



Code of Conduct for Trustees and Members of Local Governing Bodies

1. Statement of intent

- 1.1. At The Corinium Education Trust, we recognise and value the effort taken by Trustees and members of Local Governing Bodies who contribute towards our schools. We encourage their assistance and acknowledge that many school activities and processes would be at risk if it were not for their help. As a result, we want to make sure that time spent by individuals involved in the Trust's governance at all levels is productive and enjoyable.
- 1.2. This code of conduct outlines what is expected from Trustees and members of Local Governing Bodies and all individuals involved in governance throughout the trust at any level are expected to comply with these guidelines.
- 1.3. For the purpose of this document, **the term 'board' will refer to both the board of trustees and also local governing bodies unless otherwise stated and people who serve at either level will be referred to as 'members'.**

2. Role and responsibilities

- 2.1. This code of conduct will be reviewed by the Trustees on an annual basis and will be signed by all individuals at the first meeting of the academic year or on appointment.
- 2.2. The responsibilities of those involved in Trust governance are set out in the Trust's 'Arrangements for Governance' document.

3. Behaviours

- 3.1. Each committee of the Trust will make decisions collectively and take joint responsibility for their actions.
- 3.2. Members will hold themselves accountable for the performance of the board and the performance of the trust/school.
- 3.3. Members will not use their status as a member to gain advantage within the trust.
- 3.4. Members accept that they have no legal authority to act individually, except when they have been given delegated authority to do so.
- 3.5. Members will only speak on behalf of their respective board when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 3.6. Members will recognise the difference between their role and that of staff members, volunteers and other layers of governance.

- 3.7. Members are responsible for:
- Attending all meetings and training expected from them and providing apologies for any absences in advance.
 - Preparing and contributing effectively to meetings and discussions.
 - Acting in a fair and open-minded manner during discussions.
 - Considering professional advice on anything which they do not have expertise in themselves.
 - Acting in the best interest of the Trust/school.
 - Ensuring that a properly constituted, balanced and competent board is maintained.
 - Conducting themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of the Trust or its employees.
 - Honouring the authority of the Chair of the board as appointed leader of the board and supporting them in their role.
 - Studying the agenda and associated information prior to the meeting, ensuring that meetings are attended fully prepared.
 - Continually seeking ways to improve board governance practice.
 - Participating in induction, training and development activities.
- 3.8. Members must not engage in any political or campaigning activity that might compromise the position or reputation of the Trust.
- 3.9. All those engaged with the governance of the Trust who intend to stand for political roles; political activities or engage in campaigning activities must discuss the matter with the Chair.
- 3.10. Prospective members must declare any previous and current political office in their initial application/expression of interest.

4. Commitment

- 4.1. Members fully understand their role and are committed to the amount of time and energy the role involves.
- 4.2. Members will be actively involved in their role and accept their fair share of responsibilities within the board.
- 4.3. Trustees will be committed to engaging in the life of schools in the Trust, in order to further assist their decision making.
- 4.4. Local Governing Body members will actively participate in their school community, and will respond to opportunities to be involved in school activities and events.
- 4.5. Full commitment will be given to the attendance of meetings.
- 4.6. Members will demonstrate a commitment to the development and implementation of good practice, both within the board and across the Trust.
- 4.7. Trustees will demonstrate a commitment to engaging and maintaining links with Local Governing Bodies and other stakeholders.
- 4.8. All relevant training and inductions will be undertaken in a prompt and efficient manner. In addition, wherever possible, Trustees and Governors are expected to attend CET training sessions.

- 4.9. Members will develop and maintain up-to-date knowledge of the trust/school and its environment.
- 4.10. Members will help to identify good candidates for membership.
- 4.11. Trustees will act within the governing document of the trust and abide by the trust's policies and procedures.
- 4.12. The Trust will ensure that there are clear written policies regarding the claiming of expenses by members.
- 4.13. The board will ensure that they, and the Trust as a whole, act in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance.
- 4.14. In addition to reading this Code of Conduct, all members will make themselves familiar with and comply with the Trust's procedures, including the following:
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - Equal Opportunities
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Behavioural Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Disciplinary procedures
 - Complaints procedures

5. Conflicts of interest

- 5.1. Members will act in the best interests of the Trust/school at all times and will not act in the interest of, or as a representative of, any group or individual.
- 5.2. Members will record in their Declaration of Interests any conflicts of interest that they might have in connection to the board's business. Members will declare any conflict of interest that they or any family members and friends might have in connection with the Trust's business and keep this record up-to-date at all times.
- 5.3. Members will declare any conflict of interest they may have in an item of business on the agenda, will immediately remove themselves from the meeting while it is under discussion, and will not be involved in any votes taken on the matter.
- 5.4. Any conflict of loyalty will be declared at the start of any meeting, should the situation arise.
- 5.5. Members will aim to foresee and avoid any conflicts of interest.
- 5.6. Members will not benefit, financially or in other terms, for themselves, their families or their friends from their role on the board.
- 5.7. Any transaction, under which a member will benefit either directly or indirectly, will have proper legal authority.
- 5.8. Members will not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to external individuals or organisations which might influence the performance of their duties for the Trust/school.
- 5.9. Members must not use, or attempt to use, their position to promote their personal interests or those of a connected person, business or other organisation.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1. When matters discussed between members are deemed confidential, or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, complete confidentiality will be observed both inside and outside of the Trust.
- 6.2. Members partaking in discussions regarding Trust/school business outside of board meetings will exercise the greatest prudence at all times.
- 6.3. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings may be made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential.
- 6.4. Information or materials relating to the Trust must not, without permission from the Chair or Trust Lead (CEO), be passed or distributed to the press or media or any other external recipients.
- 6.5. Members accept and consent that, in the interests of open and transparent governance, their name, date of appointment, term of office, role, attendance record and any business/pecuniary interests they have will be published on the trust's website and in the Trust's accounts.

7. Conduct of board members

- 7.1. The board will seek to develop open, honest and effective working relationships with the other members, the Chief Executive, headteachers, staff members and parents at the trust/school, as well as any other relevant bodies.
- 7.2. Members will continuously strive to work as a team.
- 7.3. Members will always express their views openly, but in a courteous and respectful manner.
- 7.4. The board will acknowledge the time, effort and skills demonstrated in the execution of delegated functions by other trustees.
- 7.5. Members will seek to support and encourage all those they come into contact with through the role.
- 7.6. Members will take into account any concerns expressed about their delegated function, and will be prepared to answer queries from other members regarding their role.
- 7.7. When making decisions, members will carefully consider how their decisions and actions might affect those who are part of the school community, the Trust as a whole and the wider locality.
- 7.8. Members will not break the law, go against charity regulations or act in disregard of the Trust's policies in any aspect of their role on the board.
- 7.9. Where a member also holds another role within the Trust, such as a member of staff or volunteer, they will strive to keep these roles separate.
- 7.10. Members will use the trust's resources responsibly, ensuring that any expenses or reimbursement are documented.
- 7.11. Members will not accept gifts or hospitality without the prior consent of the board.
- 7.12. Members must at all times follow the safeguarding policy and procedures of the school they are visiting.

- 7.13. Schools will have their own protocols for members to visit schools but in general:
- Visits should be agreed in advance and have a clear focus
 - If members are spending time with pupils or in a classroom this should be arranged in advance with the appropriate staff
 - Members should not make judgements about the quality of teaching they see
 - Any concerns arising from a visit should be shared with the Headteacher in the first instance

8. Removal of a board member

- 8.1. The board will only suspend or remove a member from their post as a last resort.
- 8.2. The board will attempt to resolve any difficulties or disputes in a constructive manner before suspension or removal is considered.
- 8.3. In the event that the need arises to suspend or remove a member, the board will do so by following the established procedures outlined in the Trust's Arrangements for Governance, to ensure a fair and objective process.
- 8.4. In the event that a member wishes to leave their role, the Chair of the board will be informed in advance in writing, stating the reason for their resignation.
- 8.5. When a member has left their role on the board, the records held by the Department for Education and Companies House (where relevant) will be updated.
- 8.6. Where the leaving member has special responsibilities, a handover will be arranged to ensure that the duties are appropriately fulfilled.

9. Breaching the code

- 9.1. If a member breaches this code of conduct, the issue will be raised with the Chair of the board, who will investigate the concern.
- 9.2. In the event that it is believed the Chair of the board has breached this code of conduct, another member will undertake the investigation.
- 9.3. Members are aware that a substantial breach of this code may result in their removal from the board.
- 9.4. In the event that the code has been breached, members will be given the opportunity to defend their actions before a decision regarding removal or suspension is made.
- 9.5. In the event that a member is asked to resign from the board, they will accept the majority decision of the board and resign at the earliest opportunity.

Document History

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Approved by	Trustees
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Nov 2019	The addition of point 2.8 on political roles and activities and the sentence about campaigning to stand alongside political roles. 2.8 separated into 3 distinct points. It was 4.2 amended to read 'Declaration of Interests' rather than 'Register of Pecuniary Interests'.	KJ	Sept 2020
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July 2022	Re-paginated and paragraphs re-numbered (eg Introduction becomes 1, and 2.8 becomes 3.8 for example).	KJ	July 2023