



The Equals Trust

Code of Conduct for Governors

Signed:

(chair of Trust board)



Rationale

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from governors of the Local Governing Bodies of Equals Trust, in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work across the school and with the school communities.

Strategic Functions of the Local Governing Body

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

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

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher in conjunction with the Trust Board of directors
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to schools and MAT self-evaluation and monitoring

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Understanding the budget, set in conjunction with the Trust Board of directors
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

The governors understand that they are responsible for the same three core governance functions performed by the governing body in a maintained school: setting the direction, holding the headteachers to account and ensuring financial probity. They must also ensure that they are complying with charity law requirements.

Trust Support

Equals Trust values your commitment and support in ensuring continued strategic development and improvement with the needs, and potential, of pupils at the forefront of decisions made. The Trust endeavours to:

- Ensure all reports and papers are sent to governors prior to meetings with enough time for directors to read them
- Communicate with governors clearly and efficiently to ensure information is provided in a timely manner so that decisions can be made
- Provide the Trust Administration and Governance Manager as a point of contact for governors

The Role of Governors

The governors of member schools of Equals Trust understand and agree to the following:

Roles and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the governing body, the role of the Trust, CEO and headteachers.

- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Trust board and local governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the local governing body. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the local governing body 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 communities of the school and other schools in the locality.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school and Trust. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the Trust board.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher and senior leadership team.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the local governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities.
- We will read meeting papers prior to the meeting so that challenge may be brought, enabling meetings to be focussed and efficient.
- We will get to know the school well.
- We will visit the school for appropriate monitoring visits, arranged in advance with the headteacher, and undertaken within the framework established by the Trust board.
- We will consider 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, roles on the local governing body, 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 and directors 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 directors, members, governors and Trust staff.
- 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 the Trust board and governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and 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 headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies in 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 the Trust and schools.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding schools' or Trust business arise outside a local governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any local governing body 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 Trust's or school'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 school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We understand that, despite personal integrity, a conflict of interest could sometime be perceived to be arising even where there would not be. In these situations, we will withdraw from discussions where such interpretation could be made.

Breach of the code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate, with the help of the chair of the Trust board, if required; the local governing body or Trust 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 local governing body member, 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.