

Wilson's School Academy Trust

Trustee Code of Conduct



Approved by Trustees: September 2025

Safeguarding Statement

"The welfare of the child is paramount"

At Wilson's School the safety and welfare of our pupils is of the utmost importance. Because of the day-to-day contact with children, adults in the school are well placed to observe signs of abuse. All adults working at Wilson's School must be aware that any pupil may be at risk of harm, abuse or exploitation. We have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils (as indicated by a range of legislation outlined in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education) by identifying any child welfare concerns and taking action to address them in partnership with families and other agencies where appropriate. We are committed to safeguarding the children and young people in our care and expect everyone who works at Wilson's School to share this commitment, acting always in the best interests of the child.

In addition to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, we have policies to cover the roles of staff, pupils and parents in respect of health and safety, anti-bullying, and behaviour (Code of Conduct). We also have a Staff Conduct Policy and a Whistleblowing Policy.

We ensure that issues of safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) are explored with students through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. Children are taught, in an age-appropriate way, to recognise when they are at risk, how to keep themselves safe and how to get help when they need it, for instance through the use of case studies and examples of how problems for children were resolved by seeking help from school staff, using the school's online anonymous 'Report a Concern' tool or using recommended helplines. We are sensitive to specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual pupils, including those who are victims of abuse and those with special educational needs or disabilities.

The policy applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers working in the school and parents are informed about this and our other policies on the school's website, with attention drawn to specific elements of the policy at times during the year.

We monitor and evaluate safeguarding throughout the year in a range of ways, including through the regular review of referrals made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in our DSLs meeting, via external scrutiny and support (e.g. from the Education Safeguarding Lead at Cognus) and in termly meetings between the DSL and the trustee responsible for safeguarding and child protection. The DSL also has a timetabled supervision meeting with the Head.

There are a number of elements to our policy:

- ensuring safe recruitment practice in checking the suitability of all our staff and volunteers to work with children
- raising awareness of child protection issues amongst all staff and volunteers and making sure they know that they should share these with the DSL. It should be remembered that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and /or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. This should not prevent staff from having professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL.
- developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- developing effective links with relevant agencies and co-operating as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences and core group meetings
- establishing and maintaining a safe environment in which children feel secure and are encouraged to talk freely about anything that concerns them
- ensuring children know there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried about anything
- including opportunities in the PSHE curriculum to develop and equip pupils with the skills needed to recognise risks (including online safety risks) and stay safe from abuse
- supporting pupils who have been abused or may be at risk of harm in accordance with any agreed child protection plan
- ensuring we respond appropriately to any concern or allegation about a member of staff or volunteer

- ensuring staff follow accepted “safe practice” principles when working with students (in particular the Staff Conduct Policy, the Behaviour Code of Conduct, DfE Advice on Use of Reasonable Force, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education. These policies must be covered during the induction of new staff at the school.

If there are Child Protection concerns the London Child Protection Procedures (<http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>), must be followed. The Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) has adopted these procedures. This policy and procedure also accords with:

- “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (2024) and
- “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (2023).

If lower level concerns or needs (i.e. not child protection) are identified about a particular pupil, the Sutton LSCP Threshold guidance should be followed.

In all decision-making, the school takes into account the 2010 Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

The school also assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its pupils.

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Aims, scope and principles

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that all Trustees are expected to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that Trustees carry out their role with honesty and integrity, and help to ensure the school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The Code is based on the [Academy Trust Governance Guide](#) and the [Academy Trust Handbook](#). It should be read alongside the constitutional documents (the Articles of Association and Schemes of Delegation). Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken, as set out in the appendix.

Please note that this Code of Conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this Code, Trustees will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the Trust and its pupils.

The 7 Nolan principles of public life

As Trustees, we will follow these [principles](#) set out by the government at all times. They apply to anyone who holds a public office:

- **Selflessness** – we will act in the public interest
- **Integrity** – we will not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for ourselves, our family, or our friends. We will declare any conflict of interests
- **Objectivity** – we will act and take decisions impartially, fairly, and on merit. We will use the best evidence and avoid discrimination or bias
- **Accountability** – we understand that we are accountable to the public for our decisions and actions. To make sure of this, we will be scrutinised where necessary
- **Openness** – we will act and take decisions openly and transparently. We will not withhold information from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so
- **Honesty** – we will be truthful
- **Leadership** – we will actively promote and support the above principles and will challenge poor behaviour wherever it happens

Trustee responsibilities

The 3 functions of the Trust Board are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the Trust
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the Trust, and the performance management of staff
- Oversee the financial performance of the Trust and make sure money is well spent

In order to do this effectively, as individuals we will:

- Understand and respect the distinction between the role and responsibilities of the Board and those of the executive leadership
- Set and maintain an ethos of high expectations for everyone in the school community, including in the conduct and the professionalism of the Board itself

Promote equality and diversity throughout the organisation, including the Board's operation

- Preserve and develop the character of the Trust
- 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
- Operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff and local communities)

- Follow the Trust's policies and procedures, and the procedures of the Board as set out in relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and the Trust's constitutional documents
- Take responsibility for our self-evaluation, reviewing the Board's performance, constitution and skillset
- Take part in any training or development required to fill any gaps in the skills we need for effective governance
- Understand that where responsibility has been delegated, the Board as a whole remains accountable and that important decisions relating to core functions will be made by the full Trust Board
- Comply with relevant guidance and legislation and the Funding Agreement that sets out how we must manage our Trust's money, and procure goods and services
- Act with integrity and transparency when making financial decisions, and understand that the Board's financial management and decision-making will be scrutinised and audited
- Declare all gifts worth more than £50.00 and record them on the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. We will not accept bribes
- We will work to actively identify and manage risks to the Trust

Working with others

We will:

- Support and strengthen Trust leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, and holding them to account
- Respect the role of the executive and school leadership teams and avoid routine involvement in operational matters
- Support and challenge senior leaders in equal measure, ensuring that their workload and wellbeing are balanced
- Respect each other's views
- Work together as a Board to develop effective relationships with each other and with stakeholders
- Engage meaningfully with the communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders
- Follow the Equality Act 2010, and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything we do
- Understand that as Trustees, we are in a position of authority and are employers of those who work for the School
- Always adopt a professional, courteous tone in written communication when writing in capacity as Trustee

Commitment to governance

We:

- Will attend all meetings where possible. Where we cannot attend, we will explain our valid reason and give suitable notice to the Governance Professional
- Understand and accept the time and workload commitments of the role
- Understand that work should be shared and that all Trustees are expected to take an active role
- Will prepare ahead of meetings to ensure we make informed contributions
- Will participate in regular pre-arranged school visits in accordance with the Trust procedures and governance arrangements
- Will complete any training or development activity needed to ensure the Board has the appropriate range of skills and expertise that the School requires and understand that these requirements can change over time
- Will not engage in conduct outside of our role as Trustees which could damage the reputation and standing of the school, or our own reputation or the reputation of other members of the school community.

Openness and transparency

Conflicts of interest

To make sure our Board takes impartial decisions without bias, we will:

- Keep an up-to-date register of business and pecuniary interests of all Trustees
- Declare any potential conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and withdraw from the meeting for the relevant item of business and not vote on the matter

Publishing information

To ensure our Board is transparent and open to the communities we serve, we will make certain information publicly available.

- We accept that the following information will be published on the school's website to ensure transparency:
 - The structure and remit of the Members, Trust Board and Committees, and the full name of the Chair of each one
- For each **Member** who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - The date when they stepped down, if applicable
 - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests (including governance roles in other educational institutions)
- For each **Trustee** who has served at any point over the past 12 months:
 - Their full name
 - Their date of appointment
 - Their term of office
 - The date they stepped down (where applicable)
 - The body that appointed them
 - Their relevant business and pecuniary interests
 - Their attendance record over the last academic year
- We accept that the information about Members and Trustees will be published on Get Information About Schools
- We accept that the information about Members and Trustees will be published on [Companies House](#)
- We accept that the approved board and Committee minutes and any agenda and papers considered at a meeting may be made available to any interested person subject to appropriate redaction of confidential items and to comply with legislation

Confidentiality

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)
- Details of individual Trustees contributions in meetings or how they may have voted

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

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

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

Breaches of confidentiality

In the event of a breach of confidentiality, we will inform the Chair as soon as possible who will investigate the matter further.

Trustees understand that if they breach confidentiality, they may be removed.

Data protection

We will follow the Trust's information security processes and measures and data protection policy when using, storing, sharing and disposing of personal data. We will abide by the request to delete school papers and documents from our personal devices and external/cloud storage solutions after each meeting has concluded. We will not use personal email addresses to forward school documents or information.

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

Personal data breaches

We will inform the Trust's Data Protection Officer (dpo@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk) immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach.

Social media

We will:

- Uphold the reputation of the Trust at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with our schools' communities
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards Trustees to the Chair of Trustees and the executive leadership

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the Trust
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Speak to the press, any media outlet or represent the institution in any way without the express permission of the Chair
- Make comments online about any Members of the Trust Board or local school communities
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the Trust into disrepute

Trustee Portal

We will:

- Endeavour to ensure that all communications about Trust business take place via the Wilson's School email addresses

- Endeavour to frequently monitor the Wilson’s School email account
- Ensure that the Wilson’s School email is not used for any external communication or correspondence

Monitoring arrangements

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed and agreed, upon significant changes to the law, or as needed. It will be ratified by the full Trust Board.

Appendix 1: Breaches of the Code of Conduct

If it is suspected a Trustee has breached the Code of Conduct, this procedure will be followed:

➤ A Member of the Trust will investigate

A Member of the Trust will hold a meeting with the Trustee to discuss the issue. The Trustee can bring a companion to the meeting. Another Trustee 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 Trustee
- Making sure the Trustee withdraws from votes connected to any disputes they have been involved in

If there is no improvement in the Trustee’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

Trustees may be **removed** if they:

- Have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the professional ethos of the Trust 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 Trustee into disrepute (*see below)
- Have acted to undermine fundamental British values or the Board’s commitment to Child Protection and Safeguarding or the ability to deliver on its Prevent Duty
- Have been involved in serious misconduct whether or not connected with their role as a Trustee. 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 (including pupils, parents, staff, other Trustees and the wider community)
- Behaving inappropriately in a public forum, such as a PFA meeting or on social media
- Persistently failing to undertake the training or development they need to contribute effectively to the Board’s operation

Appendix 2: Trustee Declaration

I hereby declare that I will act in accordance with the Trustee Code of Conduct for the duration of my term as a Trustee of Wilson's School.

Signed:

Print:

Date: