



## **Code of Conduct for Academy Council Representatives**

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour and conduct expected of all Academy Council representatives.

### **The Academy Council**

The Academy Council is legally responsible for the conduct of the Multi Academy Trust with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

The Academy Council should:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved
- Provide challenge and hold the Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety
- Use performance management systems, including the performance management of the Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College to improve teaching, leadership and management
- Support and strengthen Multi Academy Trust leadership
- Contribute to the Multi Academy Trust self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- Engage with key stakeholders
- Ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the Multi Academy Trust are managed effectively
- Use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Core Functions of the Academy Council**

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 set out core functions which the Academy Council must strongly focus on and retain oversight of.

#### **1. Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Multi Academy Trust are clearly defined**

It is the job of the Academy Council to:

- Set the Multi Academy Trust's strategic framework
- Ensure the Multi Academy Trust has a long-term strategic vision
- Agree the strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the Multi Academy Trust
- Sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them
- Check on progress and review regularly their strategic framework for the Multi Academy Trust in the light of that progress.

#### **2. Ensuring that the Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the Multi Academy Trust**

The Academy Council is responsible for the appointment and performance management of the Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College. Part of their role is to support and strengthen the Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College leadership and to hold them to account for the performance of pupils and staff. This is particularly important in relation to the educational performance of the Multi Academy Trust.

#### **3. Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the Multi Academy Trust's financial resources**

The Academy Council is responsible for making sure the Multi Academy Trust's money is well spent. They should do this by ensuring they have at least one representative with specific skills and experience of financial matters.

**The Academy Council should play a strategic role and leave the running of the Multi Academy Trust to the Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College they have appointed. The Academy Council must not interfere in the day-to-day running of the Multi Academy Trust.**

## **Ways of Working**

- The way the Academy Council operates and organises itself should be kept under review.
- The Academy Council should consider how to use their powers to delegate functions and decisions to committees or individual representatives
- The Academy Council must review the establishment, terms of reference, constitution and membership of any committee of the Academy Council annually.
- The Academy Council must meet at least three times a year.
- The Executive Headteacher; Heads of Academies/College and Chairs should work together to ensure that meetings are well planned at appropriate intervals and that agendas are fit for purpose.
- The Academy Council must appoint a clerk to advise them on the nature of their functions and duties and ensure the Academy Council operates efficiently and effectively.

## **The Executive Headteacher & Head of Academies/College**

- The Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College responsibilities include the internal organisation, management and control of the Multi Academy Trust and the educational performance of the Multi Academy Trust.
- The Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College will deliver the aims of the Academy Council through the day-to-day management of the Multi Academy Trust, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy and the delivery of the curriculum.
- It is the Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College legal duty to provide the Academy Council with all the information they need to do their job well. This means they should help the Academy Council access the data published by the DfE and Ofsted. They should also provide regularly a wide range of other management information so that the Academy Council can monitor different aspects of life in the Multi Academy Trust throughout the year.
- The Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College must comply with any reasonable direction of the Academy Council.
- The Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College is accountable to the Academy Council for the performance of all his or her responsibilities.

## **The Chair**

- The Academy Council must appoint a Chair to lead and manage the Academy Council.
- The chair plays a crucial role in setting the culture of the Academy Council and is first among equals, but has no individual power.
- The Chair may only make decisions or act on behalf of the Academy Council if:
  - The Academy Council have delegated that decision to the Chair of Academy Council
  - The Chair is of the opinion that a delay in exercising a function would be detrimental to the Multi Academy Trust, anyone who works at the Multi Academy Trust or any pupil at the Multi Academy Trust or their parent.
- The Chair is the principle link between the Academy Council and the Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College. The Executive Headteacher; Head of Academies/College and Chair should meet regularly at mutually convenient times to discuss Multi Academy Trust matters and the Chair should be a critical friend by offering support, challenge and encouragement.
- The Chair works with the clerk to set Academy Council agendas and approves draft minutes of Academy Council meetings.

## **The Vice-Chair**

In the absence of a Chair of the Academy Council, the Vice-Chair will take on that role.

## **Chairs of Committees**

Chairs of committees work with the clerk to set committee meeting agendas and approve draft minutes for those meetings. They have responsibility for ensuring that if a function of the Academy

Council has been delegated to the committee or a function of the Academy Council has otherwise been exercised by the committee, it is reported to the Academy Council.

## Representatives

In law the Academy Council is a corporate body, which means that no representatives can act on her/his own without proper authority from the Academy Council. All representatives carry equal responsibility for decisions. If a function of the Academy Council has been delegated to an individual, the individual must report to the Academy Council in respect of any action taken or decision made.

The overriding concern of all representatives has to be the welfare of the Multi Academy Trust as a whole, regardless of the route by which they were appointed and the type of representative they are i.e. staff, parent, community, LA, foundation, co-opted.

For the Academy Council to carry out its role effectively, representatives must be prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously. They should:

- prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- make every effort to attend meetings promptly, regularly and for the full time
- take responsibility for their own learning, training and development as a representative

In addition they should:

- work as a member of a team at all times and be loyal to collective decisions made by the Academy Council
- recognise that all representatives have the same rights
- act in the best interests of the Multi Academy Trust at all times
- not do anything that might undermine the Academy Council statutory requirement to promote community cohesion
- respect confidentiality
- listen to and respect the views of others
- express their own views clearly and succinctly
- declare any conflicts of interest
- take their fair share of work/positions of responsibility
- know, understand and work within the prescribed regulatory framework
- report any evidence of fraud, corruption or misconduct to an appropriate person or Authority
- adhere to the seven principles of public life (below) originally published by the Nolan Committee
- ensure that communication undertaken via social networking sites is comparable to one to one interaction, meaning that all aspects of this code of conduct are taken account of when posting information, messages, pictures or video footage on-line.

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

As recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life 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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **Leadership** - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **The Agreement**

### **In General**

- a) We understand the purpose of the Academy Council and the role of the Executive Headteacher, Head of Academies/College, Chair, Vice, Chair and Chairs of Committees as set out above.
- b) We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life.
- c) We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Academy Council has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Academy Council when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- d) 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.
- e) We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- f) We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Academy Council or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Academy Council meeting.
- g) We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- h) We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our Multi Academy Trust and to promote community cohesion. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- i) In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the Multi Academy Trust we will follow the procedures established by the Academy Council.
- k) We understand that communication via social networking sites in a variety of formats is deemed comparable to one to one interaction for the purposes of this code of conduct.

### **Commitment**

- a) We acknowledge that accepting office as a representative of the Academy Council involves the commitment of time and energy.
- b) We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Academy Council, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups or as nominated representatives.
- c) We will prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand.
- d) We will make every effort to attend all meetings promptly, regularly and for the full time. Where we cannot, we will endeavour to explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
- e) We will get to know the Multi Academy Trust well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- f) Our visits to the Multi Academy Trust will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the representatives and agreed with the Executive Headteacher, Head of Academies/College.
- g) We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- h) We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Executive Headteacher, Head of Academies/College.

## **Relationships**

- a) We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- b) We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully. The Academy Council Representative chairing a meeting is responsible for ensuring appropriate conduct at all times, and the other representatives are responsible for supporting the Chair in that role.
- c) We are prepared to answer queries from other representatives 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.
- d) We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Executive Headteacher, Head of Academies/College, staff and parents, Shaw Education Trust, Local Authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

## **Confidentiality**

- a) 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.
- b) We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Multi Academy Council business arise outside an Academy Council body meeting.
- c) We will not reveal the details of any Academy Council Body vote.
- d) We will not reveal the details of discussions in Academy Council Body meetings or comments made by individual representatives at those meetings.

## **Conflicts of interest**

- a) We will record any pecuniary interest that we have in connection with the Academy Council Body's business in the Register of Business Interests.
- b) We will declare any personal or pecuniary interest in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

## **Implementation of this Code of Conduct**

- a) We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of conduct by any Academy Council representative shall be raised at a meeting of the Academy Council Body and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of representatives, shall be minuted.
- b) We understand that any representative whose conduct is minuted twice in twelve months shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute.
- c) We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003 which pertain to qualification and disqualification for the role of Academy Council representatives and grounds for suspension.

The Academy Council of the Multi Academy Trust adopted this code of conduct on

Date:.....



