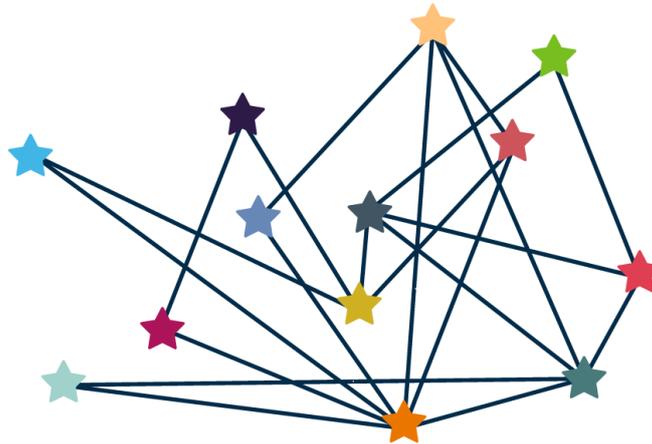


ULT Code of Conduct for Members, Trustees and Local Governing Boards



UTTOXETER
LEARNING TRUST
INSPIRED TEACHING
INSPIRING CHILDREN

Approved: Spring 2020

Due for review: Spring 2021

Code of Conduct for Members, Trustees and Local School Governors

Introduction:

This code sets out the expectations on, and commitment required from, members, trustees and local school governors in order for the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT) to properly carry out its work within the schools and the wider community. Each has their own roles and responsibilities but all are expected to respect and uphold the following 7 Principles of Public Life as defined by the Nolan Committee:

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.

The Code of Conduct sets out in particular the expectations on trustees and local governors who both have key responsibilities to ensure the effective and successful day-to-day running of the ULT and its schools.

The Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the articles of association, trustee committee terms of reference and the agreed scheme of delegation to local governing boards. The code does not override the content of any of those documents.

Trustees are responsible for the following three core governance functions:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the ULT.
- Hold the chief executive officer (CEO) to account for the educational performance of the ULT's schools and their pupils.
- Oversee the financial performance of the ULT and make sure that its money is well spent.

In addition to the core governance functions, trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the ULT, in accordance with the provisions set out in the articles of association and funding agreement. They are also legally responsible for all statutory functions and the performance of all schools in the ULT.

The ULT Trust Board has delegated some of its school level monitoring and scrutinising functions to local school governing boards who promote stakeholder engagement and are the point of consultation and representation.

The local governing board for each school is responsible for the following strategic functions:

- Establishing the school's strategic direction by:
 - setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values and objectives for the school, whilst mindful of the ULT's vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets linking to the Trust School Improvement Policy
 - meeting statutory duties
- Ensuring accountability by:
 - Supporting the CEO in the appointment of the headteacher
 - monitoring educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
 - performance managing the headteacher (with the CEO)
 - engaging with stakeholders
 - contributing to school self-evaluation
- Overseeing school financial performance by:
 - setting the allocated budget, within any guidance set by the ULT trust board
 - monitoring spending against the budget
 - ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
 - ensuring risks to the school are managed

As individuals on the trust board or local school governing board we agree to the following:

Roles and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the trust board/local governing board and the role of the executive leaders.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the trust board/local governing board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the trust board/local governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the trust board/local governing board. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the trust board/governing board meeting.

- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for ULT/school staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the ULT and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the ULT/school and wider community. Our actions within the ULT/school and the wider community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the trust board/local governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders.
- We will guarantee that all relevant health and safety and safeguarding procedures are implemented.
- We will guarantee that provision is in place for those students who have additional needs.
- We will evaluate the effective use of spend specifically allocated to support students with additional needs as well as those in receipt of the pupil premium.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the trust board/local governing board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the ULT and schools.
- We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the ULT/schools and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the ULT/school rules and policies and the procedures of the trust board/local governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our trustee/governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current ULT/school policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the ULT/school.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a trustee/local governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the trust board/local governing 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 do so.
- We will get to know the ULT/school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in ULT/school activities.
- We will visit the school(s), with all visits arranged in advance with the CEO/headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the trust board/local governing board.
- When visiting a school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a trustee/local governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board/local governing board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of trustee/local governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the ULT/school website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to local governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors ('Get Information about Schools').

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 members, other trustees/local governors, the clerk to the trust board/local governing board and ULT/school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the trust board/local governing board chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other trustees/local governing 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 ULT, CEO, headteachers, staff, parents, the local authority, other relevant agencies and the wider community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of ULT/school staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding ULT/school business arise outside a trust board/local governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any trust board/local governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflicts of Interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the trust board/local governing board 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.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the ULT/school website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the ULT/school as a whole and not as a representative of any group.

Ceasing to be a Trustee/Local Governor

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

Breaches of this Code of Conduct:

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the trust board/local governing board chair and the chair will investigate; the trust board/local governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the trust board/local governing board chair that we believe has breached this code, another trustee/local governing board member, such as the vice chair, will investigate.

Role of ULT Members:

ULT members hold the trust board to account for the effective governance of the ULT. They have no day-to-day role in running the ULT, but members will be expected to observe and respect the principles underpinning the Code.

The role of members in running the ULT can be summarised as follows:

