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# **Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust**

# **Code of Conduct for Local Board Members**

**Type:** 2

**Level:** 1

**Date Adopted:** 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014

**Review Date:** November 2015



This Code, to which all current Local Board Members subscribe, summarises their key responsibilities and gives guidance on how these should be exercised in practice.

### **Why the Local Board exists**

The Main Board of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) has established a committee, known as a Local Board, in each of the Academies run by DBAT in order to assist the Main Board in the discharge of their responsibilities.

### **Responsibilities of the Local Board**

The Local Board plays a vital role in ensuring the good governance of the Academy in which they serve and supports the Main Board in the delivery of their three core strategic functions, namely:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Principal to account for the educational performance of the Academy and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Academy and making sure its money is well spent

The details of the specific responsibilities delegated to the Local Board are set out in a written terms of reference known as the 'Scheme of Delegation'.

### **Overriding principles**

Whilst giving due weight to the legal responsibilities delegated to the Local Board, it is as important that these are exercised in accordance with the values of DBAT and (where applicable) the Christian ethos of each Academy and this consideration underpins the text of what follows.

Local Board Members are also expected to uphold the seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in public life (May 1996):

- **selflessness** - take decisions solely based on the vision and values of DBAT and the Academy
- **integrity** - not be compromised in carrying duties by outside organisations or personal interest
- **objectivity** - remain impartial and ensure choices are made on merit alone
- **accountability** - be responsible for decisions and actions
- **openness** - give reasons for actions wherever possible and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands
- **honesty** - declare any private interests and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest
- **leadership** - promote these principles by example

Additionally, each Local Board Member shall promote equality and diversity in all aspects of the Academy's governance and when carrying out any of their functions.

### **Local Board Members agree to the following:**

#### Duties and responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the Main Board, the Local Board and the Principal
- We are committed to and uphold the Object, values, purpose, ethos and objectives (including equal opportunities) of DBAT and the Academy
- We fulfil our responsibilities and duties as Local Board Members in good faith and act at all times in the best interests of DBAT and the Academy
- We act within the scope of any authority given to us by the Main Board, by law, by regulations

- or by the Scheme of Delegation
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the values and reputation of DBAT and the Academy and our actions within the Academy and the local community will reflect this
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately at all times
- We will secure the proper and effective use of the Academy's property

#### Decision making

- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Local Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Local Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so
- We prepare for Local Board meetings by reading Local Board papers in advance and attending meetings, training sessions and other relevant events
- We use reasonable skill and care when making decisions
- We will act fairly, without prejudice and with respect and justice
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Local Board or its delegated agents and we will not speak against majority decisions or reveal the details of any Local Board vote outside of the Local Board meeting

#### Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a Local Board Member involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Local Board and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to
- We will get to know the Academy well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in Academy activities
- We will visit the Academy, with all visits to the Academy arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Local Board and agreed with the Principal
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training

#### Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other Local Board Members
- We will support the Chair of the Local Board in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- We are prepared to answer queries from other Local Board Members 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
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Main Board, Principal, staff and parents, other relevant agencies and the community

- In so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer

#### Confidentiality

- We will respect the confidentiality of information that we may have access to as a Local Board Member and shall keep confidential the affairs of the Local Board
- We shall observe complete confidentiality, both inside or outside the Academy, when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Academy business arise outside a Local Board meeting
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Local Board and shall respond with respect, fairness and justice

#### Conflicts of interest

- We will act personally at all times, and not as a representative of any group even if elected to the Local Board
- We will declare all interests as required by the Scheme of Delegation and will record any pecuniary, personal or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) in the Register of Business Interests
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise
- If any conflict arises, we shall offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time and shall not vote on any such matter
- We shall inform the clerk to the Local Board as soon as possible should any changes to our circumstances occur during our term as a Local Board Member, including if we are no longer eligible to be a Local Board Member or there are any changes to the interests which have been declared

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

Every Local Board Member is under a duty to report any breach of this Code or any grounds for believing that a breach of the Code has occurred to the Chair of the Local Board (and if the allegation is about the Chair, to the Vice-Chair).

Failing to report a breach of the Code is itself a breach of this Code.

Any breach of this Code will be treated extremely seriously by both the Local Board and the Main Board and may result in the suspension or removal of a Local Board Member in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

In the event of a breach of this Code each Local Board Member agrees to participate fully in any investigations procedure instigated by the Local Board and/or the Main Board and to abide by any sanction that may be imposed on them for such breach.

#### **Review**

The Main Board will be responsible for ensuring that this Code of Conduct is kept under review.