

Tarka Learning Partnership

Code of Conduct for Members, Trustees and Governors

NB. 'Trustees' means the Directors referred to in the Trust's Articles of Association.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees in September 2018; retained for 2019-20 and 2020-21

This code sets out the expectations and commitment required from school governors, trustees and academy members in order for the governance of the Tarka Learning Partnership to properly carry out its work within the school/s and the community. Members, Trustees and Governors read the Code in conjunction with the relevant law, the Articles of Association and the agreed Scheme of Delegation (available to view on this website).

Role & Responsibilities

- ❖ I understand the purpose of the Board of Trustees and the role of the Executive leaders.
- ❖ I accept that I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Board of Trustees has given me delegated authority to do so, and therefore I will only speak on behalf of the Local Governing Body or the Board of Trustees/Members when I have been specifically authorised to do so;
- ❖ I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Board or its delegated bodies. This means that I will not speak against majority decisions outside the meetings of Governance at all levels;
- ❖ I have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as I have responsibility for staff, I will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer;
- ❖ I will encourage open governance and will act appropriately;
- ❖ I will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;
- ❖ I will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school/group of schools. My actions within the school and the local community will reflect this;
- ❖ In making or responding to criticism or complaints I will follow the procedures established by the Board of Trustees;
- ❖ I will actively support and challenge the executive leaders through the appropriate channels of Governance;
- ❖ I will accept and respect the difference in roles between the Board of Trustees/Members, local Governors and staff, ensuring that I work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- ❖ I will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- ❖ I agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the Governance of the Tarka Learning Partnership as set out by the relevant governing documents and law;

- ❖ When formally speaking or writing in our governing role I will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- ❖ When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) I will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation;
- ❖ I will observe the Nolan principles of public life (detailed in the Governance Handbook)

Commitment

- ❖ I acknowledge that accepting office as a governor/trustee/academy member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- ❖ I will actively fulfil my role in the governance body appointed to, and accept my fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- ❖ I will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where I cannot attend explain in advance why I am unable to.
- ❖ I will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in school activities.
- ❖ I will visit the school/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the senior executive leader/headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the Board of Trustees.
- ❖ When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), I will maintain my underlying responsibility as a governor/trustee/academy member.
- ❖ I will consider seriously my individual needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- ❖ I accept that in the interests of open governance, my full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing me will be published on the school's website.
- ❖ In the interests of transparency, I accept that information relating to governors/trustees/academy members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (formerly Edubase).

Relationships

- ❖ I will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- ❖ I will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all my communications with other governors/trustees/academy members, the clerk to the governing board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- ❖ I will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- ❖ I am prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and I will acknowledge the

time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.

- ❖ I will seek to develop effective working relationships with the executive leaders, staff and parents, the trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- ❖ I will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school/ Trust.
- ❖ I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- ❖ I will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- ❖ I will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately and in accordance with Trust policies/GDPR regulation.

Conflicts of interest

- I will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that I have in connection with the Trust's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting I will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- I accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- I will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- I will act in the best interests of the school/Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the LGB, Board of Trustees/Members.

Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- I understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/academy member leaves office.
- The code of conduct will only be signed at the commencement of your role in the Trust or upon changing roles e.g. from Trustee to LGB Governor.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If I believe this code has been breached, I will raise this issue with the Chair of Trustees and the Chair will investigate. The Whistleblowing Policy may be relevant in such an investigation. The Trustees will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways (see Governance Handbook)
- Should it be the Chair of Trustees that we believe has breached this code, the Members 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.

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.

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