



# CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

## **POLICY :**

### **Code of Conduct for Trustees and Governors**

**Author: Governance Operations Director**

**Date: July 2021**

**Review Body: Trust Board**

**Date Adopted: 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2021**

**Review Date: Summer 2022**

Please note that this policy is one of the suite of CAT Policies for School Standards Boards to acknowledge.

## CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

### Code of Conduct for Trustees and Governors

Our policies refer to Senior Leaders. This can refer to Executive Headteacher, Headteacher or Head of School.

The local governing bodies (known as School Standards Boards) and/or trust board have the following core functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school/trust
- Agreeing the school/trust improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing Senior Leaders, in line with the Scheme of Delegation
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher and EHT, in line with the Scheme of Delegation
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school and trust self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget, in line with the Scheme of Delegation
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Assisting the Trust in identifying risks to the organisation and ensuring that these are managed and mitigated as far as reasonably practicable in their school.

**As individuals on the Trust Board and/or School Standards Boards (SSBs) we agree to the following:**

#### Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the Trust Board and/or SSB and the role of the Senior Leaders and Chief Executive Officer.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Trust Board and/or SSB has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Trust Board/SSB when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Trust Board/SSB or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Trust board/SSB 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 government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community, the Trust and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school and the Trust. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.

- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the Trust or school we will follow the procedures established by the trust board and the SSB.
- We will actively support and challenge the senior leaders and/or Chief Executive Officer.

### Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor and/or trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the trust board/SSB, 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.
- As governors, we will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training, including induction training.
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the SSB and/or trust board, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's/trust's website.

### School Visits

- The SSB will set up an annual programme of visits that enables each governor to fulfil their strategic responsibilities.
- We will provide feedback on the agreed focus, in a way agreed by the SSB.
- The purpose of the visit, its potential benefit to teachers, governors and pupils:-
  - Getting to know the staff
  - Getting to know the pupils
  - To become familiar with the working environment of the school
  - To understand the constraints within which teachers have to work
  - To become familiar with the jargon of education at a practical level
  - To observe policies and schemes of work being implemented
  - To recognise different teaching styles
  - To offer support
  - To ensure more informed decision making at governing body level
- What is a visit NOT about?
  - Not about making judgments about quality of teaching
  - Not about pursuing personal interests
  - Not about arriving with preconceived ideas
  - Not about checking on the progress of their own children
  - Not about monopolising teachers' time
- Our schools, including the governors, pride themselves on their relaxed, informal family atmosphere. We believe this is most conducive to learning. To ensure staff feel comfortable and secure when governors visit, we would expect that the following ground rules are adhered to.
  - Governors should not be assigned to year groups where their children are learners

- Visits should be **pre-arranged** with the Head Teacher or Head of School
- Governors should always sign in and out of the building, according to school procedures
- An appropriate identification badge should be worn for the duration of visits
- Any class and school guidelines must be observed
- Confidentiality must be ensured
- Governors are expected to be courteous and impartial in dealing with groups and individuals
- The purpose must be clear and agreed with the Head Teacher or Head of School before the visit
- Governors who visit schools and attend lessons to gain a better understanding of the learning process will benefit from discussing the purpose of the lesson and the context in which it is being delivered.
- Governors are always welcome to join staff at break times in the staffroom. Our staff rooms are places of relaxation where staff can “unload” the events of the day, in an informal and supportive atmosphere. Governors should be sensitive to the completely confidential nature of all that is discussed in the staffroom.

### 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/trustees.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors/trustees 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 senior leaders and/or Chief Executive Officer, staff and parents, 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 prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a trust board/SSB meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any trust board/SSB vote.
- We will not disclose to any outside individual/organisation any information obtained during school visits without the approval of the Head Teacher or Head of School.
- We will ensure that all documentation remains confidential at all times. Information held electronically will be held on secure devices with pin/password protection.
- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee leaves office.
- We understand and will abide by the requirements laid down in the Protocol for Virtual Meetings.

### Conflicts of interest and Transparency

- 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’s/SSB’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 school's/trust'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 and/or trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body/trust board.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board/SSB, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the schools' website.
- We accept that information relating to trustees/governors will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information About Schools), some of which will be publicly available.

#### Maintaining neutrality

- In carrying out our duties, we will not promote the interests of one particular political party, religion or group as we serve the whole community.
- We will, at all times, adhere to The Seven Principles of Public Life, as listed below.

#### 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.

### 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 trust board/SSB 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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

All Trustees and Governors will sign annually to confirm that they have read and will abide by this Code of Conduct.

### Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been reviewed with the equality impact considerations as laid down in the Trust's Equality Policy.