

Three Counties Academy Trust



Members of the Governing Board Code of Conduct #GV2

Last updated: 23 June 2023

Review Date: 31 August 2024

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Aim of this Code of Conduct

Three Counties Academy Trust (TCAT) recognise and value the effort taken by members of the Governing Board to contribute towards our Trust and schools. We encourage your assistance and acknowledge that many school activities and processes would be at risk if it were not for your help. As a result, we want to make sure that your time spent as a Member, Trustee or Local Governor is productive and enjoyable.

For the purpose of this document, we will refer to the roles of Member, Trustee or Local Governor under the collective term Governing Board, referring only to individual roles if required. Irrespective of role, all members of the Governing Board are bound by this Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct outlines what is expected from members of the Governing Board, including Associate Members or individuals “in attendance”, and sets out the Code of Conduct with which all members of the Governing Board are required to comply.

1. Core functions of governance

Members of the Governing 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 TCAT schools and pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the TCAT and making sure money is well spent

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

- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos, and strategy
- Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities, and capacity
- Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

All members of the Governing Board are required to fulfil their duties in line with the law, the 'Governance handbook' and 'A Competency Framework for Governance', and 'The 7 principles of public life'. In addition, all members of the Governing Board will be expected to be:

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

2. Standards for conduct, behaviour, and practice

All members of the Governing Board will agree to meeting the standards outlined in this section.

1. Undertake the roles and responsibilities of a governor

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Accept that their role is strategic and, therefore, focus on the core functions of the Governing Board rather than the day-to-day management of TCAT schools (Trustees and Local Governors only)
- Respect the role of the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Head of School and senior leaders and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of TCAT schools, never acting in a way that could undermine such arrangements
- Accept that they have no legal authority to act individually, except when they have been given delegated authority in writing to do so

- Act fairly and without prejudice
- Apply the Equality Act 2010 in all governance matters
- Ensure the Governing Board has a diverse composition which, as far as possible, reflects the composition of the local community
- Encourage open governance
- Accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the Governing Board
- Stand by decisions that the Governing Board makes as a collective, irrespective of the level at which those decisions were made
- Be mindful of their responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of TCAT and our schools
- Consider how decisions may affect the community
- 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
- Actively support and challenge the leadership of TCAT and its schools
- Follow the procedures established by the Governing Board
- Only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when they have been specifically authorised in writing to do so
- When formally speaking or writing in a governing role, ensure their comments reflect current TCAT or school policy even if that may differ from their personal views
- Fulfil their duties as an employer, acting in a manner that is expected of a good proprietor (Trustees only)
- Adhere to TCAT and school rules and policies, and the procedures of the Governing Board in accordance with the relevant governing documents and law
- Provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in TCAT and our schools are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding (Trustees and Local Governors only)

2. Demonstrate commitment to the role

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Undertake mandatory training and access the additional training and support available to fully understand their role, including safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction
- Undertake further training appropriate to their area of monitoring or responsibility – this can be online
- Be committed to the amount of time and energy the role involves
- Be actively involved in the role and accept their fair share of responsibilities within the Governing Board
- Give full effort to the attendance of meetings. Where a members of the Governing Board cannot attend a meeting, they will contact the Governance Professional or Clerk to the Local Governing Body in advance to give their apologies and the reason for their non-attendance
- Come to meetings prepared, including having accessed and read the paperwork prior to the meeting

- Visit the appropriate TCAT school to undertake agreed monitoring or participate in school events, with visits being arranged beforehand with the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board
- Be prepared to support and to challenge when needed

3. Behave appropriately

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Pay due regard to their position of public office and adhere to 'The 7 principles of public life':
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability
 - Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership
- Acknowledge the time, effort and skills demonstrated in the execution of delegated functions by other members of the Governing Board
- Consider any concerns expressed about their delegated function and be prepared to answer queries from other members of the Governing Board regarding their role
- Act in the best interests of TCAT, our schools, and our pupils; members of the Governing Board will not act in a manner that will bring TCAT or our schools into disrepute

4. Build relationships

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Seek to develop open, honest, and effective working relationships with the Executive Headteacher, staff and parents at TCAT and our schools, as well as any other relevant body, such as the Local Authority
- Continuously strive to work as a team
- Express their views openly, in a courteous and respectful manner

5. Maintain confidentiality

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Maintain complete confidentiality both inside and outside TCAT and our schools when matters discussed between members of the Governing Board are deemed confidential, or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils
- Not reveal details of a Governing Board vote
- Operate in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Maintain confidentiality even after they leave the Governing Board

6. Be transparent

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Accept and consent that in the interests of open and transparent governance, their names, dates of appointment, terms of office, roles, attendance records and any conflicts of interest will be published on the TCAT and/or individual schools websites
- Accept and consent to information relating to them, as members of the Governing Board, being logged on Get Information About Schools (GIAS). This information will be given by members of the Governing Board on a voluntary basis, but in doing so members of the Governing Board should understand that any information provided to the Governing Board must be shared with the Secretary of State via GIAS

7. Declare conflicts of interest

All members of the Governing Board will:

- Act in the best interests of TCAT and our schools at all times, and not act in the interest of, or as a representative of, any group or individual
- Declare any business, personal or other interests they have in connection to the Governing Boards interests and record these in the Declared Conflicts of Interest Register
- Declare any interest they may have in an item of business on the agenda and immediately remove themselves from the meeting while it is under discussion. Any conflict of interest will be declared at the start of any meeting, should the situation arise

3. Breaching the code

If a member of the Governing Board breaches this Code of Conduct, the issue will be raised with the Chair of the Trust Board or Chair of the Local Governing Body as appropriate, who will investigate the concern. In the event that it is believed that the Chair of the Trust Board or Chair of the Local Governing Body has breached this code of conduct, another member of the Governing Board at the appropriate level will undertake the investigation.

The Governing Board will attempt to resolve any difficulties or disputes in a constructive manner before suspension or removal is considered. The Governing Board will only suspend or remove a member of the Governing Board from their post as a last resort. If the need arises to suspend a member of the Governing Board, the Governing Board will ensure a fair and objective process by implementing the following procedure:

- A resolution to remove a member of the Governing Board from office will be included on an agenda and circulated to all members of the Governing Board at the appropriate level and in line with the TCAT Scheme of Delegation
- A meeting will be held and the resolution to remove the members of the Governing Board from office will be fully explained
- Members of the Governing Board will give due and careful consideration to the reasons given to remove the member of the Governing Board from office
- The member of the Governing Board whom it has been proposed to remove from the Governing Board will be given the opportunity to make a statement in response to the resolution to remove them from office

- Within 14 days of the first meeting, a second meeting must be held and an item specifying that the Governing Board will confirm their decision included on the agenda
- Any elected staff or parent member of the Governing Board who has been disqualified from their role and removed from office will be disqualified from serving as a Governor and holding office for a period of five years. This period is taken from the date immediately after the day they were disqualified from their elected role. Given the consequence of the five-year disqualification period, the Governing Boards power to remove an elected parent or staff members of the Governing Board will only be used in exceptional and serious circumstances which may include the following:
 - Serious misconduct
 - Repeated serious incompetence
 - Engagement in conduct which aims to undermine fundamental British values
 - Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the Governing Board
 - Actions that are significantly detrimental to the effective operation of TCAT and/or our schools

A member of the Governing Board who has been removed from the Governing Board has the right of appeal. The member of the Governing Board should exercise their right of appeal by writing to the Governance Professional or Clerk to the Local Governing Body as appropriate within 10 working days of their removal from the Governing Board, making clear the reasons for their appeal.

On receipt of an appeal, the Governing Board, at the appropriate level, will establish an independent appeal panel. The appeal panel will comprise a panel of three members of the Governing Board at the appropriate level and membership may include a governor from another school or an appropriate representative from the LA.

4. Monitoring and review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually by the Governing Board and any changes made will be communicated to all members of the Governing Board.

All members of the Governing Board are required to familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct as part of their induction programme.

The next scheduled review date for this code of conduct is August 31st, 2024.

Code of Conduct Individual Acknowledgement Form

Name	
Role on the Governing Board	

Please tick the appropriate box once you have read and understood the following documents	
Conduct for Learning (Behaviour) Policy	
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy	
Health and Safety Policy	
Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy	
Data Protection Policy	
Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure	
Complaints Policy and Procedures	
'Keeping children safe in education'	

I hereby acknowledge the terms detailed within the Governing Board Code of Conduct and agree to abide by this code whilst I am an acting member of the Governing Board. I understand that the role is of a voluntary nature and, therefore, I will not receive payment for my duties. The Governors' Allowances Policy sets out any pecuniary claims that can be made by members of the Governing Board whilst acting on behalf of TCAT or our schools in an official capacity.

Signature: _____

Date: _____