



## Trustees Code of Conduct

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## Contents

1. Core functions of governance .....	1
2. Standards for conduct, behaviour and practice .....	3
3. Breaching the code .....	6
4. Monitoring and review .....	7
Appendix - Code of Conduct acknowledgement form.....	8

## **Aim of this Code of Conduct**

At ONE Multi Academies Trust we recognise and value the effort taken by Members, Trustees and Local Advisory Boards (LABs) who collectively contribute towards the governance of the Trust and its Academies. The Board of Trustees appreciates and acknowledges your assistance and acknowledge that many of the Trust's activities and processes would be at risk if it were not for your help. As a result, we want to ensure that the time spent in your governing role is productive and enjoyable. Trustees must conduct their business in compliance with governance and charity legislation and promote the safeguarding and welfare of children.

This Code of Conduct outlines what is expected from Trustees and should be read in conjunction with the Governance Handbook, the Academy Trust Handbook, the Articles of Association and the Funding Agreement.

The Code of Conduct is linked to other policies and protocols including Trustee Visits, Complaints, Gifts, the Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy, the Whistleblowing and the Data Protection Policy.

# 1. Core functions of governance

The Board will focus on the three core functions of governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the Academy and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Academy and making sure its money is well spent.

The Board will ensure it understands and meets the following key features of effective governance:

1. Strategic leadership: defining a vision, fostering a culture and ethos, and championing the strategy.
2. Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
3. Recruiting people with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
4. Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
5. Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.
6. Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

All Trustees will be required to fulfil their duties in line with the legal requirements, the Governance Handbook, [Charity Governance Code](#) and the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life.

## The Seven Nolan Principles Of Public Life:

<b>Selflessness</b>	We will act solely in terms of the public interest.
<b>Integrity</b>	We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
<b>Objectivity</b>	We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
<b>Accountability</b>	We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
<b>Openness</b>	We will act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information will not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

<b>Honesty</b>	We will be truthful.
<b>Leadership</b>	All Trustees will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

**Trustees will apply the highest standards and will:**

- act within their powers
- promote the success of the Trust
- exercise independent judgement
- exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
- avoid conflicts of interest
- not accept benefits from third parties
- declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

**Trustees will focus on our core purpose:**

- Strategic leadership: defining a vision, fostering a culture and championing the strategy.
- Accountability and assurance: providing robust and effective oversight of operations and performance.
- Engagement: strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders.

In addition, all will be expected to be:

- Committed
- Confident
- Curious
- Challenging
- Collaborative
- Critical
- Creative.

## 2. Standards for conduct, behaviour and practice

All Trustees will agree to meeting the standards outlined in this section, this list is not exhaustive.

### **Undertake the following roles and responsibilities:**

- Be responsible for the development of policies across the Trust and seek to engage with the relevant committees when developing and reviewing Trust-wide policies.
- Formulate and review the Trust's vision, values and long-term strategy.
- Fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in the Scheme of Delegation.
- Exercise overall control over the Trust's financial affairs.
- Agree to attend and participate in any mandatory and regular training i.e. KCSIE updates and safeguarding.
- Have regard to responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
- Act fairly and in accordance with principles of equal opportunities when making decisions affecting the appointment, recruitment, professional development, performance management, payment and discipline of staff.
- Make decisions collectively and take joint responsibility for actions taken and decisions made by the Board.
- Where decisions and actions conflict with 'The 7 principles of public life' or may place pupils at risk, bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
- Maintain and uphold confidentiality at all times in relation to Trust business, including discussions within and outside of the Trust Board and its committee meetings, unless disclosure is required by law or authorised by the Trust Board.
- Act in a fair and open-minded manner during discussions.
- Consider professional / legal advice where required.
- Be mindful of achieving a balanced skills set across the Board.
- Hold themselves accountable for the performance of the Board of Trustees and the Trust.
- Ensure the status of Trustee is not used to gain advantage or gain financially within the Trust.
- Accept that Trustees have no legal authority to act individually or on behalf of the Trust, except when they have been given delegated authority to do so.
- Only speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees or Trust when specifically authorised to do so.
- Trustees must maintain a strategic focus, respecting the Executive and Senior Leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation, never acting in a way that could undermine such arrangements.
- Adhere to the Trust's rules, policies, and the procedures in accordance with the relevant governing documents and law.
- Act fairly and without prejudice.
- Encourage open governance.
- Be mindful of the responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Trust.

- Consider how decisions may affect the community, including the wider Trust community.
- When formally speaking or writing in a governing role, ensure comments reflect current Trust policy, even if this might be different to personal views.
- When holding another role within the Trust, such as a volunteer, strive to keep these roles separate.
- Recognise the difference between a Trustee role and that of staff, Members, Governors and volunteers.
- Ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole Trust approach to safeguarding.
- Ensure regularity and propriety in use of the Trust's funds and take ownership of the Trust's financial sustainability and its ability to operate as a going concern.
- Ensure the Sikh identity and ethos of the Academies are upheld by respective staff, and the values of Sikhi are not brought into disrepute.

### **Demonstrate commitment to the role**

All Trustees will:

- Fully understand their role and commit to the amount of time and energy the role involves.
- Be actively involved in the role and accept their fair share of responsibilities within their areas of governance.
- Give full effort to the attendance of meetings and come to all meetings prepared. Where Trustee cannot attend a meeting, they will contact the Trust Chair/Governance Professional in advance to give their apologies and reason for non-attendance.
- Participate in induction, training and development activities.
- Continually seek ways to improve governance practice.
- Visit the Academies within the Trust and maintain oversight of their performance and engage with stakeholders.
- Participate in and attend Sikhi-related activities and events hosted by the Trust or associated Academies.

### **Behave appropriately**

All Trustees will:

- Pay due regard to their position of public office and adhere to 'The 7 principles of public life.'
- Acknowledge the time, effort and skills demonstrated in the execution of delegated functions by other Trustees.
- Act in the best interests of the Trust, its Academies and its Pupils – Trustees will not act in a manner that will bring the Trust into disrepute.
- Declare their eligibility to hold the position of Trustee as per the disqualification criteria and Trust's Articles of Association.

- Not break the law, breach charity regulations, or disregard the Trust's policies in any aspect of their role on the Board.
- Use the Trust's resources responsibly and not for personal gain, ensuring that any expenses or reimbursements are documented.
- Not accept gifts or hospitality without the prior consent of the Board and always act in line with the Trust's Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy.
- When onsite at any of the Academies the Trustees will ensure that they fully understand and comply with the respective Academy's safeguarding arrangements.
- When representing the Trust, to adhere to the basic principles of Sikhi (e.g. no alcohol, no smoking/vaping, no meat, no fish and no eggs etc) when in attendance at Academies.

### **Build relationships**

All Trustees will:

- Seek to develop open, honest and effective working relationships with committees members, the Trust's Central Team, Executive And Senior Leaders, and staff and parents at the Trust's Academies, as well as any other relevant bodies, such as the Local Authority, Regional Director and local Sikh communities.
- Continuously strive to work as a team.
- Behave professionally, expressing their views openly, courteously, and respectfully in line with Trust behaviours, values and ethos (universal Sikh values), fostering positive relationships and promoting a collaborative and inclusive environment.
- Honour the authority of the Chair of Trustees as appointed leader of the board and support the Chair in their role.
- Listen to any concerns raised about the work of the committees and respond to questions from Trustees in those committees.

### **Maintain confidentiality**

All Trustees will:

- Maintain complete confidentiality both inside and outside the Trust meetings, when matters are deemed confidential, or where they concern specific staff or pupils.
- Exercise the greatest care and caution when partaking in discussions regarding the Trust business outside of meetings.
- Not reveal details of any internal voting decisions.
- Operate in line with the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR.
- Continue to apply the requirements of confidentiality after leaving office.



## **Be transparent**

All Trustees will:

- Provide, with consent that their full name, dates of appointment, details of who appointed them, term of office, roles in other educational organisations, attendance at board /committee meetings, and any conflicts of interest will be published on the Trust's website.
- Provide, with consent, information relating to them be logged on Companies House and Get Information about Schools (GIAS), the DfE's national database. The Trust will provide GIAS / Companies House with the information provided by Trustees.

## **Declare conflicts of interest**

All Trustees will:

- Act in the best interests of the Trust at all times and will not act in the interest of, or as a representative of, any group or individual.
- Declare and record, in the Conflicts of Interest Register, any business, personal or other interests that they might have in connection to the business of the Board of Trustees. The interests of those related or closely connected to a Trustee will be declared on the Conflicts of Interest Register.
- Any Trustee who has a personal interest in an item on the agenda must declare this interest and withdraw from the meeting while the matter is being discussed. Any conflict of interest should be declared at the start of the meeting, should such a situation arise.

## **3. Breaching the code**

If a Trustee breaches the Code of Conduct, the concern will be reported to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair will arrange for the issue to be investigated.

If it is believed that the Chair of Trustees has broken the Code of Conduct, the Members or an independent person (not linked to the Board of Trustees) will be arranged for the issue to be investigated.

Removing or suspending a Trustee from their role will only be considered as a last resort. The Board of Trustees / Members will always try to resolve problems or disagreements in a fair and constructive way first.

If suspension or removal is necessary, the following fair and transparent process will be followed:

- A proposal to remove the person from their role will be added to the agenda of a Board of Trustees or Members (if the breach concerns the Chair of Trustee) meeting and will be informed in advance.

- A meeting of the Trustees or Members (if the breach concerns the Chair of Trustee) will be held where the reasons for removal will be fully explained and discussed.
- Trustees or Members (if the breach concerns the Chair of Trustee) will carefully consider the reasons provided.
- The person facing removal will have the chance to respond and give their side of the events.
- Trustees or Members (if the breach concerns the Chair of Trustee) will then decide as soon as reasonably possible.
- The individual will be notified of the decision in writing within five working days, where possible.

#### **4. Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Trust Board.

All Trustees are required to familiarise themselves with this document as part of their induction.

The next scheduled review date for this document is September 2026.

## Appendix - Code of Conduct acknowledgement form

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	
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Please tick the appropriate box once you have read and understood the following documents:	
The Values and Rewards Policy (Behavioural Policy)	
The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy	
The Health and Safety Policy	
The Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	
The Data Protection Policy	
The Complaints Policy	
<a href="#">Keeping children safe in education</a>	
The Trustee Visits Policy	
The Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy	
The Whistleblowing Policy	
Expenses Policy	

Copies of the above policies are available on the Trust website and can be found by following this link; <https://onemat.org.uk/trust-policies>

I hereby acknowledge the terms detailed within the Code of Conduct and agree to abide by this code whilst in office. I understand that the role is of a voluntary nature and, therefore, I will not receive payment for my duties. Any expenses I claim will be in line with the Expenses Policy.

Signature.....

Date.....

Please return this form to the Trust Governance Professional.