

Code of Conduct

As the Corporation, we agree to abide by the Seven Nolan 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 focus on our four core governance functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding the Executive to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

As Governor we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our scheme of delegation.
3. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of the College.
4. We agree to adhere to College's policies and procedures as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
5. We will work collectively for the benefit of the College.
6. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
7. We will consider how our decisions may affect the College and local community.
8. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.

West Suffolk College's Corporation agree that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and it will be endorsed by the full Corporation.

9. 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.
10. We will only speak or act on behalf of the Corporation if we have the authority to do so.
11. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
12. When making or responding to complaints we will follow the established procedures.
13. We will strive to uphold the College's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
14. We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

1. We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the Corporation, 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 College well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in College activities.
5. We will visit the College and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe College protocol.
6. When visiting the College in a personal capacity, we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
7. We will participate in induction training and take responsibility for developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

1. We will develop effective working relationships with the Executive, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local community.
2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
3. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each Corporation member's contributions are valued equally.
4. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect confidentiality

1. We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of College when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, students or families.
2. We will not reveal the details of any Corporation vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

1. We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the Corporation's business, and these will be recorded in GovernorHub's declarations page (the register of business interests).
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the College's website.

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5. We will act in the best interests of the College as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
6. We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Corporation, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the College website.
7. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded in the DfE/ESFA's national database, some of which will be publicly available.

Relationship with Suffolk Academies Trust and participation in the Eastern Education Group

1. We note the status of the College as the sponsor of the Suffolk Academies Trust (the "Trust"), under Multi-Academy Trust regulation and as a company member of the Trust.
2. We note the public benefit, charitable, collaboration arrangements (subject to appropriate review) with the Trust, under the collaborative name the "*Eastern Education Group*", in accordance with the "*Collaboration Agreement*".
3. We note the basis of the Eastern Education Group collaboration is the common educational, public benefit, charitable objects of the two charities and the coincidence of interest arising from those common objects.
4. We note that under DfE/ESFA regulation, the two charities are related parties for the purpose of "related party transactions".
5. We note our fundamental obligation, as the Corporation, with sovereign governance authority and responsibility in relation to the College, to act reasonably and prudently in the best interests of the College at all times.
6. We note the potential for conflict of interest to arise between the College and the Trust (notwithstanding the over-arching coincidence of interest).
7. We note, if and when such a conflict of interest may be present, the potential for individuals with roles in both the College and the Trust, as charity trustees, or otherwise, to be in a conflict of loyalty position in relation to the two charities (notwithstanding the over-arching coincidence of interest).

Management of potential conflict of interest in the relationship with Suffolk Academies Trust:

1. We shall ensure that the Corporation always takes decisions on the basis that they are reasonable and prudent in the best interests of the College and that each Corporation member acts on that basis.
2. We shall ensure the College supports the Trust in the Trust's compliance with the regulation applicable to related party transactions.
3. We shall ensure that, as the Corporation, we are vigilant in relation to the potential for conflict of interest/loyalty to arise in the relationship with the Trust and that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure College executives and other College representatives are similarly alert.
4. We shall ensure that there are sufficient Corporation members, who are not also charity trustees of the Trust, to constitute a quorum of the Corporation if a situation arose where the individuals who are trustees of both charities absent themselves from decision making in accordance with conflict of interest management.
5. We, after due consideration of the Charity Commission guidance, agree that operating joint Committees with the Trust is in furtherance to our charitable objects and is in the best interests of the College and Trust (as legally distinct charities). We accept the intra-Group interests of all appointed joint Committee members and permit all appointed joint Committee members to participate in discussions and votes.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by: West Suffolk College Corporation on 13 December 2023

Signed: Elton D'Souza as Chair of the Corporation

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