

## **The Great North Wood Education Trust**

### **Board of Trustees Code of Conduct**

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on 17 July 2017

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the Trust/s and the community. The work of the trustees is underpinned by the Seven Principles of Public Life:

**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 trustees have the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the trust
- Agreeing the Trust improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Monitoring progress towards targets

- Ensuring the local governing bodies performance manage the headteachers
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to Trust self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Agreeing the budget of the Trust based on the submissions of the constituent schools
- Monitoring spending against the budget at trust level
- Appointing the external auditors
- Ensuring 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 headteacher/accounting officer.
- We accept and understand that we must do nothing that could be perceived as or lead to the Trust being brought into disrepute
- 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 governing 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 governing 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 Trusts.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our Trusts. Our actions within the Trust and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the lead executive/headteacher.

#### 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 trust 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 Trust/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in Trust activities.
- We will visit the Trust/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the lead executive/headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing 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, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, 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 governors (Edubase).

#### 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 governors/trustees/academy committee members and the clerk to the governing board.
- 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 the lead executive/headteacher, 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 Trust.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Trust/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing 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/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 governing board.

#### Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair of the trust and the chair will investigate.
- The board will only use suspension or removal by the Members as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- The board reserves the right, where a breach of the Code of Conduct is so serious, to remove or suspend one of its number immediately.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another trustee will investigate.