 3: Integrity.** The board acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which helps achieve the academy trust's charitable objects. The board is aware of the importance of public confidence and trust in academy trusts and their schools, and the board undertakes its duties accordingly.
- **Principle 4: Decision making, risk and control.** The board ensures that its decision-making processes are evidence informed, rigorous and timely and that effective delegation, control, risk assessment and management systems are set up and monitored. There is effective reporting at all levels of academy trust governance to ensure decisions are taken at the correct level in accordance with the articles of association and scheme of delegation.
- **Principle 5: Board effectiveness.** The board works as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of knowledge, skills, experiences and backgrounds to make informed decisions.
- **Principle 6: Equality, diversity and inclusion.** In ensuring the effective achievement of the academy trust's charitable objects, the board has a clear, agreed and effective approach to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the academy trust.
- **Principle 7: Openness and accountability.** The board leads the academy trust in being transparent and accountable. the academy trust is open in its work, unless there is good reason for it not to be.



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