



Code of Conduct – Members, Trustees and Local Governors

Unity Academy Trust

This Code of Conduct and Role Description set out the expectation of and commitments required from school governors at schools within Unity Academy Trust, in order for the board members, trustees and local governors to properly carry out their work within school and the community. **The Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law and the Unity Academy Trust's articles of association and agreed scheme of delegation.**

The board of Trustees is the accountable body for the performance of all schools within the trust and as such must:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Hold the Executive head to account for the educational performance of the schools and their pupils and the performance management of staff;
3. Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure its money is well spent.

Within Unity Academy Trust Local Governing Boards are delegated powers by the Trustees.

These include the following core functions:

- A. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction by:
 - Clarifying the school's vision and values, ensuring it complies with the overall position;
 - Agreeing the school Improvement strategic direction, including succession planning;
 - Meeting statutory duties, including safeguarding;
 - Ensuring that they and the school promote tolerance and respect for all faiths, cultures and lifestyles.
- B. Ensuring accountability by:
 - Supporting the Executive Head Teacher and Trustees in appointing and appraising the head teacher and senior staff;
 - Monitoring the appraisal system for all staff;
 - Engaging with stakeholders;
 - Contributing to the School self-evaluation;
 - Challenging the head teacher and senior leaders on:
 - Pupils' achievement;
 - Improving the quality of teaching;
 - Pupils' behavior and safety;
 - Test and progress data.
- C. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent, and ensuring solvency and financial probity by:
 - Setting the budget;
 - Monitoring spending against the budget;
 - Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained;

- Ensuring the Pupil Premium and other resources are used effectively to overcome barriers to learning;
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed effectively.

These core functions are discharged through the actions of the following committees:

Section A – Full Local Governing Board Meeting.

Section B – Curriculum and Standards committee.

Section C – Finance and Resources.

As a board member (Member, Trustee or Local Governor) within Unity Academy Trust I agree to the following:

Roles and Responsibilities

- I understand the purpose of the board and the role of the Head Teacher and senior leaders;
 - I accept that I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given me delegated authority to do so, and therefore will only speak with key stakeholders on behalf of the Board of Governors when I have been specifically authorised to do so;
 - I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means I will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting;
 - I 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;
 - I will encourage open government and will act appropriately;
 - I will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;
 - I will always be mindful of my responsibilities to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. This includes the use of social media. My actions within the school and local community will reflect this, both in physical presence and online, including adhering to the school's E-safety policy;
 - In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school I will follow the procedures established by the Board of Governors.
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- We will actively support and challenge the senior leaders;
 - We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
 - We will respect the role of the senior 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 school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law;
 - When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we 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 organisation.

Commitment

- I acknowledge that being a governor at a Unity Academy Trust School involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy;
- I will involve myself in the work of the Board of Governors and accept a share of the responsibilities, including serving on committees, working groups or as part of a team with specific interests;
- I will make every effort to attend all meetings and where I cannot attend will send my apologies in advance with the reason, on the understanding that the Board will consider it for authorisation;
- I will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in school activities;

- I will read reports, newsletters and minutes in advance of meetings and regularly check the school website for updated information;
- I will participate in visits to the school under the framework established by the board and agreed with the head teacher;
- I will take part in an audit and review of my training and development needs and undertake the relevant training;
- I accept that in the interests of open governance, 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 school's website;
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Edubase).

Relationships

- I will strive to work as part of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted;
- I will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all my communications with other governors and school staff;
- I will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct of governors at all times;
- I am prepared to answer questions in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed and I will acknowledge the time, effort, and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved;
- I will seek to develop effective working relationships with the senior leaders, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community;

Confidentiality

- I will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school;
- I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting;
- I will not reveal details of any board of governor vote;
- I will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflict of Interest

- I will record any pecuniary or other business interest that I have in connection with the Board of Governors business in the register of business interests, and if any such conflict of interest arises in a meeting I will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.;
- I accept that the register of business interests will be published on the schools' website. This includes interests related to people I am connected with either personally or in business;
- I will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise;
- I will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if so elected to the governing board.

Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/ member academy committee member

- I understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/member leaves office.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If I believe this code to have been breached I will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; depending on the outcome of that investigation the following action could be taken;
- No further action required - matter resolved;
- A full hearing with a panel of governors;

- Suspension or removal.

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.

Role Description - Local Governor at a Unity Academy Trust Primary School.

Main Purpose.

To contribute to the work of the Local Board of Governors in ensuring high standards of progress and achievement for pupils in the school are achieved. (Please see relevant paragraphs in the current Ofsted Handbook)

Main responsibilities

As part of the Board of Governors team, a governor is expected to:

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body meetings which determine:
 - The vision and ethos of the school;
 - Clear and ambitious strategies for the school;
 - That all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
 - The school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
 - The school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
 - The principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies.

2. Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:
 - Discussing the validity of the school's self-evaluation and ensuring it is used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
 - Considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
 - Asking challenging questions of school leaders;
 - Ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
 - Ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
 - Acting as part of a team on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries and asking questions;
 - Listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.

3. Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including any brokered support, advice and expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors.

Expectations

- In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:
- Get to know the school, including by visiting the school during school hours on at least one occasion per year;
- Gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- Attend induction training;
- Undertake relevant training and development events as identified through any audit and review exercise;
- Attend meetings (full board of governor meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting;
- Act in the best interest of all the pupils of the school;
- Behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing body's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence;
- Exercise great caution in the use of social networking web-sites, for example, FaceBook, MySpace, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter etc and not make any comment regarding the school, its' staff, pupils or governors. This relates to all material posted including photographs. (Refer to acceptable use policy);
- Not make links or 'friends' with staff or pupils of the school or enter any discussion regarding the school via Social networking web sites. It is acknowledged that staff governors will have links with other staff members but should not make any comment about the governance of the school or have links with pupils. It is also acknowledged that parent Governors will have Facebook or similar links with their own children;
- Promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Time commitment:

- There is one AGM for the Members Board to attend each year. There will be three Board of Trustee meetings with three Finance and Audit meetings attached;
- There are three Full Local Governing Board meetings per year, to which all governors are expected to attend. In addition, there are two subcommittee meetings each term (Finance and Resources:

Curriculum and Standards). Governors are expected to make at least one monitoring visit per year, as well as attend school events, where possible. They are also expected to undertake training;

- Under Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, if you are employed, then you are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. 'Reasonable time off' is not defined in law, and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed. It is also up to the employer whether they pay for time taken off for governance.

Use of personal devices

To comply with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Trust's policy on data protection, when using a personal device to read or access school information, I agree to the following

- That If the device is lost, stolen or if you sell it, confidential information might be accessible to a third party; therefore I will notify the DPO immediately especially if it has google software on it.
- That if I cease to work for Unity Academy Trust all data will be deleted and removed from any device. Devices belonging to the Trust will be handed back upon ceasing employment or a voluntary role finishing.
- That if a personally owned device is used in an insecure manner, or used by another family member, I am in breach of transferring information to unrelated parties and could be sharing data with personal outside of the trust. I know I am duty bound to report this to the DPO.
- To only use encrypted devices, (USB keys, removable hard drives, and laptop) to save any data onto. These must be approved by the Trust's IT personnel.
- To not download any personal or sensitive information, relating to school onto any personal devices. i.e pupil data from any school system.
- All devices that I use must be locked after being left idle for no more than 5 minutes.
- That all passwords will be kept confidential and not shared with family or third parties.
- To ensure that anti-virus software is up to date on any device especially if logging onto wifi in public places as these may not be secure.

Contracting for meetings at all levels.

In order for meetings to run smoothly, effectively and efficiently all board members, Trustees and Local Governors must adhere to the contracting rules of the 3P's.

Professional

- **Mobile phone usage** : All phones must be either switched off or on silent mode. In agreement will all committee members should a phone call need to be made or taken, this must be done at a convenient time with the meeting structure.
- **Time keeping** : Meetings must keep to a reasonable length and the agenda content must be covered in a timely fashion.
- **Punctuality** : All board members must arrive on time for the meetings, so that content does not have to be repeated and valuable time wasted.
- **Postponing** : In the event that a meeting needs to be postponed all committee members must agree to this and agree to an alternative date.
- **Apologies** : Apologies must always be sent in advance to either the clerk or the chair of the meeting.

- **Things to come with and be prepared :** It is crucial the committee members come prepared with all documentation and relative questions regarding the content of the meeting. Also committee members should have completed or at least acknowledged actions relating to them at the following meeting.
- **Note taking :** It must be agreed by all committee members that if notes are being taken, individuals are willing to share these with others for cross reference purposes.
- **Frequency :** It is important that full attendance at meetings is adhered to. A register will be kept.

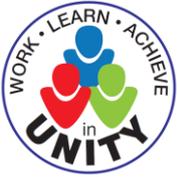
Procedural

- **Purpose:** The content and purpose of each meeting is shared and communicated clearly to each committee member. Should the purpose of the meeting need to be changed, this must be shared in a timely fashion.
- **Boundaries:** Boundaries are clear throughout meetings i.e not talking over one another, waiting for appropriate time to ask a question, following the agenda, Chair to keep conversations on topic. Keep to strategic vision and work unless guided by Chair or senior leader. Ensure individuals are clear about their role within that meeting.
- **Confidentiality:** The content, both discussions and paperwork are kept confidential at all times. Any paperwork that must be collected in at the end of a meeting and **MUST** be given back. A breach of confidentiality could result in dismissal from the role.
- **Contributions:** It is expected that all committee members make a contribution during the meeting, either through questions or discussions. It is expected that all material is pre read and individuals come with relevant questions.
- **Accountability:** By agreeing to be a Member, Trustee or Local Governor, all are accountable for the effectiveness and performance of the school/s. It is a shared duty and responsibility to make the right decisions in the best interests of the school/s and their communities. All come under the heading of leadership of the school/s.
- **Issues to take elsewhere:** Should committee members feel the need to discuss a matter or have a query that may not be suited to a meeting, members should speak to the chair, clerk or senior school staff and agree a suitable time to discuss this issues outside of the meeting.

Psychological

- **Anxieties, fears and or concerns:** It must be agreed by all committee members that there is a time to voice any anxieties, fears or concerns to the appropriate audience. The clerk, chair and senior staff may prefer these to be voiced outside of the agenda or via email or face-to-face prior to the meeting; Nethertheless all must feel that this support mechanism is in place.
- **How to mention if needs are not being met:** If committee members do not feel that either they can fulfil their duties or if other members feel that individuals are not complying with the role and its responsibilities; this must be voiced in a closed forum between the Chair and the individual. If committee members require more support in order to fulfil their role, then again this must be addressed to the chair or clerk.
- **Balance of support and Challenge:** Although the Governance role of Members, Trustees and Local Governors is a strategic role to challenge and ensure schools are utilising their resources effectively, in order to enhance pupils education; there must be a balance between support and challenge in order to work effectively with the schools' staff. Should it be felt that during a meeting that this balance is not equal or channelled effectively the Chair and Senior staff must voice this. Committee minutes need to reflect challenge and support through effective minuting of questions and discussions.
- **How to recover trust if something goes wrong:** Should a breach of trust occur or people have reasonable cause to feel that a trust element is in question, chairs of committee's will need to ensure that all committee members agree that should trust ever

be in question, all members are content for this to be addressed in a mutually agreeable way.



Declaration of Understanding

- Relating to Unity Academy Trust Code of Conduct.
- Seven principles of Public Life.
- Role Description.
- Contracting expectations at meetings.

I _____ have read and understood these documents.

- Signed: _____
- Date: _____
- Name: _____ (please print)
- Role: _____
- Institution: Unity Academy Trust