The Tiffin Girls' School
Code of Conduct for the Governing Board

REVISED SEPTEMBER 2026

Introduction

1. This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations of and commitment required from school governors in order for the Governing Board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It should be read in conjunction with:
    - TTGS Academy Trust Articles of Association
    - TTGS Governance and Terms of Reference document
    - TTGS Governor Role Description
    - TTGS Scheme of Delegation
    - DfE Academy Trust Governance Guide
    - DfE Academy Trust Handbook
    - TTGS Gifts and Hospitality Policy
    - TTGS Data Protection Policy
    - TTGS Online Safety Policy
    - IT Acceptable Usage Agreement Governors and Members

2. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually, and any changes to the code will be approved by the Governing Board. All Governors will be required to read and sign the Code of Conduct at the start of each academic year.

3. Governors must apply the highest standards of conduct and ensure robust governance. Governors must set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and professionalism of the Governing Board itself.

4. Governors must act with integrity, objectivity, honesty and in the best interests of the school; and be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties.

5. Governors are expected to:
    - adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the government (APPENDIX A)
    - make an active and valuable contribution
    - show inquisitiveness to question and analyse
    - devote time and show commitment to the Governing Board
    - be enthusiastic and participate in the life of the school
    - be discreet, open minded and fair
    - maintain confidentiality as appropriate
    - be a good listener
    - support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish (APPENDIX B)

6. This code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, Governors will use their judgement to act in the best interests of the school and its students and seek guidance from the Governance Professional if required.

The Governing Board has the following core strategic functions:

7. Establishing the strategic direction of the school by:
    - Setting the vision, values and objectives for the school
    - Agreeing the school development plan with priorities and targets
    - Meeting statutory duties

8. Ensuring accountability by:
    - Appointing the Headteacher
    - Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets via the use of key performance indicators
    - Performance managing the Headteacher
    - Engaging with stakeholders
    - Contributing to school self-evaluation

9. Ensuring financial probity 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 identified and managed

<u>As individuals on the Board we agree to the following:</u>

Role and Responsibilities

10. We understand and respect the difference in roles between the Governing Board and the Headteacher; in particular, the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy, the implementation and operation of the curriculum and the day to day management of the school. We will avoid any actions that might undermine these responsibilities.
11. We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Governing Board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
12. We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Governing Board meeting or at subsequent Governing Board meetings.
13. We will comply with relevant guidance and legislation and our funding agreement that sets out how we must manage the school's money and procure goods and services.
14. We will act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions and understand that our financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited.
15. We will follow the same rules as staff set out in the Gift and Hospitality Policy.
16. We understand that discrimination and inequality exists in society and we recognise our duty to act fairly, without prejudice, and with a commitment to equality, equity, and diversity throughout the organisation including the operation of the Board. As Governors we fulfil our duty with respect to equality, equity and diversity on behalf of the employer (The Tiffin Girls' School Academy Trust).
17. We will not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We will work to understand a wide range of perspectives and marginalised communities.
18. We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
19. We will, where appropriate, seek and consider information, advice and guidance to inform our decision making.
20. We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
21. 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 local community will reflect this.

22. We will abide by and actively encourage all policies and practices that safeguard and promote the welfare of students and staff.
23. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Board.
24. We will actively support and challenge the Headteacher, doing so in a candid but constructive and respectful manner.
25. We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the Governing Board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
26. When formally speaking or writing in our governing role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
27. When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.

Commitment

28. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
29. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees, appeal/review panels and working groups as appropriate.
30. We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to.
31. We will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions.
32. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
33. Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Board and agreed with the Headteacher.
34. When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
35. We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training or development activities that are needed to fill any gaps in the skills we have in order to contribute to effective governance.
36. We will participate in the annual skills audit and questionnaire, complete a Governor self-evaluation and attend annual 1-2-1 meetings with the Chair of Governors.
37. To ensure our safeguarding responsibilities are adhered to, we will:
    - attend an annual safeguarding update from the Designated Safeguarding Lead
    - sign an annual declaration confirming we have read and understood Parts 1 and 2 of the DfE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.
    - complete an online safeguarding course on appointment or re-appointment as a governor
38. We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, 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. We understand this applies to each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months.
39. We acknowledge that in accordance with the DfE drive to increase transparency on who governs our schools, we will comply with the requirement for our names, terms of office and body responsible for appointing us to be published on the National Database for Governors via 'Get Information About Schools'; and our school email address, date of birth, nationality and postcode will be held encrypted securely by the DfE.
40. We accept the statutory requirement for our names, terms of office, month of birth, nationality and occupation to be published on the Companies House website; and our date of birth and residential address will be held encrypted securely by Companies House.

41. We recognise that if a governor fails to attend three GB meetings in an academic year, the Chair will arrange a meeting with the governor concerned to discuss and resolve the issue(s), which may include resignation from the GB.
42. We accept the statutory requirement for all new governors to undergo an enhanced DBS check and that governor information is stored within the Single Central Record, held by the school. We will comply with the school to instigate the application of an enhanced DBS check within 21 days of appointment to the GB.
43. We have read The Tiffin Girls' School's document "Eligibility to serve as a Director of the Academy Trust/Governor of the School" (APPENDIX C). We will give written notice to the Governance Professional and Chair if we become disqualified from holding office as a governor and resign with immediate effect.

Relationships

44. We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
45. We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the Governance Professional and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
46. We will support the Chair in their role of leading the GB and ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
47. We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and consider any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
48. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher, staff and parents/carers, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

49. In the course of our role, we are sometimes privy to sensitive information. *We will* observe confidentiality *when discussing this information, and will not publicly disclose:*

- Information about sensitive matters
- Information about named individuals (such as staff, pupils and their parents/carers)
- Details of individual governors' contributions in meetings or how they may have voted

50. Confidential information will never be:
- Disclosed to anyone without the relevant authority
- Used to humiliate, embarrass or blackmail others
- Used for a purpose other than what it was collected and intended for

51. Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule our duty to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

52. We will continue to observe confidentiality after we have left office.

GDPR Compliance

53. We will follow the school's information security processes and measures and Data Protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data.
54. Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report safeguarding concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

Personal data breaches

55. We will inform the school's Data Protection Officer immediately if we believe there has been a personal data breach.

Conflicts of interest

56. We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the school's business in the List of Related Parties. We understand that the Headteacher and Finance Director will determine which of the related parties should be included in the Register of Interests published on the school website. We accept that should a conflicted matter arise in a meeting, we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time and will not vote on the matter.
57. We will also declare any conflict of interest and/or conflicts of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
58. We will inform the Governance Professional immediately if there is a change to any pecuniary or other business interest.
59. We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Governing Board by parents or staff.

Use of the Governor Portal, School Email Account

60. We will have regard to the school's Online Safety Policy with respect to IT acceptable usage when using the Governor Portal and school email account.
61. We will have regard to the school's Data Protection Policy and accept that documents must not be downloaded from the Governor Portal to personal devices.
62. We will use our school email account for all electronic communications regarding governor matters.

Social media

We will:

63. Uphold the reputation of the school at all times.
64. Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our school's communities.
65. Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available.
66. Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards governors, to the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher.
67. Carefully consider how appropriate it would be to accept any friend requests from parents/carers or to join any parent/carer groups associated with the school.

We will **not**:

68. Accept friend requests from students.
69. Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles.
70. Make comments online about any members of the board of governors or school communities.
71. Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute.

Remote Meetings and Visits

72. We understand that, in the event of a school closure, or by mutual agreement with all governors, meetings and visits may take place remotely.

73. We will attend with webcam/video switched on where possible.
74. We will prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations, e.g. by wearing headphones.

Communication

76. We will not make direct contact with individual members of staff, with the following specific exceptions where contact is appropriate and with the Headteacher's continued awareness of such contact:
    - The Chair of Finance and Contracts Committee should have direct contact with the Headteacher and Finance Director
    - The Chair of Audit and Risk Committee should have direct contact with the Headteacher and Finance Director
    - The Chair of Pay and Personnel Committee should have direct contact with the Headteacher and HR Director
    - Governors with an individual responsibility should have direct contact with the relevant member of SLT e.g. Health and Safety Governor and Operations Director, Safeguarding Governors and the Designated Safeguarding Lead
77. We understand a Committee Chair will inform other committee members on a timely basis of any important issues discussed with SLT outside the meeting.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

78. We understand that potential or perceived breaches of this code will be taken seriously and that a breach could lead to formal sanctions (APPENDIX E: Breach Procedure).

Governors will sign an electronic form following the first Governing Board meeting of each academic year to confirm they have read, understood and abide by the code. The form will state:

Undertaking:
As a member of the Governing Board I will always have the well-being of the students and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never intentionally say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Board, the Headteacher or staff. I will resign with immediate effect, if I become disqualified to hold office as a Director/Governor.

APPENDIX A: ***The Seven Principles of Public Life***

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

We will abide by the Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life and demonstrate our commitment to ethical governance:

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:

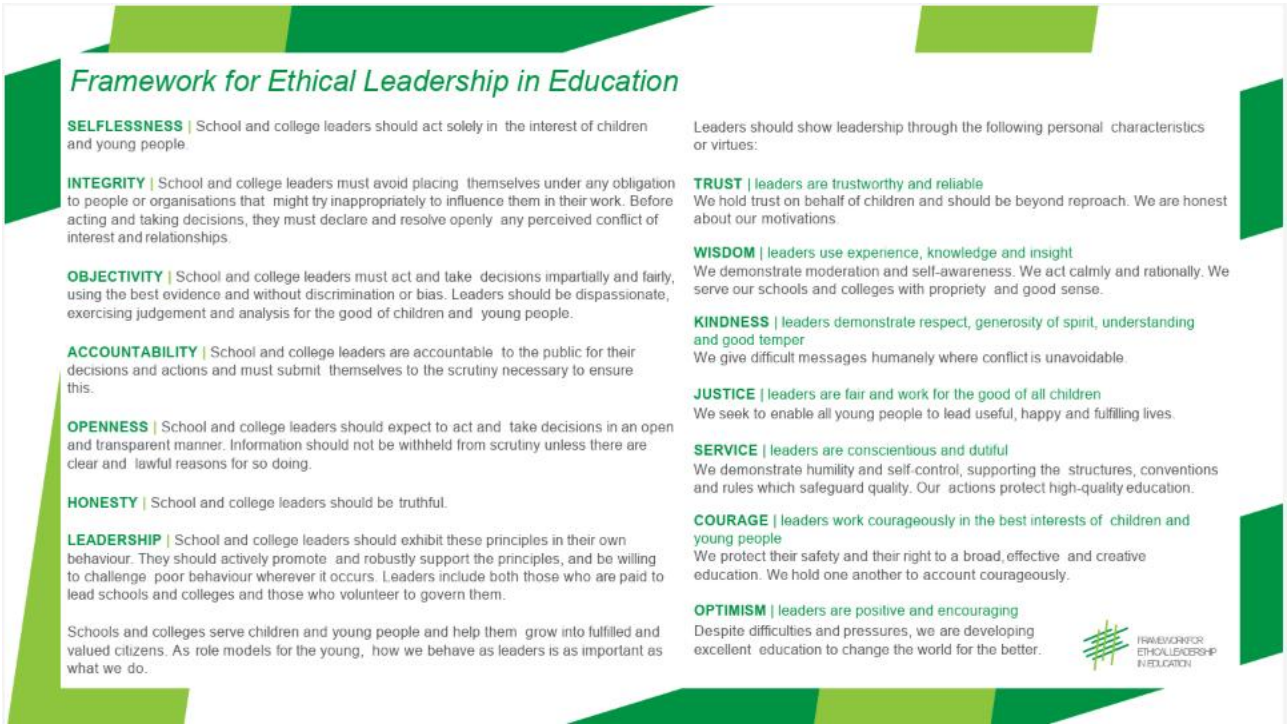
1. act within our powers
2. promote the success of the trust
3. exercise independent judgement
4. exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence
5. avoid conflicts of interest
6. not accept benefits from third parties
7. declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

We will focus on our core purpose:

1. strategic leadership: defining a vision, fostering a culture and ethos, 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

<u>APPENDIX B:</u> The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

We all have a duty to behave ethically, but the bar for school leaders and governing boards is particularly high because they are setting the standards for the young people in their care and in turn the sort of society that we become in the future. The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education was published in 2017 to support and guide the profession and governing boards in their decision-making and their behaviour.



APPENDIX C: Eligibility to serve as a Director of the Academy Trust/Governor of the School

The DfE Model Articles of Association (paragraphs 68-79) and the Charity Commission's guidance on 'Automatic Disqualification Rules for Charity Trustees and Charity Senior Positions' are outlined here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-model-memorandum-and-articles-of-association

APPENDIX D: Charity Commission Guidance on automatic disqualification rules for charity trustees and charity senior positions

Please see guidance online here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/automatic-disqualification-rules-for-charity-trustees-and-charity-senior-positions

APPENDIX E: Breach Procedure

If we suspect a Governor has breached the code of conduct, we will follow this procedure:

- A Member of the trust will investigate.
- A Member of the trust will hold a meeting with the Governor to discuss the issue. The Governor can bring a friend to the meeting. Another Governor will attend to corroborate any decisions.
- If the situation doesn't improve, or there is another suspected breach, we will take action to improve the issue. This may involve:
    - Further meetings with the Member to reset expectations, based on this code of conduct
    - Support, mentoring or training for the Governor
    - Making sure the Governor withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in
- If there is no improvement in the Governor's behaviour, the board will vote on a motion to ask the Members to remove them in accordance with sections 168 and 169 of the Companies Act 2006 and the trust's articles of association. This is a last resort and will not be used without the above steps being taken, except in exceptional circumstances.

Governors may be removed if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the board (including failing to undertake training appropriate to the role, whether or not directed to do so by the board)
- Have brought, or is likely to bring the academy trust or the office of the governor into disrepute
- Have acted to undermine fundamental British values or the board's commitment or ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty
- Have been involved in serious misconduct. We will determine what counts as serious misconduct based on the facts of the case, but it will include any actions that compromise the 7 principles of public life, if sufficiently serious
- Have displayed repeated and serious incompetence
- Have acted in a way that is significantly detrimental to the effective operation of the board, or their actions have interfered with the operational efficiency of the school

'Bringing the board into disrepute' may include, but is not limited to:

- Speaking out publicly against the school
- Being disrespectful to members of the school community
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PSA meeting or on social media
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the board's operation