



Board of Trustees Code of Conduct 2017-2018

Adopted by the Rye Academy Trust Board of Trustees on 3rd October 2017.

This code sets out the collective and individual expectations on and commitment required from trustees in order for the board of trustees to properly carry out its work and discharge its duties effectively.

The board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the trust and its schools
- Agreeing trust and school strategies for rapid and sustained improvement with priorities and targets and closely monitoring progress towards their achievement
- Meeting statutory duties, particularly with respect to financial probity, sound governance and ensuring a safe, legal and compliant learning and work environment for students and staff

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the chief executive and school and executive leaders
- Monitoring the educational performance of the schools and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the chief executive and headteachers
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to trust and school self-evaluation to instil a culture of continuous improvement

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the chief executive and school and executive leaders.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the 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 governance 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 schools/trust. Our conduct and actions at all times will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the board.
- We will actively support and challenge executive and school leaders.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit and overall best interests of the trust.
- We will respect the role of school and executive leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the schools/trust and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the procedures of the board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our capacity as trustees we will ensure our comments reflect current and agreed trust policy/strategy even if these 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.

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 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 schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the schools, with all visits arranged in advance with school leaders and undertaken within the framework established by the board.
- When visiting the schools in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a trustee.

- 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 governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the trust's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to trustees will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of 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, the clerk to the board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members 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 school and executive leaders, staff and parents, 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 students, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding trust business arise outside a board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

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 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.

Ceasing to be a trustee

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a trustee leaves office

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the 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 chair that we believe has breached this code, another trustee, such as the vice chair will investigate.

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.