**We agree to follow the** [**charity governance code**](https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/front-page)

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.

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**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.

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We will apply the highest standards and will:

1. act within our powers
2. promote the success of the trust
3. exercise independent judgement
4. exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
5. avoid conflicts of interest
6. not accept benefits from third parties
7. declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

We will focus on our core purpose:

1. strategic leadership: defining a vision, fostering a culture and championing the strategy
2. accountability and assurance: providing robust and effective oversight of operations and performance
3. engagement: strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders

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As individuals, we agree to:

### **Fulfil our role & responsibilities**

1. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core purpose rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
2. We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our [scheme of delegation](https://app.governorhub.com/g/lifemultiacademytrustboard/docs/635250e224f11795756fb974).
3. We will develop, share and live the ethos and values of our trust.
4. We agree to adhere to trust policies and procedures.
5. We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring or right to work checks.
6. We will work collectively for the benefit of the trust.
7. We will be candid but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
8. We will consider how our decisions may affect the trust and local community.
9. We will stand by the decisions that we make as a collective.
10. 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.
11. We will only speak or act on behalf of the trust board if we have the authority to do so.
12. We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
13. When making or responding to complaints, we will follow the established procedures.
14. We will strive to uphold the trust’s reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
15. We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

### **Demonstrate our commitment to the role**

1. 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.
2. We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
3. We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
4. We will get to know the school/s well and welcome opportunities to be involved in school activities.
5. We will visit the school/s and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
6. 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.
7. 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**

1. We will develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents and other relevant stakeholders from our local communities.
2. We will engage with and be accountable to those governing at local level.
3. We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities, sector bodies and other trusts.
4. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings.
5. We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member’s contributions are valued equally.
6. We will support the chair in their role of leading the board and ensuring appropriate conduct.

### **Respect confidentiality**

1. 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.
2. We will not reveal the details of any Trust board vote.
3. We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
4. We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

### **Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent**

1. 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.](https://app.governorhub.com/g/lifemultiacademytrustboard/docs/62eb7b6f1558cd197fd23a0a)
2. We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise.
3. 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.
4. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the trust’s website.
5. We will act as a trustee, not as a representative of any group.
6. 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 trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the trust website.
7. 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.

We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions.

Adopted by**:** LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board

**Date:**

Signed:

**APPENDIX A**

Procedure for handling alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct

1. **Purpose and Scope**

This appendix outlines the procedure to be followed if a trustee of LiFE Multi Academy Trust is alleged to have breached the Trust's Code of Conduct.

Breach of the Code of Conduct, refers to a specific action or behaviour that violates the agreed standards set out in the Trust Board’s Code of Conduct, some examples are –

Behavioural Breaches

* Disrespectful or aggressive communication during meetings or in correspondence
* Failure to maintain confidentiality of sensitive information
* Undermining collective decisions once they’ve been agreed by the board
* Using position for personal gain or to influence decisions improperly

Ethical or Legal Breaches

* Conflict of interest not declared or managed
* Misuse of trust resources, such as IT systems or funds
* Falsifying records or providing misleading information
* Discriminatory or harassing behaviour towards staff, pupils, or fellow trustees.

Professional Conduct Failures

* Persistent non-attendance at meetings without valid reason
* Failure to prepare or engage with board business
* Acting outside the scope of the role, such as giving operational instructions to staff
* Bringing the trust into disrepute, including inappropriate social media use

For complaints/matters outside of the code of conduct please refer to the Trust Complaints Policy. This process applies to all member appointed and/or co-opted trustees of the Trust Board and may relate to an individual or part or the whole of the Trust Board.

**2. Guiding Principles**

* All trustees are expected to act in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles).
* Breaches will be dealt with in a manner that is fair, proportionate, and maintains public confidence in the Trust’s governance.
* Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

**3. Raising a Concern**

* Any concern regarding a potential breach must be made in writing to the Chair of the Trust Board via the Director of Governance.
* If the allegation concerns the Chair, it should be directed to the Vice Chair (who may choose to delegate the matter to a Committee Chair) via the Director of Governance.

**4. Preliminary Assessment**

* The Chair (or Vice-Chair/Committee Chair) will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days and assess whether the matter warrants formal investigation.
* If the breach is minor or due to a misunderstanding, it may be resolved through informal discussion and support.
* If the concern is deemed frivolous, malicious, or unfounded, it may be dismissed with - justification.
* A decision may be taken to suspend the Trustee during the process (in accordance with the Articles of Association)

1. **Formal Investigation (aligned with the Trusts Complaint Policy to avoid any confusion)**
2. **Stage 1**

The Lead Person will only consider the breach as stated in the first communication and will not review any new breaches at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial communication. Any further/additional breaches complaints must be dealt with separately.

The table below sets out the roles and responsibilities during Stage 1 of the process. Depending on who the complaint concerns, the procedure may vary slightly.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Who does the breach relate to** | **Who will lead on the process** | **Who will support** | **Who will investigate** |
| Trustee (coopted appointed by Trustees) | Chair and/or Vice Chair | Director of Governance | Chair and/or Vice Chair |
| Trustee (member appointed) | Chair and/or Vice Chair | Director of Governance | Chair and/or Vice Chair |
| Chair (coopted trustee) | Vice Chair and/or Chair of a Committee 1 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 |
| Chair (member appointed trustee) | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 |
| Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 |
| Trust Board (whole) | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 |
| Trust Board (majority) | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 |

1 The Independent Investigator will be appointed by the Vice Chair or a Committee Chair (should the Vice Chair choose to delegate).

2 The Members will meet to agree and appoint the Independent Investigator but no further business will be discussed or information shared to ensure they have no prior knowledge and could form a panel, if needed at a later date.

3 Independent Investigator (who has no prior knowledge or involvement with the Trust).

Alleged breaches should be addressed to the Director of Governance, email - governanceprofessionals@lifemultiacademytrust.org.uk and include details of the breach, who has been contacted and possible outcomes to resolve the issue.

The Lead Person should arrange a face to face meeting to discuss the details of the breach.

During the investigation, the Lead Person will:

▪ if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be

accompanied if they wish.

▪ keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the Lead Person will provide a formal written response within 10 School days of the date of receipt of the communication relating to the breach. If the Chair/Vice Chair is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the individual with an update and revised response date.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the breach and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions the Trust will take to resolve the breach and any support which may need to be put in place.

The Lead Peron will advise the individual of how to escalate to Stage 2 should they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1. If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they should write to the Director of Governance, within 5 School days, email – governanceprofessionals@lifemultiacademytrust.org.uk asking for the breach to be heard before a panel. For further details please move to section 5b below.

1. **Stage 2**

The panel will only consider the breach as stated in the initial communication and investigated under Stage 1 and will not review any other matters at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial breach. Depending on who the breach concerns, the procedure may vary slightly

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Who does the breach relate to** | **Who will lead on the process** | **Who will support** | **Who has investigated under Stage 1 and will need to attend the panel meeting** | **Stage 2 Panel Composition** |
| Trustee (coopted appointed by Trustees) | Chair and/or Vice Chair | Director of Governance | Chair and/or Vice Chair | 3 Trustees with no prior knowledge1 |
| Trustee (member appointed) | Chair and/or Vice Chair | Director of Governance | Chair and/or Vice Chair | 3 Members with no prior knowledge2 |
| Chair (coopted trustee) | Vice Chair and/or Chair of a Committee 1 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 | 3 Trustees with no prior knowledge1 |
| Chair (member appointed trustee) | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator | 3 Members with no prior knowledge2 |
| Jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 | 3 Members with no prior knowledge2 |
| Trust Board (whole) | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 | 3 Members with no prior knowledge2 |
| Trust Board (majority) | Members 2 | Trusts Legal Advisor | Independent Investigator 3 | 3 Members with no prior knowledge2 |

1 The exception would be – where the complainant has requested a committee of independent Trustees or where members of the Trust Board have prior knowledge and it is not possible to appoint **3** impartial Trustees.

2 The exception would be – where the complainant has requested a committee of independent Members or where members of the Trust have prior knowledge and it is not possible to appoint 3 impartial Members.

3 Independent Investigator (who has no prior knowledge or involvement with the Trust).

Stage 2 is the final stage of the process relating to breaches of the code of conduct. A request to escalate to Stage 2 must be made to the Director of Governance, within 5 School days, email – [governanceprofessionals@lifemultiacademytrust.org.uk](mailto:governanceprofessionals@lifemultiacademytrust.org.uk). The Director of Governance will record the date the request is received and acknowledge receipt in writing (either by letter or email) within 3 School days.

Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

A breach which has been escalated to Stage 2 will be considered by a panel of 3, the composition of which will be 3 impartial (no prior knowledge) individuals (see table above).

The Director of Governance will write to the individual to inform them of the date of the meeting. They will aim to convene a meeting within 21 School days of receipt of the Stage 2 request. If this is not possible, the Director of Governance will provide an anticipated date and keep the individual informed.

If the individual rejects the offer of 3 proposed dates, without good reason, the Director of Governance will decide when to hold the meeting. It will then proceed in the individual’s absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

Prior to the meeting the panel members would decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Panel.

The panel will decide whether to deal with the breach by inviting parties to a meeting or through written representations, but in making their decision they will be sensitive to the individual’s needs and should

ensure all parties are in agreement. Where an individual chooses not to make a written submission and/or chooses not to attend the meeting then the panel will review all evidence submitted and deliberate in the individual's absence.

If the individual is invited to attend the meeting, they may bring someone along to provide support, this can be a relative or friend. Generally either party should not be encouraged to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate, e.g. if a member of Staff is called as a witness at a meeting, they may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation.

Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

At least 15 School days before the meeting, the Director of Governance will –

* confirm and notify the individual of the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that, if the individual is invited, the dates are convenient to all parties (subject to the 3 date option) and that the venue and proceedings are accessible. The meeting may be held remotely subject to the agreement of all parties.
* request copies of any further written material to be submitted to the panel at least 10 School days before the meeting.

Any written material will be circulated to all parties at least 7 School days before the date of the meeting. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

The meeting will be held in private. Electronic recordings of meetings or conversations are not normally permitted unless a individual’s own disability or special needs require it and only with the consent of all parties. The parties consent will be recorded in any minutes taken.

The panel will consider the breach and all the evidence presented. The panel can:

* uphold the breach in whole or in part
* dismiss the breach in whole or in part.

If the breach is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:

* decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
* where appropriate, recommend changes to the Trust’s systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.
* where appropriate in relation to a Trustee where a minor breach has occurred recommend a verbal or written warning, additional training or support.
* where appropriate in relation to a Trustee where a serious breach has occurred, recommend a formal censure, suspension from committee roles or a referral to the Trustees (coopted appointment) with a recommendation for removal (in accordance with the Articles of Association) Trustees (member appointed) with a recommendation for removal (in accordance with the Articles of Association).

*Note: in exceptional circumstances and in relation to more complex cases the Panel may choose to adjourn the meeting to further deliberate, request additional information or commission an Independent Investigation.*

The Chair of the panel, through the Director of Governance, will provide the individual and the individual Trustee who the alleged breach relates to with a full explanation of their decision and the reason(s) for it, in writing, within 5 School days.

6. Notification and Record-Keeping

* The outcome will be shared in writing with the trustee and the Trust Board.
* A confidential record of the process and outcome will be retained by the Director of Governance.

7. Right of Appeal

* The trustee may appeal in writing within 10 working days of the decision.
* An independent panel, which may include Members or external advisors, will review the appeal.
* The decision of the appeal panel is final.

8. External Reporting and Governance Statement

* + Where appropriate, serious breaches may be reported to the DFE, Charity Commission, or other regulatory bodies.
  + A summary (redacted/anonymised) of any upheld breaches may be included in the Trust’s annual governance statement.