

## Code of Conduct for Trustees and Governors

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of, and commitment required from, QEGSMAT Trustees and Governors in order for them to carry their work out effectively. It seeks to articulate the standards of expectation in a framework for all to adopt.

As individual Trustees and Governors, we agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of our role. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except where we have been given delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Trust Board or Local Governing Body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside of any meetings. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and as 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 the community.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Trust and the academies in line with the QEGSMAT vision and values. Our actions will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints, we will follow the policy approved by the QEGSMAT Trust Board.
- We will actively support and challenge the leaders appropriately.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between ourselves and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the Trust and the academies.
- We will respect the role of leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the Trust's policies and those of the academies.
- When formally speaking or writing in our role we 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) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.

### Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work, 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 do so.
- As a Trustee we will get to know the Trust's academies, taking the opportunities to visit or meet with Headteachers or Chairs of Local Governors.
- As a Local Governor we will take opportunities to familiarise ourselves with the academy and meet with the Headteacher when appropriate.

- When visiting an academy in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a representative of QEGSMAT.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms and role of office, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Trustee/Local Governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the Trust's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to our roles will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools).

### 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 others 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 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 academy leaders, staff and parents, other QEGSMAT staff and other relevant agencies and the community.

### Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils/students.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Trust/academy business arise outside a meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

### Use of Social Media

- We must not participate in discussions that may bring an academy or the Trust into disrepute, nor give advice or information that we know to be contrary to the Trust's policies or interests. We should not engage in chat that could embarrass, misrepresent or convey an unjust or unfavourable impression of an academy or the Trust or its business affairs, employees, suppliers, pupils/students or their families.
- We will use common sense when posting items. We will think about the intended audience and the consequences of making unwise remarks about an academy or the Trust. We will not reveal sensitive or confidential information on any social networking sites.
- We agree to set a good example to pupils and students when using social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. In our use of social media we will follow these principles:
  - Courtesy and respect for staff, parents, pupils and students.
  - Use of appropriate language when discussing the Trust or its academies.
  - No posting of photographs of staff, parents, pupils or students without prior permission.

- Addressing any issues or concerns regarding the Trust directly with the Leadership team and not in postings on social media.

#### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will declare all business and pecuniary interests by completing the Trust's Register of Interests.
- We understand the Register of Interests will be published on the Trust's website.
- We will declare any conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting and, when these arise, we will withdraw from that part of the meeting.
- We will act in the best interests of the Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

#### **Ceasing to be a Trustee/Local Governor**

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after we leave office.

#### **Breach of this code of conduct**

- If we believe this code has been breached, the matter will be referred to the Headteacher or to a Trust Executive Leader.

## **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. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, their friends, or stakeholders, at the expense of all stakeholders.

### **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 and have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties.

### **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.

*Approved by QEGSMAT Trust Board 13/12/2021 electronically*