

Code of Conduct for Trustees and Academy Board Members

This code is modelled on the National Governance Association (NGA) template (2019) and sets out the expectations on and commitment required from Trustees and Academy Board Members of the Robinswood Academy Trust ("the Trust").

The Trust Board is:

- Responsible for ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic development of all Academies in the Trust so that these principles can be applied at individual Academy level;
- The strategic decision-making body for the whole Trust including the allocation and management of resources;
- Responsible for overseeing the performance of all Academies and holding leadership at all levels to account for the educational performance of the Academies and the pupils and the performance management of staff;
- To ensure that the Trust and the Academies are conducted in compliance with the general law, all statutory requirements and DfE guidance, and that all required policies and procedures are in place, reviewed and agreed;
- Accountable for the financial performance of the Academies and ensuring appropriate financial and procurement systems are in place according to the EFA Academies Financial Handbook;
- The employer of all staff;
- The admissions authority for the Academies within the Trust; and
- Responsible for providing information about the Trust Board to the Academy Boards using the minutes of Trust Board meetings as a two-way process to feedback and relay issues, decisions and outcomes.

The Academy Boards are responsible for:

- Monitoring their Academy's performance and providing challenge and support to the leadership team to ensure that best possible outcomes are achieved for all pupils.
- Ensuring that the relevant delegated Trust policies are adhered to and implemented at the local level, including both curriculum and non-curriculum policies, including safeguarding and health and safety;
- Providing information about their Academy to the Trust Board using the minutes of Academy Board meetings as a two-way process to feedback and relay issues and outcomes; and
- Communicating with parents and the wider local community.

As individuals on the Trust and Academy Boards we agree to the following:

Role & responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the Trust and Academy Boards and their strategic roles.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when given delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Trust Board/Academy Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Trust Board/Academy Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Trust Board /Academy Board 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 government 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 our academy/group of academies. Our actions within the academy and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the Trust/Academy Board.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders.
- 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 its governance procedures as set out by its relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role as Trustees and Academy Board Members 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 Trust.
- 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 Trust and Academy Boards.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a Trustee or Academy Board Member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Trust Board/Academy 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 why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the academy/academies well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in academy activities.
- We will visit the academy/academies with all visits arranged in advance with the relevant member of staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Trust Board/Academy Board.
- 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 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 Academy and Trust website.

- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to Trustees/Academy Board members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information about Schools).

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/Academy Board members and the Trust's Company Secretary.
- We will support the Chair of the Trust Board and Academy Boards in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other Trust Board and Academy Board members in relation to delegated functions and consider 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 Head Teacher, Head of Schools, staff and parents, the Trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

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 the Trust/Trust business arise outside a Trust Board/Academy Board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Trust Board/Academy Board vote.

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 governing 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 Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Trust Board/Academy Board.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Trust Board Chair who will investigate; the Trust Board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the Trust Board Chair that we believe has breached this code, another Trust Board such as the Trust Board Vice Chair will investigate.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Robinswood Academy Trust Board on 19th September 2019

ANNEX:

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.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.

1. **Selflessness.** School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. **Integrity.** School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. **Objectivity.** School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. **Accountability.** School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness.** School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty.** School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. **Leadership.** School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

- a. **Trust:** leaders are trustworthy and reliable
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.
- b. **Wisdom:** leaders use experience, knowledge and insight
We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.
- c. **Kindness:** leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper
We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- d. **Justice:** leaders are fair and work for the good of all children
We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
- e. **Service:** leaders are conscientious and dutiful
We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality.
Our actions protect high-quality education.
- g. **Courage:** leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people
We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
- h. **Optimism:** leaders are positive and encouraging
Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.