Confederation of School Trusts

Code of Governance[1]

1. Organisational purpose

The board is clear about the organisation's aims and ensures that these are being delivered effectively and sustainably.

Key outcomes:

- The board has a shared understanding of and commitment to the charity's purposes and can articulate these clearly.
- The board can demonstrate that the organisation is effective in achieving its purposes and agreed outcomes.

2. Leadership

The organisation is led by an effective board that provides strategic leadership in line with the charity's aims and values.

Key outcomes:

- The board, as a whole, and trustees individually, accept collective responsibility for ensuring that the organisation has a clear and relevant set of aims and an appropriate strategy for achieving them.
- The board agrees the organisation's vision, values and reputation and leads by example, requiring anyone representing the organisation reflects its values positively.
- The board makes sure that the organisation's values are reflected in all of its work, and that the ethos and culture of the organisation underpin the delivery of all activities.

3. Integrity

The board acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which help achieve the organisation's charitable purposes. The board is aware of the importance of the public's confidence and trust in charities, and trustees undertake their duties accordingly.

Key outcomes

- The board acts in the best interests of the organisation and its members. The board is not unduly influenced by those who may have special interests and places the interests of the organisation before any personal interest. Collectively, the board is independent in its decision making.
- The board safeguards and promotes the organisation's reputation and, by extension, promotes public confidence in the wider sector.
- Members of the board and those working in or representing the organisation are seen to be acting with integrity, and in line with the values of the organisation.

4. Decision-making, risk and control

The board makes sure that its decision-making processes are informed, rigorous and timely and that effective delegation, control and risk assessment and management systems are set up and monitored.

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[1] Based on the Charity Governance Code

Key outcomes:

- The board is clear that its main focus is on strategy, performance and assurance, rather than operational matters, and reflects this in what it delegates.
- The board has a sound decision-making and monitoring framework which helps the organisation deliver its charitable purposes. It is aware of the range of financial and non-financial risks it needs to monitor and manage.
- The board promotes a culture of sound management of resources but also understands that being over-cautious and risk averse can itself be a risk and hinder innovation.
- Where aspects of the board's role are delegated to committees, staff or contractors, the board keeps responsibility and oversight.

5. Board effectiveness

The board works as an effective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.

Key outcomes:

- The board's culture, behaviours and processes help it to be effective; this includes accepting and resolving challenges or different views.
- All trustees have appropriate skills and knowledge and can give enough time to be effective in their role.
- The chair enables the board to work as an effective team by developing strong working relationships between members of the board and creates a culture where differences are aired and resolved.
- The board takes decisions collectively and confidently. Once decisions are made the board unites behind them and accepts them as binding.

6. Diversity

The board's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and decision-making.

Key outcomes:

- The board is more effective if it includes a variety of perspectives, experiences and skills.
- The board ensures that the organisation follows principles of equality and diversity, going beyond the legal minimum where appropriate.

7. Openness and accountability

The board leads the organisation in being transparent and accountable. The charity is open in its work, unless there is good reason for it not to be.

Key outcomes:

- The organisation's work and impact are appreciated by its members and stakeholders.
- The board ensures that the organisation's performance and interaction with its members and stakeholders are guided by the values, ethics and culture put in place by the board. Trustees make sure that the charity collaborates with stakeholders to promote ethical conduct.
- The organisation takes seriously its responsibility for building public trust and confidence in its work.
- The organisation is seen to have legitimacy in representing its members and stakeholders.

![Confederation of School Trusts logo]

Signed by the CST Board:

Rob McDonough, Chair

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Approved 11/05/18

Date of Review December 2019