

## **Code of Conduct**

### **We agree to abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:**

#### **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 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.

#### **Objectivity**

We will act and take decisions 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 so doing.

#### **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 focus on our four core governance functions:**

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding the Executive to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

### **We agree to:**

#### **Fulfil our role & responsibilities**

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our scheme of delegation.
3. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our school/s.
4. We agree to adhere to Trust policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
5. We will work collectively for the benefit of our Schools and Colleges.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
7. We will consider how our decisions may affect our Schools and Colleges and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.

The Eastern Education Group Trust Board agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and all governance members of the Trust will declare their commitment to the Code annually via GovernorHub.

9. Where decisions and actions conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life or may place pupils at risk, we will speak up and bring this to the attention of the relevant authorities.
10. We will only speak or act on behalf of the Trust if we have the authority to do so.
11. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
12. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
13. We will strive to uphold the Trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
14. We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

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

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the governance work of the Trust, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on Committees or working groups where required.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the Trust and its Schools and Colleges well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in their activities.
5. We will visit the Schools and Colleges and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe Trust protocol.
6. When visiting the Schools and Colleges in a personal capacity, we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

#### **Build and maintain relationships**

1. We will develop effective working relationships with the Executive, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governance members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each governance member's contributions are valued equally.
4. We will support the chair in their role of leading and ensuring appropriate conduct.

#### **Respect confidentiality**

1. We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, students or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any Trust vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

#### **Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent**

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the Trust's business, and these will be recorded in GovernorHub's declarations page (the register of business interests).
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the Trust's website.

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5. We will act in the best interests of the Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the Trust website.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get Information About Schools), some of which will be publicly available.

**Relationship with West Suffolk College and participation in the Eastern Education Group:**

1. We note the status of West Suffolk College as the sponsor of the Trust, under Multi-Academy Trust regulation and as a company member of the Trust.
2. We note the public benefit, charitable, collaboration arrangements (subject to appropriate review) with West Suffolk College, under the collaborative name the "*Eastern Education Group*", in accordance with the "*Collaboration Agreement*".
3. We note the basis of the Eastern Education Group collaboration is the common educational, public benefit, charitable objects of the two charities and the coincidence of interest arising from those common objects.
4. We note that under DfE/ESFA regulation, the two charities are related parties for the purpose of "related party transactions".
5. We note the Trust Board's fundamental obligation with sovereign governance authority and responsibility in relation to the Trust, to act reasonably and prudently in the best interests of the Trust at all times.
6. We note the potential for conflict of interest to arise between the Trust and West Suffolk College (notwithstanding the over-arching coincidence of interest).
7. We note, if and when such a conflict of interest may be present, the potential for individuals with roles in both the Trust and West Suffolk College, as charity trustees, or otherwise, to be in a conflict of loyalty position in relation to the two charities (notwithstanding the over-arching coincidence of interest).

**Management of potential conflict of interest in the relationship with West Suffolk College:**

1. We shall ensure that the Trust always takes decisions on the basis that they are reasonable and prudent in the best interests of the Trust and that each governance member acts on that basis.
2. We shall ensure the Trust complies with the regulation applicable to related party transactions.
3. We shall ensure that we are vigilant in relation to the potential for conflict of interest/loyalty to arise in the relationship with West Suffolk College and that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure Trust executives and other Trust representatives are similarly alert.
4. We shall ensure that there are sufficient Trust Board members, who are not also charity trustees of West Suffolk College, to constitute a quorum of the Trust Board if a situation arose where the individuals who are trustees of both charities absent themselves from decision making in accordance with conflict of interest management.
5. We, after due consideration of the Charity Commission guidance, agree that operating joint Committees with West Suffolk College is in furtherance to our charitable objects and is in the best interests of the College and Trust (as legally distinct charities). We accept the intra-Group interests of all appointed joint Committee members and permit all appointed joint Committee members to participate in discussions and votes.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

**Adopted by:** Eastern Education Group Trust Board on 11 July 2024  
**Signed:** Elton D'Souza as Chair of the Trust Board

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