



Board of Trustees Code of Practice

North Star Community Trust

March 2026

Due for review March 2028

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1. As Trustees we agree to the following: -

1.1. Role and responsibilities

- 1.1.1. We will ensure the Trust complies with organisation law and any other relevant legislation or regulations and pursues its Objects as defined in the Articles of Association
- 1.1.2. We will ensure that the Trust applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its Objects.
- 1.1.3. We will be familiar with the trust's strategic priorities and its charitable objectives.
- 1.1.4. We will protect and manage the property of the Trust and to ensure the proper investment of the Trust's funds
- 1.1.5. We will appreciate the difference between strategic and operational decisions
- 1.1.6. We will abide by the equal opportunities policy adopted by the Trust from time to time.
- 1.1.7. We understand the purpose of the Trustee Board and the role of the Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.1.8. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Trust Board has given individuals delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees individually when specifically authorised to do so (and if approached by outside agencies / individuals with regard to Trust matters, should inform the CEO / Chair to ensure formal discussion at a Board and / or committee meeting).
- 1.1.9. We accept that the Board of Trustees has collective responsibility for all decisions made by either it or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside of the board or committee meetings.
- 1.1.10. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice and, in so far as the Trustee Board body has responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer. Similarly we will not ask or encourage Trust employees to act in any way that would conflict with their own codes of conduct, role and responsibilities.
- 1.1.11. We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- 1.1.12. We recognise our responsibility to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of the Trust's governance and operations.

- 1.1.13. As Trustees of the Board we will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other academies or schools.
- 1.1.14. We will always be mindful of the Board of Trustees responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our academies. Our actions within the Trust and the local community will reflect this.
- 1.1.15. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the Trust, we will contribute to ensuring the board follows its procedures.
- 1.1.16. We will contribute to ensuring the Board actively supports and challenges Chief Executive Officer.
- 1.1.17. We will ensure that risk is managed appropriately and that the Trust has effective systems of internal control.
- 1.1.18. We will regularly keep up to date with the changes requirements or rules set out in its governing document, funding agreement or the Academy Trust Handbook.

1.2. Commitment

- 1.2.1. We acknowledge that accepting office as a Trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- 1.2.2. We will actively contribute to the Trustee Board's role in giving strategic direction to the Chief Executive Officer, including setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- 1.2.3. We will act with honesty, frankness and objectivity taking decisions impartially, fairly and on merit using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias, including challenging the status quo
- 1.2.4. We will represent the good name, ethos and values of the Trust and its associated academies and represent them at functions and meetings as appropriate.
- 1.2.5. We will familiarise ourselves with and uphold the *Seven Principles of Public Life*, as set out by the Committee of Standards in Public Life.
- 1.2.6. We will connect with and meaningfully engage with stakeholders to inform decision making and ensure the trust is anchored in the needs of the communities it serves.

- 1.2.7. We will make full effort to attend all Trust Board and committee meetings reading papers in advance. Where attendance is not possible, we will notify the Clerk or Chair well in advance as non-attendance may affect meeting quorum. Continued non-attendance without reasonable explanation may result in the Board reviewing our continued membership in line with governance best practice.
- 1.2.8. We will get to know the academies well and respond to opportunities to involve both ourselves and the Board of Trustees with academy activities.
- 1.2.9. We are committed to acquiring and maintaining the knowledge and skills required to be effective Trustees. We will undertake ongoing training and development, including any identified by the skills audits
- 1.2.10. We will visit the academies, with all visits arranged in advance with the Chief Executive Officer and appropriate staff.
- 1.2.11. We will provide appropriate challenge to ensure that change is in the best interests of children, young people, and the trust overall.
- 1.2.12. We will use any specific knowledge or experience to help the Trustee Board reach sound decisions. This will involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussion, focussing on key issues and providing advice and guidance requested by the Trustee Board on new initiatives or other issues relevant to the area of the Trust's work in which we have special expertise, knowledge or skills.
- 1.2.13. We will utilise our personal networks to further the Trust's aims and objectives and to assist with fundraising where appropriate.
- 1.2.14. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development and will undertake relevant skill audit assessments.
- 1.2.15. We accept that in the interests of open government, information with regard to our roles as Trustee including details of any business or pecuniary interests will be published on the academy's website and notification of our appointment passed to the DfE and Companies House.

Areas of focus

- 1.2.16. Safeguarding: We will maintain oversight on promoting the welfare of children at all times and developing a culture of safeguarding across the Trust ensuring it adheres to statutory safeguarding responsibilities including safer recruitment practices and reporting mechanisms.
- 1.2.17. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: We lead on maintaining a focus on providing an inclusive education through the curriculum, student outcomes, accessibility, and inclusive pastoral support.
- 1.2.18. Educational outcomes: We will lead on robust effective oversight of the educational performance of the trust.
- 1.2.19. Finance: We will Lead on robust effective oversight of the appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance.
- 1.2.20. Staffing and performance: We will Leads on effective oversight of staffing and performance across the trust and ensuring the voice of staff is heard by the board.

1.3. Relationships

- 1.3.1. We will strive to work as part of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- 1.3.2. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications with trustees, members, governors and staff, both inside and outside of meetings.
- 1.3.3. We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- 1.3.4. We are prepared to answer queries from other Trustees in relation to their delegated functions or from academy governors via the *Academy Advisory Committee Chairs Meeting* or CEO / Governance Team.
- 1.3.5. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Chief Executive Officer, Head teachers, governors, staff, parents, the community, other relevant agencies, regulators and educational providers. We acknowledge that requests to or visits with Trust staff will often require advance notice so that they may be factored into workloads

and we will be mindful of wellbeing, encouraging open discussion, feedback, and respectful challenge among Trustees and senior leaders.

- 1.3.6. We will ensure transparent communication about governance decisions and the nature of relationships, in line with the Academy Trust Handbook's requirements for governance transparency.

1.4. Conflicts of interest

- 1.4.1. We will declare any conflict of interest whilst carrying out any duty as a Trustee. We will record any pecuniary, or business interest (including those related to people I am connected with) that we have in connection with the Trustee 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.
- 1.4.2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- 1.4.3. We will declare any conflict of interest should it arise whilst carrying out any duty of a Trustee.
- 1.4.4. We will act in the best interests of the Trust as a whole and not as a representative of any group.
- 1.4.5. We understand the importance of providing, declaring and appropriately managing conflicts of interest, related party relationships and transactions in accordance with DfE governance expectations, the Academy Trust Handbook 2025 and Charity Commission guidance.
- 1.4.6. We will ensure that actions taken to manage any conflicts of interest are appropriately documented, including the nature of the conflict, the steps taken to manage or mitigate it, and the rationale for any decisions made.
- 1.4.7. 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 school's website and we will update the Trust's governance team if any business pecuniary interests change.

- 1.4.8. We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database of governors (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

1.5. Breach of this code of practice

- 1.5.1. If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the Trustee Board should only use suspension / removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- 1.5.2. Should it be that we believe the Chair has breached this code another Trustee, such as the Vice Chair, will investigate.
- 1.5.3. We understand that any allegation of material breach of this code of practice by any Trustee shall be raised at a meeting of the Trustee Board and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Trustees, shall be recorded in minutes and can lead to consideration of suspension from the Trustee Board. Where appropriate the Trustee will have the opportunity to respond to concerns before final action is taken
- 1.5.4. The process will remain confidential and proportionate.

1.6. Confidentiality

- 1.6.1. We understand that the Trust Board of Trustees has a duty to comply with the requirements of UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and will maintain strict confidentiality in all matters deemed sensitive or involving specific staff or pupils / parents. We will also exercise the utmost prudence when discussing Trust matters outside formal meetings.
- 1.6.2. We will not reveal the details of any trustee board or committee meeting vote.
- 1.6.3. We will hold confidential within the Trustee Board or committee meeting, all discussions and deliberations that may occur in the process of arriving at decisions. Whilst we understand that the role of Trustee is voluntary, we also accept that certain aspects with regard to finance and confidentiality are bound by statute
- 1.6.4. We understand that the position we hold on the Trustee Board or committees is separate from that of other positions I may hold at the Trust. Our responsibilities to the Trustee

Board or committees remain in effect whilst performing the duties of any other positions we may hold.

- 1.6.5. Revealing or disseminating confidential information received whilst a Trustee Board member without prior authorisation from the chair shall be considered cause for removal from the board.
- 1.6.6. Upon the conclusion or termination of the role as Trustee, we will return or securely destroy all documents and other materials in our possession obtained during the term as a member of the Board of Trustees. This may relate to electronic, paper or other medium.
- 1.6.7. These agreements and obligations shall survive the termination or conclusion of our term on the board of trustees.

2. Declaration

- 2.1.** Trustees are asked to sign and return the final page of this document.

NSCT Trustee Board Code of Practice

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.

Declaration

I have read and understood the Trust Board Code of Practice. As a Trustee, I will always have the achievement and well-being of the children and the reputation of North Star Community Trust at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the trust, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the Trust, the Chief Executive Officer its academy advisory committees or staff.

Signature

Print name

Role

Date