



Local Schools Board Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is a mandatory document for all Vine Schools Trust Local Schools Board's and must be agreed by all members, signed and implemented with no amendments.

**"I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit"
(John 15:5)**

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from members of Local Schools Boards in order for governance to properly be carried within the school, the community and on behalf of the Vine Schools Trust. For more detail on the specific activities of the Local Schools Board review the Terms of Reference and Governance Scheme of Delegation.

1. Core Strategic Functions:

- 1.1. Maintaining the historic Christian Character of the Vine and the School as part of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust with:
 - 1.1.1. Reference to the Church of England Vision for Education, “Deeply Christian, Serving the common good”
 - 1.1.2. Reference to the Vision and Values of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust.
 - 1.1.3. Reference to the historic foundation and locally agreed vision and values of each school that is part of the ‘local schools board’s remit.
 - 1.1.4. Reference to the Vision of the Diocese of Chelmsford Board of Education.
- 1.2. Maintaining the strategic direction of each school, by:
 - 1.2.1. upholding and modeling the Christian distinctiveness of each school including links with the linked church(es) along with the requirement to ensure the promotion of British Values.
 - 1.2.2. ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction set the Vine Trust Board along with the individual school vision with the context of the Church of England’s Vision for Education;
 - 1.2.3. Engaging with the Community Board in each school and other stakeholders.
 - 1.2.4. be aware of and support the wellbeing of the Executive Headteacher / headteacher(s), staff and children in each school;
 - 1.2.5. Meeting all the responsibilities in the Local Schools Board Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation as well any other statutory duties.

2. Ensuring effective accountability and a focus on School Improvement, by:

- 2.1. Members of the Local Schools Board assisting the Vine Trust Board in the appointing of the Executive Headteacher /Headteacher.
- 2.2. Reviewing progress towards the School’s Improvement Plans and targets.
- 2.3. The chair of the Local Schools Board assisting with the performance management of the Executive Headteacher / Headteacher.
- 2.4. Contributing to the strategic improvement plan and self-evaluation.

3. Ensuring that safeguarding is a priority, by:

- 3.1. Supporting the safeguarding member in their role
- 3.2. Accessing safeguarding training
- 3.3. Being confident in understanding the Child Protection Policy and the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education document.

4. Ensuring financial probity, by:

- 4.1. Ensuring a budget has been provided by the Vine Trust for each school.
- 4.2. Supporting the headteacher in responding to budget concerns.
- 4.3. Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed and recorded on the risk register.

5. As individuals on one of the above bodies we agree to the following:

- 5.1. Fulfil our roles & responsibilities according to the Terms of Reference
- 5.2. We understand the purpose of the Local Schools Board to work on behalf of the Vine Schools Trust Board and to assist them in their accountability role
- 5.3. We understand the role of the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher.
- 5.4. We accept that all members have equal status the central concern must be the welfare of the Vine Schools Trust and each school as a Church of England school.
- 5.5. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Trust Board/Local Schools Board has given us delegated authority to do so and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Trust Board/Local Schools Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 5.6. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Trust Board/Local Board/Local Governing Body /Executive Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Trust Board/Local Board/Local Governing Body /Executive Board meeting.
- 5.7. 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.
- 5.8. We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- 5.9. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other academies, schools and/or trusts.
- 5.10. We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust, other Vine academies, the Diocese of Chelmsford and our schools. Our actions within the Trust, schools and the local community will reflect this.
- 5.11. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the Vine Schools Trust /schools we will follow the procedures established by the Vine Schools Trust Board.
- 5.12. We will actively support and challenge the senior executive officers (CEO/Executive Headteacher/Headteacher).

6. Commitment

- 6.1. We acknowledge that accepting office as a member of a Local Schools Board involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 6.2. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Local Schools Board and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- 6.3. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- 6.4. We will get to know the Vine Schools Trust and our schools well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in appropriate activities.

- 6.5. We will when necessary visit the schools, with all visits arranged in advance with the member of staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Vine Schools Trust and agreed with the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher.
- 6.6. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant training.
- 6.7. We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the Local Schools Board, and any body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's websites.
- 6.8. In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to members will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database (Getting Information About Schools or its successor).
- 6.9. As well as adhering to the Nolan Principles (see below) the Local Schools Board will ensure that Christian values underpin the relationships between governors and others. These core values based on the Beatitudes may be summarised as follows:
 - Faithfulness and integrity
 - Dignity and compassion
 - Humility and gentleness
 - Truth and justice
 - Forgiveness and mercy
 - Purity and holiness
 - Tolerance and peace
 - Service and sacrifice

7. Relationships

- 7.1. Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ and striving to develop effective working relationships with all stakeholders we:
- 7.2. Will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- 7.3. Will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other members and the clerk.
- 7.4. Will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- 7.5. Are prepared to answer queries from other 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.
- 7.6. Will seek to develop effective working relationships with other stakeholders.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1. We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or, outside our schools.
- 8.2. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding Vine Schools Trust and its school business arise outside of a meeting.
- 8.3. We will not reveal the details of any Local Schools Board vote
- 8.4. We will only communicate with outside bodies, including the linked Church, matters agreed to be communicated at a meeting of the Local Schools Board or in the published minutes.

- 8.5. We will at all times adhere to the school Social Media Policy.
- 8.6. We will only speak to the media when delegated by the governance board to and only on advice (from the Vine Schools Trust CEO, Diocese and/or Local Authority Press office.

9. Conflicts of interest

- 9.1. 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 Local Schools 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 school's websites.
- 9.2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- 9.3. We will act in the best interests of the Vine Schools Trust and its schools as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if appointed to the Board, avoiding any possibility of bringing the Trust and Schools into disrepute.

10. Breach of this code of conduct

- 10.1. If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate and make a recommendation to the Vine Schools Trust Board who will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- 10.2. Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, the Vine Schools Trust CEO or their representative will investigate.

11. Nolan Principles (on the next page)

This Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles is accepted by a decision of the.....
Local Schools Board on

Date:

Signed by Chair on behalf of the Local Schools Board:

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12. Nolan Principles

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 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.

7 'Nolan Principles' of public life

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions 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.