



ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS (“Trust”)

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED IN OUR TRUST

GOVERNORS - BEDFORD FREE SCHOOL

A copy of this Code of Conduct is to be signed by Governors at the first meeting of the relevant committee at the start of each academic year. Any new Governors appointed during the year must also sign it. It sets out our commitment as a Trust to complying with our Values and Principles and acting at all levels and at all times in a manner that is appropriate

We will at all times comply with and abide by our Vision Values and Operating Principles document

We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see below

- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governors when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governors or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governors meeting.
- We will not enter into dialogue or express our views on social media even if not acting in the capacity of a Governor
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools and our Trust.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our Trust and the schools within it.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the Trust or a school within it we will follow the procedures established by the school or the Trust.

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 Trust and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- If acting as Governors we will not go beyond our duties or act outside of the powers of authority conveyed on us, and acknowledge that were we to do so we could be held liable to the Trust and/or third parties.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, explain in advance in full why we are unable to do so.
- We will get to know the Trust and the schools within it and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in activities at the Trust and the schools within it

- Our visits to the schools /Trust will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Trust / local governing body and agreed with the Chief Executive Officer /Headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the leadership of the Trust and leadership of the schools within the Trust.
- We are committed to working with the Trust to support schools within it

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 Members /Trustees /Governors.
- We will support the chair of the Trust board in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors 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 recognise that the roles of Governor, staff member and volunteers in a school are different. Where we are also a staff member and/or volunteer in a school we will maintain the separation of those roles.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Trust's staff and parents, the Trust's 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 and the schools within the Trust.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Trust business arise outside a Governors Board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Governor vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the Governors in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We will act in the best interests of the Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected as a Governor

Breach of this code of practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the relevant chair and that chair will investigate; the Governors should seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes constructively;
- Should it be a chair that we believe has breached this code, another member or governor such as the vice chair 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 Board and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstances removal as a Trustee.

The Governors adopted this code of practice on the date below or if later the date they signed it

DATE: 4th October 2017

(It is recommended that Governors sign and adopt the Code of Conduct at the first relevant meeting of each academic year).

The Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life ("The Nolan Principles")

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office 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.