

Aylesbury Vale Academy Trust

Code of Conduct for the Governing Board

2023/24

The Governing Board has the following three strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for Aylesbury Vale Academy
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the Academy Principal
- Monitoring the educational performance of the Academy and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the Academy Principal
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

We recognise the following as the fourth core function of governance:

Ensure that other key players with a stake in the organisation get their voices heard by:

- Gathering the views of pupils, parents and staff and reporting on the results.
- Reaching out to the school's wider community and inviting them to play their part.
- Using the views of stakeholders to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy, policies and procedures

As individuals on the Governing Board, we agree to the following:

Role and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the Board and its strategic role.
- We understand how the role of the Board differs from and works with others including the Academy Principal.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Board meeting.
- 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.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our Academy. Our actions within the Academy and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints, we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the Academy Principal and Senior Leaders.

- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the Board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the senior leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- We agree to adhere to the Academy's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational 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 Academy.
- 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 Governing Board.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a Governor/Trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on any 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 school activities.
- We will visit the Academy (both primary and secondary phases), with all visits arranged in advance with the Academy Principal and/or Primary Headteacher (as appropriate) and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a 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 Governing Board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the Academy's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to Governors / Trustees 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 other Governors, the Clerk to the Governing Board and Academy staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities' any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life (see annex) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other 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 executive leaders, staff and parents, the Aylesbury Vale Academy Trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.

- We will exercise the greatest care at all times when discussions regarding academy business arise outside a Governing Board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any 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 Governing Board's 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 Academy's 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 school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Governing Board.

Ceasing to be a governor and academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a Governor /Trustee leaves office

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the 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 Chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing board member, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.

Adopted by the Governing Board of Aylesbury Vale Academy on 08 November 2023.

Annex

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.