Code of Conduct
For Local Governing Committees
Academic Year 2026/2027

This code sets out the expectations and commitment required from the local governing committees (LGC) to properly carry out its work within the school, the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), and the wider community.

The Local Governing Committee is a committee of the South Downs Learning Trust and, as such, has clear Terms of Reference and delegations as detailed in the Scheme of Delegation.

We will abide by the 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 apply the highest standards and will:

1. act within our powers
2. promote the success of the trust
3. exercise independent judgement
4. exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence
5. avoid conflicts of interest
6. not accept benefits from third parties
7. declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

We will focus on our core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

The Local Governing Committee has the following responsibilities:

1. Contributing to and fulfilling the vision and ethos of the school and South Downs Learning Trust, with regard to the aims and ambitions for their pupils.
2. Monitoring and reviewing the School Development Plan for the school in conjunction with the school leadership team and executive team and contributing to school self-evaluation. The LGC is focussed on the school's performance and achieving sustained school improvement and having regard to any locally agreed priorities identified by the South Downs Learning Trust.
3. Acting as a critical friend to the school leadership team; being ready to challenge and hold school leaders to account for the performance of the school.
4. Reporting to the South Downs Learning Trust when required.
5. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
6. We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our scheme of delegation.
7. We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures.
8. We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust.
9. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
10. We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust and local community.
11. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
12. 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.
13. We will only speak or act on behalf of the trust board if we have the authority to do so.
14. When making or responding to complaints, we will follow the established procedures.
15. We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
16. We will have regard to our responsibilities under the Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

17. We will act as the local ambassadors for our trust.
18. We will avoid, as far as possible becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the LGC.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role:

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board 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 school/s well and welcome opportunities to be involved in school activities.
5. We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. When visiting or communicating with a school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
8. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.
9. We will read our SDLT e mails and respond to any requests as soon as possible within a best endeavours response time of 48 hours.

Build and maintain relationships:

1. We will develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local communities.
2. We will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.
3. We will establish effective working relationships with trustees.
4. We will express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
5. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
6. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.
7. Where a personal relationship between a governor and any member of staff has recently existed or is in the course of developing or presently exists, that governor must not become or continue to be involved in appraisal, promotion or any other management activity or process involving the other party.

Digital and Environmental Responsibility:

1. We will promote awareness of digital governance and IT security standards, in line with the Academy Trust Handbook 2025.
2. We will support the trust's commitment to sustainability by encouraging environmentally responsible practices and acknowledging the role of the sustainability lead.
3. We will uphold cybersecurity best practices and acknowledge that the trust must not pay ransomware demands, as outlined in the Academy Trust Handbook 2025.

Disclosure of Criminal Convictions

1. Governors must immediately disclose to the Governance Professional any criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands, or warnings received after their initial DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.
2. This obligation is essential to uphold safeguarding standards and maintain the integrity and trust placed in the board.
3. Failure to disclose such information may be considered a serious breach of this Code and could result in formal sanctions, including removal from the board.

Change of Personal Details Notification

All trustees and governors are required to notify the Governance Professional to the Governing Body immediately of any changes to their personal details, including:

1. Change of home address
2. Change of email address or phone number
3. Change in employment or professional status (if relevant to declarations)

Respect confidentiality:

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of the trust when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.
5. We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside of a meeting.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent:

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 LGC 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 and any subsequent vote.
2. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the trust's website.
3. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
4. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the trust website.
5. 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.

Ceasing to be a governor

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

Breach of this code of conduct:

1. If we understand this code of conduct has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair of Trustees, and they will investigate; the LGC will only use the suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
2. Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another member of the board of Trustees such as the Vice Chair will investigate.
3. We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Thank you for reviewing the Code of Conduct for Local Governing Committees

Please sign and date below to confirm your commitment to uphold the principles and expectations outlined in the document. Completed forms should be returned to Governance Professional **Lisa Davis**, via on E mail at Ldavis@sdlt.org.uk

I agree to abide by the South Downs Learning Trust Code of Conduct

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____