

Code of Conduct for Rainham Mark Education Trust and its Academy Local Governing Bodies

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from members, trustees and governors in order for the Trust and local governing bodies to properly carry out their work within the schools/academies and the community.

Rainham Mark Education Trust has the following core strategic functions in each school/academy:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school, taking account of the overall strategy set by the Trust Board
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the headteacher/head of school, in partnership with the Chair of the Trust
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the headteacher/head of school
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Agreeing and setting the overall budget with the Trust Board
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

The trustees of the Trust have overall responsibility and ultimate decision making authority for all the work of Rainham Mark Education Trust, including the establishing and running of schools. The Scheme of Delegation outlines the delegation of the responsibilities to the local governing body

As members, trustees and local governors we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of The Trust and of the local governing bodies and the role of the headteachers/head of school.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when The Trust and the local governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of The Trust or the local governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by The Trust and the local governing body 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 government 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 school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by The Trust.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher/head of school.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a trustee or governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Trust or governing board, 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.

- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the headteacher/head of school.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

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.
- 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 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 headteacher/head of school, 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 governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in the Register of Interests, keeping our record updated and confirming it annually. 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 Interests will be published on the school's website, unless with prior agreement that a particular matter remain outside of the public domain.
- 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.

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 governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

We will serve as governors in accordance with **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.

Adopted by Rainham Mark Education Trust from September 2016.

Signed (Governor/Trustee/Member) Date