Vine Schools Governance Code of Conduct

September 2025

Purpose:

- The Vine Schools Trust Governance Code of Conduct is to set and maintain the high standards of conduct that we expect all those involved in Governance roles across The Trust to uphold.
- **The Vine Vision and Values (**Empowering all to flourish, Playing our part in the community, Developing faith rooted in God's love, Delivering an ambitious curriculum and Celebrating uniqueness) are integral to the work of our governance community and are encapsulated in this code.
- The Code will enable each Board, Committee and Governor to successfully fulfill their roles and responsibilities for the benefit of the wider trust, pupils, and communities.
- This document will enable us to hold each other to account and support each other in our roles.

Scope:

- The Governance Code of Conduct applies to all those who complete a Governance role within the Trust: Member, Trustee, Governor and any related committee members.
- The Code of Conduct should be read alongside other relevant governance documents and policies e.g. Terms of Reference, Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.
- The Governance Code of Conduct adheres to and incorporates the **Nolan Seven Principles of Public Duty** – Honesty, Integrity, Selflessness, Objectivity, Leadership, Accountability and Openness.
- In addition, Trustees agree to follow the seven principles in the **Charity Governance code:** 1. Organisational purpose, 2. Leadership, 3. Integrity, 4. Decision-making, risk and control, 5. Board effectiveness, 6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and 7. Openness and accountability.
- Potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and any breach could lead to formal sanctions.
- The Governance Code of Conduct will be reviewed and signed annually, via Governor Hub.

The Governance Code of Conduct – By signing this conduct we agree to: -

Strategically

- abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Duty
- follow the Charity Governance Code (Trustees and Members)
- be mindful that our role is strategic and to focus on our core purpose rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- act within our powers and solely in terms of the public interest.

- fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our Trust Scheme of Delegation.
- develop, share and live the Vison and Values of the Vine Schools Trust.
- adhere to all Trust and School policies and procedures, and the procedures of Governance responsibilities as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, the Trusts constitutional documents and funding agreement.
- work collectively for the benefit of the Trust, School, Pupils and Families we serve.
- fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring or right to work checks.
- engage with, listen to and act upon the views of our stakeholders.
- fulfil responsibilities under The Equality Act and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything we do.
- uphold fundamental British Values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Decision Making

- make decisions based on the principles of administrative law – being lawful, rational, reasonable and fair.
- not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends.
- 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.
- accept collective responsibility for all decisions made.
- consider carefully the impact of decisions made on the School, Trust and wider community.
- act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, understanding that financial management and decision-making will be scrutinized and audited.

Commitment

- participate in Induction, Safeguarding and GDPR training.
- continue to develop skills, knowledge and experience in support of the role by networking and accessing relevant training throughout the year.
- become an active participant of the board, committee fulfilling agreed roles and responsibilities.
- make every effort to attend all meetings and on rare occasions explain in advance why we are unable to.
- arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- support board self-evaluation and development.
- get to know the School/s well and welcome opportunities to be involved in School /Trust wide activities.
- complete any agreed allocated monitoring or governance activities in a timely manner (for example, making arrangements with members of staff in advance).

- report back findings following any training, monitoring or governor activities to the board/committee and seek actions where necessary.
- ask questions, challenge and hold to account.

Behaviours

- build and maintain effective, respectful working relationships within and across the trust as well as in our school communities.
- respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities, sector bodies and other trusts.
- act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, without prejudice.
- uphold the Trust's reputation in all communications and interactions.
- respect Schools as places of work for staff and children and act appropriately when conducting visits or interacting with colleagues.
- create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- ask questions and express views openly, courteously and respectfully.
- respect confidentiality, at all times, both inside and outside of the meetings, and after the end of the term of office.
- keep the details of any governing board vote confidential.
- only speak or act on behalf of the trust / Governance board if we have the authority to do so.
- avoid conflicts of interest and declare any gifts (recording on the gifts and hospitality register).
- support each other in our roles and ensure high standards are maintained.
- be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Compliance

- understand the importance of and requirements for safeguarding our pupils and agreeing to adhere to all Trust and School safeguarding policies.
- follow the Vine GDPR Governance Guidelines, including the appropriate use of Governor Hub and DCVST emails for all governance related work.
- be transparent in the declaration of any conflicts of interest or loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, at least annually via Governor Hub.
- declare any changes in personal circumstances that may affect the ability to be a Governor e.g. bankruptcy, criminal conviction.
- relevant governance information to be published on the Trust and School website. This includes business and pecuniary interests, role, category of Governor/Trustee, the body responsible for appointing, full name, date of appointment, term of office and attendance records.
- governance information about individuals to be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available.

- relevant Trustee information being published on Companies House.

Note:

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.

Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns should we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Where it is suspected or reported that a Member, Trustee or Governor has breached the code of conduct, or there is cause for concern about an individual's conduct the Chair will investigate and discuss it with the individual in a timely manner.

A serious breach of the code of conduct may result in the suspension or removal of the individual from their role by the Vine Trust Board.