

BORDEN GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Trustee Code of Conduct

Review Responsibility: Board of Trustees

Frequency of Review: 1 year

Date Approved: Oct 25 (updated Feb 26)

Approved By: Board of Trustees

Next Review Due By: Oct 26

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Vision/Ethos Statement

BORDEN TRUST VISION

Borden Grammar school provides a supportive and inclusive academic environment. We nurture our students to become courageous, creative and resilient in their response to challenge and to be respectful and kind to others. Our ethos develops a drive for achievement and personal development, allowing our young people to grow; reaching their full potential and so leading the way to a better future.

BORDEN TRUST VALUES

1. **Ethical Leadership** - a strong belief in justice with the courage to make all decisions in a kind, honest and transparent way
2. **Accountability and service** - using evidence to prioritise the long term interests of the school and the community it serves
3. **Kind and caring** - Always considering the wellbeing, values and success of students, parents and staff in the school community
4. **Aspiring and inspiring** - Aspiring for the best, inspiring others to get there and being optimistic about the future
5. **Integrity and resilience** - Willing to act independently with integrity and showing resilience in the face of adversity

This Code should be read in conjunction with the Academy Trust Governance Guide, Terms of Reference (ToR's), relevant law and for academies their articles of association, master funding agreement, agreed scheme of delegation and Academy Trust Handbook.

Once approved by the Board of Trustees, this Code of Conduct will apply to all trust board trustees and academy trust members.

Failure by any individual trustee to agree to the Code of Conduct will be counted as a breach of the Code.

The Board of Trustees has adopted the following code of conduct:

Purpose of the Board of Trustees

The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. The Board of Trustees is the key strategic decision-making body in the school, setting the strategic framework and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties. High quality effective and ethical governance is key to success in our school and for the future of our pupils. Ensuring the best possible outcomes is at the heart of our Board of Trustees strategic role; every child has the right to reach their full potential.

Academy trust boards have the following core purposes of governance

Strategic leadership - the board defines the **trust vision** for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the trust's culture and sets and champions the trust strategy including determining what, if any, governance functions are delegated to the local tier

Accountability and assurance - the board has **robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the academy trust**, including the provision of education, pupil welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping their estate safe and well maintained

Strategic engagement - the board has **strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders**. The board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement

Collectively as a board we agree the following:

- **Organisational purpose** - our trust board is clear about the charitable purpose of the school/trust and ensures these are being delivered effectively and sustainably.
- **Leadership** - our school is headed by an effective trust board that provides strategic leadership in line with the school strategic aims, values and culture including the values and virtues to preserve the religious character of the school and a commitment to fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.
- Our trust board bases its effectiveness on the six key features of effective governance: **strategic leadership, accountability; people** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity; structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities; compliance with statutory and contractual requirement; and evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.
- Our trust board bases its effectiveness on the academy features of trust board effectiveness: The features of trust board effectiveness are **culture & engagement, strategy, non-executive leadership, accountability, executive leadership and compliance**.
- **Integrity** - our trust board acts with integrity, adopting values and creating a culture which helps achieve the schools/trust charitable purpose. Our trust board is aware of the importance of the public and stakeholder confidence in our school/trust and trustees undertake their duties, accordingly, abiding by the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education including the Seven Principles of Public Life (see appendix 1) including avoiding placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, trustees must declare and resolve openly **any actual or perceived conflict of interest and relationships**, with our trust board, managing any risk appropriately.
- **Decision making, risk and control** - our trust board makes sure that its decision-making processes follow our required statutory procedures, which act solely in the interest of pupils, are informed, timely, impartial and fair, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias, and that effective delegation, control and risk assessment, and appropriate management systems are set up and monitored. Our trust board assesses the risks attached to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare by abiding and role modelling the schools'/trust culture to encourage pupils to respect other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- **Board effectiveness** - our trust board works as an effective collective team, using the appropriate balance of skills, experience, backgrounds and knowledge to make informed decisions.
- **Diversity** - our trust board's approach to diversity supports its effectiveness, leadership and provides sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable robust decision making.
- **Openness and accountability** - our trust board leads the school/trust in being transparent and accountable. Our trust board and school are open in its working, particularly to ensure transparency of decision-making.

As individuals on the Board of Trustees, we agree the following:

Role and Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the trust board, the skillset required to perform our core roles, and any individual delegated functions, and the role of the headteacher.
- We accept and abide by the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Schools which incorporates The Seven Principles of Public Life (see appendix 1).
- We each as individuals and as the Board of Trustees, agree at the earliest opportunity to 'call-out' the use of unacceptable words, language, actions or behaviours e.g. within the context of a meeting - at the time within the meeting we agree to seek an explanation/clarification/rectification/accountability.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the trust board has given its delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the trust board when we have been specifically authorised to do so, reporting back accordingly to the trust board.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the trust board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Board of Trustees meeting.
- When making decisions we will act objectively, impartially and fairly. We will use the best evidence, and without discrimination or bias, be objective when exercising judgement and analysis solely for the good of the pupils.
- When communicating formally within our trustee role, we will ensure any comments made reflect the school policy even if they differ from our personal views.
- 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 transparent 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 school. Our actions within the school and the wider local community will reflect this.
- We will promote and demonstrate tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and British values.
- We will demonstrate a professional attitude in all our undertakings as a trustee.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the policies and procedures established by the Board of Trustees, acting without discrimination or bias.
- We will actively support the head teacher and senior leadership team but challenge their expectations and respectfully hold them to account for school performance.
- We understand, accept, and respect the differences between the strategic trust board role and the staff day to day operational and management roles, avoiding actions that may undermine these arrangements.
- We understand, will adhere to, and respect the differences between the strategic trustee role and any other which we may undertake within the school as a parent, professional or volunteer.
- We agree to adhere to the school rules and the policies and procedures we approve as a Board of Trustees as set out by the relevant governing documents and law, including complying within the

required timeframe to apply for an enhanced DBS check and Section 128 check, in academies-chair suitability check and any subsequent checks thereafter as part of the ongoing school safeguarding procedures.

- We agree to abide by the school e-safety protocols for social media and artificial intelligence (AI) when communicating in a private capacity will strive to uphold the reputation of the school and ensure compliance with this Trustee Code of Conduct Policy.
- We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal or professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We agree to abide by the requirements of any contracts (such as The Education People, Governor Services Training package or The Clerking Service Specification) procured by the Board of Trustees.
- We agree to use our governance portal and school email addresses for all governance communication both within and outside the school organisation. We recognise this will protect the school from any potential breach of data protection.
- We will communicate publicly about school or governance matters only when authorised to do so by the Chair of Trustees and in a way that upholds the collective position of the Board of Trustees.
- We will ensure that any content we create or share publicly — including videos, social media posts or commentary — reflects our governance role appropriately and is made only with the prior approval of the Chair of Trustees where it references trustee duties, school business or school premises.
- We will exercise careful judgement in any personal online activity to ensure our posts cannot reasonably be linked back to the school in a way that could impact its reputation or cause confusion about our capacity as trustees.
- We will remain aware that our trustee identity may be publicly discoverable and will therefore communicate online in ways that reflect the high standards expected of holders of public office, particularly when discussing sensitive topics.

We understand that this Trustee Code of Conduct Policy operates alongside the school's Online Safety Policy, and we will follow the requirements of both. Where either policy sets a higher standard, we will meet the stricter requirement.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will **each** involve ourselves actively in the work of the Board of Trustees, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service in committees, monitoring pairs, monitoring activities, panels or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings, including any held virtually or a hybrid option, and where we cannot attend, send apologies and explain in advance why we are unable to and in accordance with our protocols, where possible will send questions for consideration.
- We will attend meetings being fully prepared, having read all papers in advance, being ready to make a positive contribution and in accordance with our agreed protocols, where possible will send questions in advance.
- 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 arranged in advance in accordance with the Trustees Monitoring Visits Policy and schedule as established annually by the Board of Trustees.
- We will demonstrate commitment to our individual and collective needs for induction which **must** include safeguarding training and will undertake relevant training to develop the knowledge and skills required to effectively perform our core and individual delegated functions and keep them up to date.

- We will ensure collectively that all trustees comply with the requirements for statutory training for safeguarding, PREVENT duty and any others identified in the Governance Guides or Keeping Children Safe in Education, including safeguarding training at local Induction.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Board of Trustees, attendance records, relevant business, familial, friendship, relationship and pecuniary interests, diversity data (see [Maintained / Academy](#) DfE guidance for the publication of diversity data), category of trustee and the body responsible for appointing us, will be published on the school's website until 12 months after our service has ended in line with the DfE 'What [Maintained schools / Academies](#) must publish online' requirements.
- We will abide by the trust board agreed Staff Code of Conduct Policy, regarding behaviours and dress code when visiting the school.
- In the interest of transparency, we will commit to declaring at meetings and updating our pecuniary, familial, friendship, relationship and business interests as soon as possible.
- We will abide by [UK GDPR, data protection](#) and the DfE/LA [data retention](#) information documentation

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 trustees, the clerk/governance professional to the Board of Trustees and all school staff.
- We each as individuals and as trust board, agree at the earliest opportunity to 'call-out' the use of unacceptable words, language, actions or behaviours e.g. within the context of a meeting - at the time within the meeting we agree to seek an explanation/clarification/rectification/ accountability.
- We will always support the clerk/governance professional in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at and between meetings.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other trust 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 headteacher staff and parents, the trust, and other relevant agencies and the wider community.
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- We will maintain clear professional boundaries online and will use only the school's agreed governance channels for any communication with pupils, parents or members of the school community.
- We will foster constructive, respectful relationships by avoiding any digital or social-media-based interactions that bypass or conflict with formal governance processes.

Social Media

- We will abide by the requirements of the school's social media, artificial intelligence (AI) and Authorised Users Protocols (AUP) policies
- We will ensure that we only record, film, photograph or produce content on school premises when it is directly linked to our governance responsibilities and has been formally approved in advance by both the Chair of Trustees and the Headteacher.
- We will ensure that any reference to our trustee role in public or personal online spaces is made only where this has been expressly authorised by the Chair of Trustees and is fully aligned with the agreed communications approach of the Board of Trustees.
- We will ensure that all pupils, parents and members of the public are directed to the school's official communication channels for concerns or complaints, and that we maintain appropriate professional boundaries by not using personal social media platforms to receive or manage such contact.

Confidentiality

- We will ensure we abide by the protocols of our virtual meeting policy and processes to ensure our attendance enables the confidential conditions required.
- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside and outside school.
- We will continue to recognise and honour the commitments made in this code when visiting the school in a personal capacity (ie, as a parent or carer, volunteer)
- We will always exercise the greatest prudence when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a Board of Trustees meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any trustee board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential documentation including any held electronically, is securely stored, and disposed of appropriately in accordance with our data protection policy and procedure, the LA/trust document retention schedule for schools, associated to the DfE best practise document, and being mindful of the UK GDPR legislation requirements.
- We will use school email accounts for all email communication in our trustee role, for communications both within and outside of the trust board.

Conflicts of Interest

- We will record any familial, pecuniary, friendship, relationship or other business interest (including those pertaining to people we are related to, connected to or friendly with, and those governing in other schools) in the Register of Business Interests and also declare these at all relevant meetings. If any familial, friendship, pecuniary, business or relationship conflict perceived or real arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time and accept the trust board's decision on managing the conflict.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- We will declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise, such as supporting the school with any operational element.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected or appointed by them to the trust board.
- We will use personal social media responsibly and with due regard to how it reflects on our governance role, ensuring our online activity does not create — or appear to create — a conflict with our duties as trustees.

We recognise this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, trustees will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school, its pupils, and their role in holding public office.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair of Trustees for investigation and reporting back to the Board of Trustees.
- Should it be the Chair of Trustees that we believe has breached this code, the issue should be raised with the vice chair for investigation.
- In certain circumstances, e.g., tainting, it may be more appropriate for another member of the trust board or an appointed independent investigator to undertake the investigation, then report back to the Board of Trustees.
- The trust board will only use removal (ensuring statutory guidance, procedures and regulations are followed) as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways. Removal will be used where serious misconduct has taken place.

- We will uphold this Code in all aspects of our conduct, including online behaviour, and recognise that personal social media activity is subject to the same expectations of professionalism and integrity as our offline actions.
- We will support appropriate investigation into any online conduct that may fall short of this Code.

Annual Trustee Declaration

I declare that I am not disqualified from serving as a school trustee (or associate member) in that I do not breach any of the circumstances in which a trustee (or associate member) is disqualified from standing for election, being appointed or continuing in office:

Qualifications and disqualifications (regulation 17 and Schedule 4 to the Regulations)

Grounds for disqualification fall into three broad categories:

- general grounds
- grounds that apply to particular categories of trustee; and
- grounds that arise because of particular failings or actions on the part of the trustee.

All the grounds for disqualification apply also to associate members except that associate members can be registered pupils at the school and can be under 18.

General grounds

Registered pupils cannot be trustees.

A trustee must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment.

A person cannot hold more than one trustee post at the same school at the same time.

Grounds that apply to particular categories of trustee

A person is disqualified from being a parent trustee if they are an elected member of the LA or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours (i.e., for more than one-third of the hours of a full-time equivalent) in any consecutive twelve-month period at the time of election or appointment.

A person is disqualified from being a Local Authority trustee if they are eligible to be a staff trustee at the school. The Local Authority may also have restrictions on potential candidates. Please check the criteria list for the Local Authority trustee positions.

A person is disqualified from being a partnership trustee if they are:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school
- eligible to be a staff trustee at the school
- an elected member of the Local Authority; or
- employed by the Local Authority in connection with its education functions.

Grounds that arise because of particular failings or actions on the part of the trustee

A person is disqualified from being a trustee of a particular school if they have failed to attend the meetings of the Trust Board of that school for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the Board of Trustees. This does not apply to the headteacher or to foundation trustees appointed by virtue of their office.

A foundation, Local Authority, co-opted or partnership trustee at the school who is disqualified for failing to attend meetings is only disqualified from being a trustee of any category at the school during the twelve-month period starting on the date on which they were disqualified.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a trustee of a school if, in summary, that person:

- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; an interim bankruptcy restrictions order; debt relief restrictions order; an interim debt relief restrictions order; or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced
- is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; a disqualification order under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order)

- has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- has been removed from office as an elected trustee within the last five years
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a trustee or since becoming a trustee.
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a trustee.
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years ending with the date immediately preceding appointment/election or since appointment or election as a trustee
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

Anyone proposed or serving as a trustee who is disqualified for one of these reasons must notify the clerk to the Board of Trustees.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

The trust board/chair **must** make sure the following are carried out on members, trustees and local governors with delegated responsibilities in accordance with the latest version of the Academy Trust Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

- Apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate.
- A section 128 direction check.
- Checks to confirm their right to work in the UK.
- Any other checks deemed necessary where the individual has lived or worked outside the UK.

For trust chairs that are newly appointed as the Chair of Trustees or have not previously had a suitability check completed on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education in relation to this role, they must apply for a suitability check from the Department for Education.

I have agreed to an application being made for an enhanced criminal record certificate, section 128 check and any other checks deemed necessary e.g. for academies, requirements for Companies House. I agree to abide by the above Trustee Code of Conduct Policy and know of no reason from the above disqualification criteria for not continuing to hold the office of trustee.

Failure by any individual trustee to agree to this Trustee Code of Conduct Policy will be counted as a breach of the code.

I understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions including removal from the Board of Trustees as a last resort.

Signed*: _____ Date: _____

***acceptance of this Trustee Code of Conduct Policy should be done on GovernorHub via 'Confirmations'**

Appendix 1 - The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

SELFLESSNESS | School and college leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.

INTEGRITY | School and college leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.

OBJECTIVITY | School and college leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.

ACCOUNTABILITY | School and college leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

OPENNESS | School and college leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

HONESTY | School and college leaders should be truthful.

LEADERSHIP | School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do.

Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

TRUST | leaders are trustworthy and reliable

We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.

WISDOM | leaders use experience, knowledge and insight

We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

KINDNESS | leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper

We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.

JUSTICE | leaders are fair and work for the good of all children

We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.

SERVICE | leaders are conscientious and dutiful

We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.

COURAGE | leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people

We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.

OPTIMISM | leaders are positive and encouraging

Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.



FRAMEWORK FOR
ETHICAL LEADERSHIP
IN EDUCATION