

<b>Updated by</b>	Pippa Truman Davies	<b>Target group</b>	Trustees and WeST Community Council members (WeST CCms)
<b>Approved by</b>	Trust Board		
<b>Issued</b>	October 2025	<b>Next review due</b>	Autumn 2026

## WeST Governance Code of Conduct

At Westcountry Schools Trust (WeST), every aspect of governance is integral to our vision of improving education, stronger together... every child in a great school. We review our Governance Code of Conduct regularly and ask all our valued governance volunteers to recommit to our vision and purpose annually. This is based on the National Governance Association model code of conduct for trusts.

### The Charity Code

As Trustees and WeST Community Council members, we recognise and support the principles set out in the [charity governance code](#)

### Seven Nolan Principles of Public Life

As volunteers working with Westcountry Schools Trust and its schools, 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.

### Highest standards

We will apply the highest standards and will:

- act within our powers and the WeST CC remits
- 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 any personal or related party interests in proposed transactions or arrangements
- Act professionally and with integrity throughout every WeST CC meeting, whilst on school or WeST premises and whilst representing WeST or a WeST school, online and in person.

### Core Purpose

Trustees: 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

As Individuals, we agree to:

Fulfil our role & responsibilities

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core purpose rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in our [scheme of delegation](#).
- 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.
- **Trustees:** We will fulfil our responsibilities as a good employer, acting fairly and without prejudice.
- When making or responding to complaints, we will follow and refer others to the established complaints procedures.

- We will strive to uphold the trust's reputation in our private communications (including on social media).
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under The Equality Act and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.
- **WeST CC members:** We will act as local ambassadors for our schools and Westcountry Schools Trust.

### 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 will make every effort to attend all WeST CC/Trustee 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.
- We will get to know the schools and WeST well and welcome opportunities to be involved in school and WeST activities.
- We will visit the schools and when doing so will make arrangements with relevant staff in advance and observe school and board protocol.
- 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, data protection and cyber security) 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.
- **WeST CC members:** We will champion the voices of our school communities and stakeholders.
- **WeST CC members:** 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 WeST CC Chair/Trust Board Chair in their role of leading the WeST CC/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 not reveal the details of any vote in a WeST CC or Trustee matter.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will maintain confidentiality even after we leave office.

### Declare conflicts of interest and be transparent

- 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 or WeST CC member, 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

If you suspect that any Trustee or WeST CC member has acted in breach of this code of conduct please notify your Trust Board Chair or WeST CC Chair in the first instance, without delay. If the matter concerns the Trust Board Chair or WeST CC Chair, please report the matter to WeST's Governance and Compliance Lead.

Where it is suspected that a Trustee or WeST CC member has breached this code of conduct, or there is cause for concern about a Trustee or WeST CC member's conduct, the following procedures will apply.

### WeST CC members

#### Stage 1 – written warning

The WeST CC Chair (or the Governance and Compliance Lead if the matter concerns the WeST CC Chair) will investigate. Minor issues may be dealt with via email, and, if appropriate, hold a meeting with the WeST CC member or WeST CC Chair to discuss the issue. The outcome of any investigation

may include a stage 1 written warning including a reminder of expectations based on this code of conduct, together with an offer of support, mentoring or training as appropriate.

### Stage 2

If the breach is considered sufficiently serious or there is no improvement in the WeST CC member's (or Chair's) behaviour in response to a written warning under Stage 1, then the matter will be escalated to the Governance and Compliance Lead (or to a Trustee/a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) if appropriately serious or if the Governance and Compliance Lead dealt with the matter at Stage 1), under Stage 2, who will investigate. The outcome of any such investigation may include one or more of the following outcomes:

- A further Stage 2 written warning and resetting of expectations, together with additional support, mentoring or training as appropriate.
- A further review under Stage 1 or Stage 2 as appropriate after an agreed timeframe by the WeST CC Chair, Governance and Compliance Lead or CEO.
  - A mutual decision for the WeST CC member to stand down from their position.
- Removal of the WeST CC member from their position immediately or from a set date.

If the Governance and Compliance Lead is conflicted or otherwise unable to investigate, the responsibility will be delegated to a member of the ELT or a Trustee as appropriate.

WeST CC members unhappy with any Stage 1 or Stage 2 outcomes may put their concerns in writing to [complaints@westst.org.uk](mailto:complaints@westst.org.uk), within five school days of receiving that outcome, and a non-conflicted member of the ELT will review the matter and respond within 20 school days.

## WeST Trustees

### Stage 1 – written warning

The Governance and Compliance Lead will investigate (this may be directly or via a senior member of staff or confidential third party) and, if appropriate, hold a meeting with the Trustee to discuss the issue. If the concern relates to the Chair of Trustees, Minor issues may be dealt with via email. The outcome of any investigation may include a stage 1 written warning including a reminder of expectations based on this code of conduct, together with an offer of support, mentoring or training as appropriate.

### Stage 2

If the breach is considered sufficiently serious or there is no improvement in the Trustee's behaviour in response to a written warning under Stage 1, then the matter will be escalated to the Chair of Trustees (or the Vice Chair or any Member in the Chair's absence or if the Chair of Trustees is conflicted) who will investigate (this may be directly or via a senior member of staff or confidential third party). The outcome of any such investigation may include one or more of the following outcomes:

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## WeST CC members

- A further Stage 2 written warning and resetting of expectations, together with additional support, mentoring or training as appropriate.
- A further review under Stage 1 or Stage 2 as appropriate after an agreed timeframe as appropriate.
  - A mutual decision for the Trustee to stand down from their position.
- Removal of the Trustee from their position immediately or from a set date.

Trustees unhappy with any Stage 1 or Stage 2 outcomes may put their concerns in writing to [complaints@Westst.org.uk](mailto:complaints@Westst.org.uk), within five school days of receiving that outcome, and a non-conflicted member of the Members, or independent complaints investigator as directed by the Members, will review the matter and respond within 20 school days.

### WeST's Governance Code of Conduct Declaration 2025-26

I have read and understood the Governance Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its contents. Please either confirm on GovernorHub that you agree to abide by this code of conduct or complete the form below and return this to your clerk or Governance Professional, preferably by email.

Name:	
Role:	
WeST CC:	<i>(if applicable)</i>
Signature:	
Date:	