Code of Conduct for Governors and Local Governing Bodies

This Code of Conduct sets out the behaviour and conduct expected of all school Governors and is based on the Governance Handbook. The Code of Conduct should be read alongside JTMAT's constitutional documents i.e. the articles of association. It is expected that all Governors will know, understand and work within the prescribed regulatory framework. They must comply with the updated General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. The code of conduct is anchored in the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life. It aligns with the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education which outlines principles that support ethical decision-making and challenge unethical behaviour

The Local Governing Body

The MAT Board is legally responsible for the conduct of its schools with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.

Once this code has been adopted, the Local Governing Body will agree to faithfully abide by it recognising and supporting the principles set out in the charity governance code.

The Governing Body will abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life as follows:

Selflessness:
We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity:
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 decision 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.

Objectivity:
We will act and take decision impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability:
We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness:
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 doing so.

Honesty:
We will be truthful.

Leadership:
We 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.

We will apply the highest standards and will:

1. Act within our powers

2.

In each school The Local Governing Body should:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction within that established by the MAT. Fulfilling its role and responsibilities as set out in JTMAT's scheme of delegation.
- Operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved
- Provide challenge and hold the Head of School 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 Head Teacher/Head of School (in conjunction with the MAT) to improve teaching, leadership and management
- Support and strengthen school leadership
- Contribute to the school's 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 school are managed effectively
- Use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.

Core Functions of the Governing Body

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

1. Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined

It is the job of the Governing Body to:

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

2. Ensuring that the Head Teacher/Head of School performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school

The Local Governing Body supports the MAT in discharging its responsibility for the appointment and performance management of the Head Teacher/Head of School. Part of their role is to support and strengthen the Head Teacher/Head of School's 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 school.

3. Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

The Local Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school's money is well spent. They should do this by ensuring they have at least one governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters.

The Local Governing Body should play a strategic role and leave the running of the school to the Head Teacher/Head of School. The Local Governing Body must not interfere in the day-to-day running of the school.

Ways of Working – see our Terms of Reference

The Seven Principles of Public Life

As recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life established by the then Prime Minister in October 1995, 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 Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.

1. Selflessness School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. Integrity School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. Objectivity School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. Accountability School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. Openness School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. Honesty School and college leaders should be truthful.
7. Leadership School and college leaders 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. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

a. **Trust**: *leaders are trustworthy and reliable*
We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.

b. **Wisdom**: *leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*
   We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.
c. **Kindness**: *leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*
   We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.
d. **Justice**: *leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*
   We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.
e. **Service**: *leaders are conscientious and dutiful*
   We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.
f. **Courage**: *leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*
   We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.
g. **Optimism**: *leaders are positive and encouraging*
   Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.

The Agreement

In General

a) We understand the purpose of the Local Governing Body and the role of the Head of School and 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 Trust has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Local Governing Body 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 on behalf of the MAT Board. We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
e) We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
f) We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Local Governing Body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Local Governing Body 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 school 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 school we will follow the procedures established by the MAT.
j) We will actively support and challenge the Head Teacher/Head of School and Leadership Team
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. We will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.

Commitment

a) We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor involves the commitment of time and energy.
b) We will fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring to right to work.
c) We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.
d) We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Local Governing Body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups or as nominated Governors.
e) We will prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand.
f) 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.

g) We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
h) Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Local Governing Body and agreed with the Head of School.
i) We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
j) We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Head of School.
k) When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor/trustee/academy committee member.
l) We accept that in interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
m) In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors/trustee/academy committee members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors GIAS (https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk)

Relationships

a) We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
b) We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing body and school staff 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.
c) We are prepared to answer queries from other Governors 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 Head of School, staff and parents, the MAT Board of Trustees, the 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 school business arise outside a Local Governing Body meeting.
c) We will not reveal the details of any Local Governing Body vote.
d) We will not reveal the details of discussions in Local Governing Body meetings or comments made by individual Governors at those meetings.
e) We will ensure that all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflicts of interest

a) We will record any pecuniary interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the Local Governing Body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
b) We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
c) We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of ay meeting should the situation arise.
d) We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

Ceasing to be a governor

We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

Implementation of this Code of Conduct

- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of conduct by any Governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Local Governing Body and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Governors, shall be minuted, and the MAT Board will be informed by the Clerk.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, the vice chair will investigate.
- We understand that any Governor whose conduct is minuted twice in twelve months shall be suspended for a period of six months from the date of the second minute, with the MAT Board being informed via the Clerk.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2013 which pertain to qualification and disqualification for the role of school Governor and grounds for suspension.

Accepted and signed on behalf of the The Local Governing Body by the Chair ……
On …….