

Code of Conduct for Local Advisory Board Governors of Academies within The Wensum Trust

This policy should be adopted by the board on an annual basis and signed by each member of the board. New members appointed during the year should sign the policy as part of their induction.

This policy was created and ratified by the Trust Board in:	August 2023
The policy owner is:	Lead Governance Professional
This policy will be reviewed by the Trust Board in: (unless earlier review is recommended by the Trust)	August 2025
Policy Version:	V6
Signed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees:	John Smith

Code of Conduct

This code sets out the expectations of roles and duties and level of commitment of Governors of the Local Advisory Board (LAB) to properly carry out its work within the Academy and Trust and the wider community.

This Code should be read in conjunction with the most up-to-date relevant laws and guidelines for academies including but not limited to the Governors Handbook, Academy Trust Handbook, Wensum Trust's articles of association and our agreed Scheme of Delegation.

The Local Advisory Board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and the objectives for the academy in conjunction with The Wensum Trust Vision and Strategic objectives.
- Agreeing the academy improvement strategy with priorities and targets clearly defined in line with Critical Success Factors (CSF) and Key Performance Indicators (KPi).
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Where appropriate assisting the Trustees in the appointing of the lead executive in the academy
- Monitoring the educational performance of the academy and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the Headteacher alongside the CEO and Strategic Leads
- Engaging with our stakeholders
- Contributing to academy self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance in line with those areas delegated to the LAB via the Scheme of Delegation, and being mindful of (where delegated):

- The academy budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are identified and well managed

As individuals on the board we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

- We understand the role and purpose of the board of Trustees, Local Advisory Board and the role of our executive leaders.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the LAB has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the LAB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the LAB 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 governance and will act appropriately
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect our academy having regard to being part of The Wensum Trust and the local wider community.

- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Trust and our family of schools. 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 Wensum Trust Board of Trustees.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between Trustees, LAB Members and staff, ensuring that we work collectively in the best interests of the pupils in our academy, having regard to being part of The Wensum Trust.
- We accept that our role is strategic as set out in the Scheme of Delegation and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management. We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and will avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the academy's rules, The Wensum Trust's policies, and the procedures of the LAB as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current agreed policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of our school and the Trust.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor is unpaid and at times will involve the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing 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 academy(ies), including SRBs, well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the academy(ies), with all visits arranged in advance with the senior executive leaders/Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the LAB.
- When visiting the academy in a personal capacity (i.e., as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will regularly undertake relevant training commensurate to the role of Governor.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors' membership will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools).
- We agree to adopt the seven principles of public life presented herein.
- We agree to bring our perspective to issues discussed, but not to speak in support of any of the bodies involved, but to take decisions in the best interests of the pupils in our academy, having regard to being part of the Trust.

Build and maintain 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, the governance professional to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.

- 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 Trustees, executive leaders, staff and parents of schools within The Wensum Trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Respect 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 academy.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Academy and/or The Wensum Trust business arise outside of a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.
- We will not do anything to bring The Wensum Trust or its academies into disrepute either by our actions, verbally or in written format, including social media.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with 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 and subsequent vote.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will 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.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, diversity information, 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.
- 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.

Ceasing to be a governor

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code of conduct has been breached the governing board will notify the Lead Governance Professional who will offer advice and guidance.
- If we believe this code has been breached the governing board could consider the use of suspension until and investigation has been completed, or removal, as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

- It will be at the discretion of Chair of the LAB, in consultation with the Lead Governance Professional (who may liaise with the Chair of Trustees), to appoint an independent investigator in order to carry out a confidential investigation in order to recommend any action to the LAB. A panel of three members will be formed to consider the findings of the investigation report. All three panel members will have no prior knowledge of the content of the investigation, and at least one member will be independent of the management and running of the school i.e., a Trustee or Governor from another school within the Trust. The panel's decisions will be considered final.
- Should the panel's decision be that the code of conduct has been breached, the chair of the panel will inform the Chair of Trustees who will have absolute authority to remove the Governor from the LAB with immediate effect.
Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the vice chair will appoint an independent investigator and follow the process outlined above.

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.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty – Holders of public office should be truthful

Leadership – Holders of public office 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.

Acceptance of the Governor Code of Conduct

Each member of the LAB will agree to the Code of Conduct by completing the appropriate declaration in their personal profile on Governor Hub.

The code of conduct will be reviewed annually. Any new Governors joining during the year will sign the relevant declaration on Governor Hub.