

# Venture Multi-Academy Trust

## Code of Conduct for Trustees

This code sets out the expectations on, and commitment required from, trustees in order to properly carry out their work within the Trust and the community.

### **As trustees, we will focus on our strategic functions:**

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff;
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent;
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

### **As individuals on the board we agree to:**

#### **Fulfil our role & responsibilities**

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day to day management.
2. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our trust and schools.
3. We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
4. We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust and schools.
5. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
6. We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust, schools and local community.
7. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
8. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
9. We will only speak or act on behalf of the board if we have the authority to do so.
10. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
11. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
12. We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).

#### **Demonstrate our commitment to the role**

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend, explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the trust and schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in trust and school activities.
5. We will visit the schools and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting a school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

## **Build and maintain relationships**

1. We will develop effective working relationships with trust and school leaders, staff, parents/carers and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

## **Respect confidentiality**

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of meetings, particularly when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any trust board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

## **Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent**

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the trust website.
5. We will act in the best interests of the trust and schools as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the trust website.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information about Schools), some of which will be publicly available.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

We also accept the Seven Principles of Public Life, as detailed in the Appendix to this code of conduct, and agree to be bound by them in all matters we undertake as trustees.

**Adopted by VMAT Board of Trustees on 5th October 2020**

**Signed: Philip Robinson** (Chair of board)

The trust board agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and it will be endorsed by the full trust board.

## **Appendix: 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.