

**Cleves School**  
**Code of Practice**  
**For school trustees 2023/24**

This code sets out the expectations of, and commitment required from trustees in order for the Board of Trustees to carry out its work properly within the school and the community. Every trustee and associate member will sign it at the start of the school year (or on joining the Board of Trustees, if mid-year).

**The purpose of the Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The Board of Trustees aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school that provides all children with an excellent education, encourages high attainment and supports their well being.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, trustees must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and,
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

**The Board of Trustees:**

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
  - Determining the values, aims and objectives for the school;
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives;
  - Setting targets; and,
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy, which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework;
  - Progress towards targets;
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy; and,
  - The budget and the staffing structure.
- Ensures accountability by:
  - Signing off the school's self-evaluation report;
  - Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary;

- Holding the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school;
  - Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate;
  - Making available information to the community; and,
  - Overseeing and monitoring financial performance.
- Appoints and performance manages the Headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the Board of Trustees.

### **The role of a trustee**

In law the Board of Trustees is a corporate body, which means:

- No trustee can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full Board of Trustees;
- All trustees carry equal responsibility for decisions made; and,
- Although appointed through different routes (e.g. parents, staff, co-opted), the overriding concern of all trustees has to be the welfare of the children and the school as a whole.

### **General commitments**

- We understand the purpose of the Board of Trustees and the role of the Headteacher
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life (see appendix);
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Board of Trustees has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees when we have been specifically authorised to do so;
- We accept we have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer;
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately;
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Board of Trustees or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Board of Trustees meeting;
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools;
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and positive reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community outside of our role as trustees, and including on social media, will reflect this; and,
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Board of Trustees.

### **Personal Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy and we are committed to having the highest

expectations of ourselves and the Board of Trustees as a whole; We will familiarise ourselves with all relevant governance documents including Cleves Standing Orders.

- We will ensure that the Board of Trustees focuses on strategic issues of importance to the school;
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Board of Trustees, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups;
- If acting as directors, we will not go beyond our duties or act outside of the powers of authority conveyed on us, and acknowledge that were we to do so we could be held liable to the school and/or third parties;
- If acting as members of the trust body, we accept that we may be held responsible up to the limit in the articles of association, were the trust to go bankrupt;
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend we will explain in advance in full why we are unable to;
- We will read papers in advance of meetings and carry out agreed action points;
- We will get to know the school well and find appropriate opportunities to engage in the life of the school, e.g. by attending school events;
- We will arrange visits to school in advance with the staff, and in accordance with the framework established by the Board of Trustees and agreed with the Headteacher;
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake all relevant and necessary training, including ensuring we keep up to date;
- We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher; and,
- We will ensure that the Board of Trustees' performance is evaluated objectively and results acted upon.

## **Relationships**

- We will:
  - Do all we can to promote constructive working relationships within the GB;
  - Express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other trustees and will listen and respond respectfully to others' views;
  - Support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times;
  - Make our views known in an appropriate and timely manner, and then abide by collective decisions taken;
  - Answer queries from other trustees 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;
  - Seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community; and,
  - Welcome new trustees and help them to get up to speed.

## **Confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school (and will maintain this after leaving office);
- We will maintain confidentiality when discussions regarding school business arise outside a Board of Trustees meeting;
- We will not reveal the details of any Board of Trustees vote; and,
- We will not disclose what other trustees have said or how they have voted; and,
- We will be permitted to disclose confidential information regarding school business where: (i) the disclosure constitutes 'whistleblowing' to a governmental, supervisory or regulatory authority; or (ii) the disclosure is required by court, by a governmental, supervisory or regulatory authority or otherwise by law or regulation.

### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the Board of Trustees' business in the Register of Business Interests;
- We will declare any pecuniary interest – or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest affecting our ability to think only of the best interests of Cleves – in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time; and,
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

### **Emergency contact procedures**

- We agree to make available emergency contact information for ourselves and, in the case of an emergency, for this to be made available to services such as the police, fire service or the EFA.

### **Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the Board of Trustees will only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another trustee, such as the vice chair will investigate;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any trustee shall be raised at a meeting of the Board of Trustees, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of trustees, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the Board of Trustees; and,
- We are aware of the provisions of Cleves Articles of Association's relating to disqualifications from the role of school trustee.

### **Removal from Office**

- The Board of Trustees in determining whether to remove, rather than suspend a trustee will make reference to the *School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017* and statutory guidance issued in August 2017 in considering whether:
  - There have been repeated grounds for suspension
  - Serious misconduct has occurred which either threatens to bring the school, Board of Trustees or Governance into disrepute
  - There has been serious or repeated failure to contribute meaningfully to the effectiveness of governance at the school, such as non- attendance at meetings, not engaging in training or not participating in meetings.
  - They have engaged in conduct aimed at undermining British values.
  - The actions of the trustee are sufficiently detrimental and compromise the operational efficiency of the school.

Every Trustee will sign this code at the first Board of Trustees meeting of each school year.

***As trustees were holding virtual meetings due to COVID-19, it was agreed to confirm Trustees signatures electronically.***

**Undertaking:**

As a member of the Board of Trustees of Cleves School I will abide by the above statements. In particular I will always have the best interests and well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Board of Trustees, the Headteacher or staff.

<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Signature and date</b>
<b>Chris Hodges</b>	
<b>Susan Foster</b>	
<b>Doris Neville-Davies</b>	
<b>Elaine Jones</b>	
<b>Emma Bird</b>	
<b>Jim Graham</b>	
<b>Sarah Trinder</b>	
<b>Pete Matthew</b>	
<b>Francesca Pierce</b>	
<b>Sophie Matthews</b>	
<b>Amelia Au-Yeung</b>	
<b>Jenni Herriott</b>	
<b>Theresa Sherry</b>	
<b>Pippa Marks</b>	

Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023

## **Appendix: 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, or their friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.