



Governance Code of Conduct

This policy applies to all Governors, Members & Trustees of the Bonitas Multi-Academy Trust

Date last reviewed	Summer 2025
Review period	Annually
Date of next review	Summer 2026
Owner	Chair of Trustees
Approved by	Board of Trustees
Date approved	July 2025
Associated documents/information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Protection Policy

Code of Conduct

Herein: 'Governor' means any Member of the Trust, Trustee, non-Trustee member of a Trust committee or panel, local governor or non-governor member of a local governing body committee or panel. 'Governing body' means the local governing body, in relation to local governors and non-governor members of local governing body committees; OR the Board of Trustees, in relation to Members, Trustees or non-Trustee members of a committee of the Board. 'Trust' means the Bonitas Multi-Academy Trust. 'Headteacher' means the headteacher or principal of the school or CEO of the Trust, as appropriate.

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and Trustees in order for the governing body and the Trust to properly carry out its work within its school and the community.

Once this code has been adopted, all board members agree to faithfully abide by it. Trustees agree to follow the charity governance code, those governing at local level will recognise and support the principles set out in the charity governance code:

<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/>

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law, articles of association and agreed scheme of delegation.

We will abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

Selflessness

We will act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

We will avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence us in our work. We will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

We will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions and will submit ourselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

We will 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.

Honesty

We will be truthful.

Leadership

We will exhibit these principles in our own behaviour. We will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

We will apply the highest standards and will:

- act within our powers
- promote the success of the trust
- exercise independent judgement
- exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
- avoid conflicts of interest

- not accept benefits from third parties
- declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

We will focus on our core purpose:

Strategic leadership:

- Defining a vision; ensuring clarity of the vision, values, and objectives for the schools
- Fostering a culture
- Championing the strategy
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability and assurance:

- Providing robust and effective oversight of operations and performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
- Monitoring the educational performance of the schools and progress towards agreed targets
- Engaging with stakeholders and ensuring their voices are heard
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

Engagement:

- Strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders

As individuals we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities as set out in our scheme of delegation

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will respect the role of the headteacher and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our trust.
- We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures.
- We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring or right to work checks.
- We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust.
- We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust and local community.
- We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
- 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.
- We will only speak or act on behalf of the trust board if we have the authority to do so.
- We will act as ambassadors for our trust

- **Trustees:** We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints, we will follow the established procedures.
- We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media), and will not engage in public criticism or debate about the trust, its schools, staff, or governance matters on any platform.
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Demonstrate our commitment to the role

- We will involve ourselves actively in the work of the board and accept our fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or working groups where required.
- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of time and energy.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- Where attendance at a meeting is virtual we will observe the Bonitas Trust Virtual Meeting Protocol.
- We will get to know the school/s well and welcome opportunities to be involved in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol. We understand that visits are for monitoring and engagement purposes and not for formal lesson observation unless explicitly agreed as part of the monitoring role.
- When visiting a school in a personal capacity (for example, as a parent or carer), we will continue to honour the commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Build and maintain relationships

- We will develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local communities.
- **Those governing at local level:** We will champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders.
- **Those governing at local level:** We will establish effective working relationships with trustees.
- **Trustees:** We will engage with and be accountable to those governing at local level.
- **Trustees:** We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities, sector bodies and other trusts.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally.
- We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

Respect Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside of the trust when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, pupils or families.
- We will use our allocated school email address for all electronic correspondence relating to governance and ensure that confidential correspondence, is not shared or forwarded to unauthorised recipients. We will ensure that email accounts used for governance are secure and password-protected in line with data protection requirements.
- We will use AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) with caution. We acknowledge that AI may assist with drafting or research, but that it must not be used to process personal data, confidential or sensitive material unless this use is compliant with Trust policies and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). We recognise that AI-generated content may be inaccurate, biased or incomplete, and must always be reviewed and verified before use in any decision-making. We noted that the DfE guidance highlights the need for responsible AI use in education, especially with regard to safeguarding, fairness, and data protection. We accept that misuse that compromises confidentiality or governance standards, may breach this Code of Conduct.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

Conflicts of interest

- We will declare any business, personal or other interest that we have in connection with the board's business, and these will be recorded in the Register of Business Interests.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
- If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the trust's website.
- We will act as a trustee/academy committee member (governor); not as a representative of any group.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the trust board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor/trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the trust website.
- We accept that information relating to board members will be collected and recorded on the DfE's national database (Get information about schools), some of which will be publicly available

Breach of this code of conduct

- We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.
- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue for investigation; suspension/removal will only be used as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

- Should it be a chair that we believe to have breached this code, another trust governor will be asked to investigate.

Approved by Bonitas Trust Board 14 July 2025.

The Bonitas Board of Trustees agrees that this code of conduct will be reviewed annually, upon significant changes to the law and policy or as needed and adopted by all who govern.