



Brighter Futures Educational Trust



Larwood School

Brandles School

Executive Headteacher: Mr Pierre van der Merwe | BA, NPQH |

Headteacher: Mr Paul Smith | BA (Hons), PGCE, NPQH |

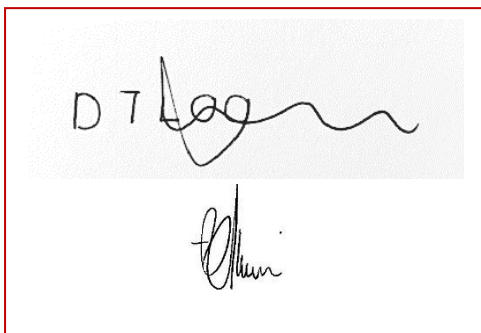
Dan Login

Chair of Trustees

Pierre Van der Merwe

Executive Headteacher

GOVERNANCE CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY



Policy Number: 82

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Version Control

V1.1	June 2024	Version control added
V1.1	June 2025	New policy specifically for trusts

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1.AIMS, SCOPE AND PRINCIPLES

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that all trustees are expected to follow.

By creating this policy, the aim is to ensure that trustees carry out their role with honesty and integrity, and help us to ensure our Trust and our schools are environments where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The code is based on *the [Governance Handbook](#)* and the *[Academy Trust Handbook](#)*. It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our Articles of Association and any Scheme of Delegation). Failure to follow the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix.

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, trustees will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust and its pupils.

2. THE 7 NOLAN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Trustees will follow these principles set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

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

3. TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITIES

In Trusts, the purpose of governance is to provide:

- strategic leadership
- accountability and assurance
- strategic engagement

In order to do this effectively, trustees will:

- Understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the board and those of the executive leadership
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the community of every school, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the board itself
- Promote equity and diversity throughout our organisation, including the board's operation
- Preserve and develop the character of the Trust
- Not undermine fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents/carers, staff, local communities and the local authorities)
- Follow the Trust's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the trust's constitutional documents
- Take responsibility for self-evaluation, regularly reviewing the board's performance, constitution and skillset
- Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills needed for effective governance
- Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full board
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation, and the funding agreement, which sets out how trustees must manage trust money, and procure goods and services
- Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, and understand that financial management and decision making will be scrutinised and audited
- Declare all gifts and record them on the gifts and hospitality register. Trustees will not accept bribes
- Trustees will work to actively identify and manage risks to the Trust

4. WORKING WITH OTHERS

Trustees will:

- Support and strengthen trust leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, and holding them to account
- Respect the role of the executive and school leadership teams and avoid routine involvement in operational matters
- Respect each other's views
- Work together as a board to develop effective relationships with stakeholders
- Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders

- Follow the Equality Act 2010, and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything they do

5. COMMITMENT TO GOVERNANCE

Trustees:

- Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice
- Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role
- Understand that work should be shared among Members and that all trustees and local governors are expected to take an active role
- Will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions
- Will participate in regular pre-arranged school visits in accordance with our trust policies
- Will attend any training or development activity needed to ensure the board has a wide range of skills and expertise

6. OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

Conflicts of interest

To make sure the board takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all trustees
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter

Publishing information

To ensure the board is transparent and open to the communities it serves, we will make certain information publicly available.

- The board accepts that the following information will be published on the Trust's website to ensure transparency:
 - The structure and remit of the Members, Board of Trustees and committees
- For each **Member** who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - The date when they stepped down, if applicable
 - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests (including governance roles in other educational institutions)
- For each **trustee** who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name

- Their date of appointment
- Their term of office (trustees and local governors only)
- The date they stepped down (where applicable)
- The body that appointed them (trustees)
- Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
- Their attendance record over the last academic year (only for trustees/local governors at board and committee meetings and local governors at local governing body meetings)
- The Board accepts that the information about members, trustees and local governors will be published on [Get Information About Schools](#)
- Trustees accept that the Board may collect diversity data to publish on the Trust or schools' websites, which could include information on any of the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010
 - Trustees understand that providing this information is voluntary and that, if we have already provided this information, we are able to request it be removed from any reporting
- Trustees accept that the information about trustees and local governors will be published by [Companies House](#)
- Trustees accept that the approved board and committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting will be made available to any interested person

7. CONFIDENTIALLY

In the course of their role, Trustees are sometimes privy to sensitive information. *Trustees will observe confidentiality when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:*

- Information about sensitive matters
- Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents)
- Details of individual trustees or local governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted

Confidential information will never be:

- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

Trustees' commitment to confidentiality does not overrule their duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where they believe a child is at risk of harm.

Trustees will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

Breaches of confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, trustees will inform the chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Trustees understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be suspended or removed.

8. DATA PROTECTION

Trustees will follow the Trust's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.

Trustees' commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where they believe a child is at risk of harm.

Personal data breaches

Trustees will inform the Trust's data protection officer immediately if they believe that there has been a personal data breach.

9. SOCAIL MEDIA

Trustees will:

- Abide by any requirements set out in our Trust's social media policy

Trustees will:

- Uphold the reputation of the trust and schools at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our schools communities
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards trustees to the chair of trustees and the executive leadership
- Carefully consider how appropriate it would be to accept any friend requests from parents/carers or to join any parent/carer groups associated with the Trust or any of the schools within the Trust

Trustees will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the Board of Trustees or Trust communities
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring the Trustees or the Trust into disrepute

10. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This code of conduct will be reviewed and agreed annually, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the full Board of Trustees.

11.LINKS WITH OTHER POLICES

This policy links with our policies on:

- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Online Safety
- Data Protection Policy

APPENDIX 1: BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Trust Boards

If we suspect a trustee has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- A Member of the Trust will investigate
- A Member of the Trust will hold a meeting with the trustee to discuss the issue. The trustee can bring a friend to the meeting. Another trustee/local governor will attend to corroborate any decisions
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
 - Further meetings with the Member to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the trustee
 - Making sure the trustee withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in

If there is no improvement in the trustee's behaviour, the Board will vote on a motion to ask the Members to remove them in accordance with sections 168 and 169 of the [Companies Act 2006](#) and the Trust's Articles of Association. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances

Trustees may be **removed** if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board of trustees/local governors (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the Board)
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the Trust or the office of the trustee into disrepute
- Have acted to undermine fundamental British values or the Board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty
- Have been involved in serious misconduct. The Board will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- Have displayed repeated and serious incompetence
- Have acted in a way that is significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Board, or their actions have interfered with the operational efficiency of any of the schools within the Trust.