

Members and Trustees Code of Conduct



FINHAM PARK
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

The ethos and philosophy of Finham Park Multi Academy Trust

Schools in the Finham Park MAT will set out to pioneer, innovate and deliver a “World Class” education for all children from the age of 0-19 where the artificial barriers of stage and age are removed. Our education will aim to exceed the highest national and international benchmarks for academic achievement, whilst ensuring young people develop a passion for learning in all its contexts and are ready to take their place as active members of our global community.

The schools in Finham Park Multi Academy Trust will seek to move beyond collaboration and into co-construction – ensuring our education is developed with and by all members to reflect the needs of our children, their families and the wider community.

1. The Academy Trust commits itself to conduct its affairs in a manner consistent with the Ethos & Philosophy statement above.
2. The values and aims of the Trust are such that the schools must remain “not for profit” organisations

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	Date: 16 th July 2024
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Last reviewed on:	11 th July 2023
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Next review due by:	July 2025
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1. Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all Members and Trustees to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that Members and Trustees carry out their role with honesty and integrity, and help us to ensure our school is an environment 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, standing orders 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, Members and 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

As Members and Trustees, we will follow these [principles](#) set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

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

3. Members and Trustees' responsibilities

The 4 functions of our board are to:

- › Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the trust
- › Set the policy framework for achieving the trust's aims and objectives
- › Hold executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the trust, and the performance management of staff
- › Oversee the financial performance of the trust and make sure money is well spent

In order to do this effectively, as individuals we 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 equality 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, staff, local communities and the local authority/authorities)
- › Set targets in consultation with the LGBs
- › 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 our self-evaluation, regularly reviewing our board's performance, constitution and skillset
- › Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills we need 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
- › 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 of meetings
- › Comply with relevant guidance and legislation and our funding agreement that sets out how we must manage our trust's money, and procure goods and services
- › Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited
- › Declare all gifts worth more than £50 and record them on the [gifts and hospitality register](#). We will not accept bribes
- › We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the trust

4. Working with others

We 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, expressing our own openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors
- › **Support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all other times**
- › **Be prepared to answer queries from other governors 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**
- › **Recognise that the roles of governor, staff member, parent and volunteers in school are different and maintain separation between roles where more than one are held**
- › 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 we do

5. Commitment to governance

We:

- › Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice to the Governance Professional
- › Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role
- › Understand that work should be shared among the Trust Board of the and that all Trustees are expected to take an active role
- › Will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions
- › Will participate in the Link Trustee scheme and make pre-arranged school visits, to get to know our link school, 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

Will keep the welfare of all schools at the heart of our work as governors and act in their best interests

6. Openness and transparency

Safer Recruitment

To support our board's ongoing commitment to safer recruitment and safeguarding, we will:

- › Inform the Trust Governance Professional, in confidence, of our involvement in any criminal activity, arrest or if there are any changes to circumstances/known names

Conflicts of interest

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

- › Publish an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all Members and 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 our board is transparent and open to the communities we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.

- › We accept that the following [information will be published on the school's website](#) to ensure transparency:
 - The structure and remit of the Members, board of trustees, committees and local governing bodies (where applicable), and the full name of the chair of each one (where applicable)
- › 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 and local governor** (where applicable) who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - Their term of office
 - The date they stepped down (where applicable)
 - The body that appointed them
 - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
 - Their attendance record over the last academic year
- › We accept that the information about Members, trustees and local governors will be published on [Get information about schools](#)
- › We accept that the information about trustees will be published on [Companies House](#)
- › We 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. Confidentiality

In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. We 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 Members and Trustees' 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

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

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

Breaches of confidentiality

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

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

8. Data protection

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

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

Personal data breaches

We will inform the trust's data protection officer, Rachel Canning immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

Privacy Notice for Governors and Volunteers

We collect and use personal information about you, during and after your work relationship with us, in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Our Privacy notice for [Governors and Volunteers](#) can be found on the Trust website and from the Governance Professional, upon request.

9. Social media

We will:

- › Uphold the reputation of the trust 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 Members and Trustees to the chair of trustees and the executive leadership

We will **not**:

- › Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- › Make comments online about any members of the board of Members and Trustees or school communities
- › Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us 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 policies

This policy links with our policies on:

- Safeguarding (available on individual school websites)
 - [Finance](#)
 - [Data protection](#)
 - [Privacy notice for Governors and Volunteers](#)

Appendix 1: breaches of the code of conduct

We understand that any workplace disciplinary case relating to our conduct and principles covered under this Code of Practice, or any convictions that may change the status of our current, enhanced DBS record, are reportable to the Chair of the Board; immediately

We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any Member or Trustee shall be raised at a meeting of the Board, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Trustees, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstances removal from the Board

In taking the decision to suspend we will follow a process as set out in the relevant Terms of Reference

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 Member or Trustee to discuss the issue. The Member or Trustee can bring a friend to the meeting. Another Member or Trustee 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 or Trustee to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
 - Support, mentoring or training for the Member or 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 (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 academy 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. We 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 the school
- Have been absent without the permission of the Chair, from all the meetings during a six-month period and their post be deemed to be vacated

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PTA meeting or on social media
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the board's operation