

## Academy Council Code of Conduct

(This is annually agreed by each governor at the start of the academic year).

The Acorn Education Trust Code of Conduct for Academy Councils sets out the expectations and commitment required from Academy Council Governors in order for them to properly carry out their work within the schools of the Trust.

The Academy Council's aim is to ensure that children are attending an effective school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

The Code of Conduct is based on the DfE Governance handbook and should be read alongside the Trust's Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.

Academy Council Governors are expected to follow the 7 Nolan principles of public life set out by the government. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

### The 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

- Selflessness – we will act in the public interest
- Integrity – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests
- Objectivity – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
- Accountability – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
- Openness – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
- Honesty – we will be truthful
- Leadership – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens

The role of the Academy Council Governor is as follows:

- The Academy Councils will receive a Data Dashboard three times a year that will summarise the Self Evaluation form of the school and the subsequent 360 meeting.
- To ensure parental engagement runs smoothly and assist the head teacher with complaints, questionnaires, parental challenge and supportive feedback.
- Commitment to the local community to promote a positive school perception and feedback
- To promote and implement positive behaviour and reward systems aligned with the vision of the school to encourage strong learning.
- Promote positive communication, marketing and perception of the school to encourage new pupils. Assess a negative situation and where necessary help build its reputation looking closely at key areas: website, Ofsted.
- Encourage extra-curricular activities and ensure they are aligned with the vision of the school and AET.
- To monitor the vision and values of the school and their implementation throughout the school's work. In Church of England Schools this includes a deep understanding of the SIAMS Inspection framework and the school's work on this.

- Culture, vision and ethos: to promote the school's vision and ensure it is lived and acted out by ALL staff; children and the parental community. For Church schools this is the delegated responsibility of SIAMS and the vision, ethos and culture as a Church of England school.
- Ensure (where appropriate) school SIAMS criteria is an integral part of the school culture
- Review progress against SIAMS SEF criteria of CofE schools
- Participate in staffing panels to support the executive staff
- Approve pupil behaviour policies
- Participate in behaviour panels to support the Headteacher and executive staff
- Exclude a pupil more than 15 days or permanently
- Review exclusion on appeal
- To supply Academy Council Governors to fulfil cross Trust roles connected to Performance, Standards and Safeguarding.
- Participate in the appointment of Headteachers.
- To have a Safeguarding Academy Council Governor who, working with the Trust Lead on Safeguarding ensures processes and procedures are being followed. Safeguarding Governors are required to undertake Safeguarding Training within the first year of their term of office. All Academy Council Governors are required annually to read Section 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- To keep up to date with developments and issues within schools and governance by accessing the following recommended resources; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governanceupdate>, <https://www.theschoolbus.net/home>.
- Foundation Governors can access <https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/>

### **Working with others**

- To support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders and holding them to account
- To express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications with other Academy Council Governors, the Governance Adviser, Assistant Governance Adviser and school staff both in and outside of meetings
- To support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- To develop effective working relationships with the executive leaders, staff, parents and the Trust

### **Commitment to the Academy Council**

- Academy Council Governors are appointed by the Trust Board via an interview with the Headteacher and Academy Council Chair of the relevant school. They are appointed based on the skills and experience they can bring to the Academy Council, along with challenge and support of the Headteacher and school. There is an expectation that they will preserve and develop the principles and values of the Trust and the school to which they are appointed.
- On appointment, all Academy Council Governors will have an up-to-date DBS check and be given Safeguarding training.
- To attend all meetings where possible, the Academy Councils meet 4 times per year. All documents sent prior to the meeting must be read and any questions sent to the Assistant Governance Adviser, Headteacher and Chair before the meetings.
- Where it is not possible to attend an Academy Council meeting, ensure a valid reason and suitable notice has been given. Failure to attend 3 consecutive meetings will result in correspondence from the Chair and/or Governance Adviser to understand the reasons for absence and where appropriate removal from the Academy Council.
- School visits and learning walks are to be taken at regular times throughout the year and relevant paperwork documenting the visit must be completed and forwarded to the Headteacher and Governance Adviser. School visits are to be arranged in advance with the relevant staff member.

- To access emails and communicate on a regular basis, especially if their role is the Chair or Vice Chair. Communication between meetings and regular monitoring of emails is essential to ensure best practice.
- Chairs and/or Vice Chairs are expected to attend agenda planning meetings with their head teacher and Assistant Governance Adviser.
- To prepare ahead of meetings to ensure informed contributions are made.
- To understand and accept the time and commitment of the role.
- Relevant and consistent training must be undertaken to develop the governor role via The School Bus e-learning programme and through the Acorn Trust. Any training undertaken by Academy Council Governors should be shared at Academy Council meetings and/or highlighted points emailed to the Academy Council.
- To actively support and challenge the head teacher.
- Dependent on experience and skills there will be an opportunity for some Academy Council Governors to join an Acorn Education Trust committee.
- Within the Trust where some Academy Councils are low on numbers it is acceptable for Academy Council Governors to join from another council. Becoming a governor of two Academy Councils will ensure the sharing of good practice across the Trust.
- Accept that in the interests of open governance, full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Academy Council, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for their appointment will be published on the school website and government website (GIAS).

### **Confidentiality**

- To observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school
- To ensure all confidential documents are held and disposed of appropriately
- Will not reveal details of any Academy Council vote
- To exercise discretion at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside of an Academy Council meeting **Conflicts of interest**
- To record, in the Register of Business interests, any pecuniary interest that is in connection with the Academy Council's business
- To declare any personal or pecuniary interest in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time
- To accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on their schools and Acorn Trust website
- To act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected by the Academy Council or Trust
- To declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise

### **Ceasing to be an Academy Council governor/trustee/committee member**

- Confidentiality will continue to apply after an Academy council governor leaves office.

### **Breach of the Code of Conduct**

Academy Council Governors may be suspended if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the Board of Trustees
- Have brought, or is likely to bring their school or the Acorn Education Trust into disrepute.

Bringing the Trust into disrepute may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of their school/Trust community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum or on social media.

The Acorn Education Trust Board of Directors' may terminate the appointment of any Academy Council Governor whose presence is deemed by the Directors not to be in the best interests of the Trust or the Community.

Any Academy Council staff governor shall automatically cease to hold office if they are no longer employed by the Trust.

Signed by the Chair, on behalf of the Academy Council of \_\_\_\_\_ School.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 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.*  
Selflessness - School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Honesty - School and college leaders should be truthful.
- 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:
- **Trust:** *leaders are trustworthy and reliable.* We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.

- **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.
- **Kindness:** *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper.* We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Optimism:** *leaders are positive and encouraging.* Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.