



# Trustee Policy

<b>Policy title:</b>	Trustee Policy
<b>Function:</b>	For information and guidance about Blue Coat School governance. This document forms part of the portfolio of policies designed to inform Trustees and staff.
<b>Status:</b>	Approved
<b>Statutory guidance:</b>	The Governance Handbook (2020)
<b>Audience:</b>	Staff, Senior leadership team, Trustees
<b>Ownership:</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Last reviewed:</b>	September 2023
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Finance and Resource Committee
<b>Approved by:</b>	The Full Trust Board
<b>Next review:</b>	Every year – Next Review September 2024

Changes for 2022 include:

- Inclusion of vision and values statement and reference to legal status of the school (Aims and Objectives, page 3)
- Introduction of an online visit record form (page 7, para 25)
- Provision for trustees to claim reasonable expenses when undertaking business on behalf of the school (page 7 and page 26 Annex H)

# Contents

<b>Aims and objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Procedures and practices</b>	<b>4</b>
Core functions	4
Induction	5
Training	5
Code of conduct	6
Visits to school	6
Expenses	7
<b>Monitoring, review and evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
Annex A: Trustee protocols for visits to school	8
Annex B: Trustee record of visit	9
Annex C: Record of Trustee visits	10
Annex D: Code of Conduct	11
Annex E: Principles of Public Life	15
Annex F: Framework for Ethical Leadership	16
Annex G: Recruitment & Selection of Trustees	17
Annex H: Expenses protocol	26

# Aims and objectives

At the Blue Coat School our vision is simple. All that we do is focused on developing exceptionally well-rounded individuals with the skills to thrive and positively contribute in a rapidly changing society. This is underpinned by our unrelenting focus on:

## **Inspiring excellence**

Excellence is not something that is simply achieved. It something that we always strive for so that we can continually create opportunity and enhance the life chances of talented young people from broad and diverse backgrounds. The best is not, however, always the easiest. Our staff and learners will be resilient, and able to overcome barriers and challenges to ensure that potential is unlocked.

## **Shaping character**

Our learners leave us not just knowing how to do things, but how to do things in the right way for the right reasons. That is why humility and integrity are the key pillars of our community, and the basis for how we treat one another. They ensure we have a culture where individuals are treated with care and compassionate respectfulness.

## **Forging futures**

Every member of our community will leave us embracing their strengths and with ambition and aspiration as to how they can contribute positively to the modern world they are entering. Our students will become the leaders of tomorrow.

By extension, our values, approach and ethos are embodied in, and implemented through, our policies and procedures. They are the framework to support all that we do and achieve.

The Blue Coat School has the legal status of a company and as a charitable trust. This means that Trustees have responsibilities as both company directors and charity trustees.

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that there is clarity about the roles and responsibilities of a Trustee.
2. To ensure that individual and collective Trustees operate in accordance within a set of agreed common principles.
3. To ensure that new Trustees are given the necessary information and support to fulfil their role with confidence.
4. To ensure that Trustees have access to appropriate training opportunities to assist them in their role.

# Roles and Responsibilities

5. Trustees will ensure that they:
  - determine, monitor and keep school policies, plans and procedures under review
  - scrutinise and challenge in support of the Headteacher's responsibility for the implementation of policy and management of the School
  - do not act individually, except when the Board of Trustees has given delegated authority to do so

- act fairly, with transparency and without prejudice
  - contribute effectively to all meetings through thorough preparation including the reading of all papers
  - undertake their duties to the highest standard in line with relevant legislation and guidance
  - visit the school regularly to maintain an up to date knowledge of the workings of the school.
6. The Headteacher and senior leadership team will:
- provide relevant and timely information to Trustees
  - engage with Trustees to ensure there are regular, robust examinations of the impact of the school's work
  - support the work of Trustees
  - provide information, advice and guidance to allow them to undertake their duties to the highest standards
  - provide regular opportunities for Trustees to visit school.
7. School staff will:
- carry out their duties in line with policies and practices approved by Trustees
  - engage with Trustees when they attend school.

## Procedures and Practices

### Core functions

8. The Board of Trustees will have due regard to the advice and guidance set out in the Department for Education Governance Handbook.
9. School leaders and Trustees recognise and value some fundamental characteristics of a highly-functioning Board and in particular that:
- Trustees govern rather than manage
  - Trustees understand school leaders' roles
  - Trustees know the school, its performance, its students, its staff and its parents
  - Trustees are able to challenge leaders.
10. Trustees will undertake effective governance by:
- establishing a clear understanding of its core functions
  - seeking to recruit and develop talented Trustees
  - establishing appropriate structures
  - adhering to agreed ways of working.
11. In line with the DFE Governors handbook, Trustees will:
- ensure effective governance through a clear purpose
  - operate as strategic leaders
  - secure high-quality accountability
  - recruit, develop and support individual Trustees to meet expected competencies
  - ensure it has effective structures
  - ensure Trustees and school leaders fulfil statutory requirements
  - evaluate its effectiveness.

## Induction

12. New Trustees will:

- be invited by the Headteacher to visit the School
- have the opportunity to tour the School and meet staff and students
- be welcomed to the Board of Trustees by the Chair of Trustees
- have the opportunity to review previous minutes prior to attendance at Board meetings.

13. New Trustees will receive a Trustee Induction Pack or be signposted to online resources which includes:

- the arrangements for induction
- the role of a Blue Coat School Trustee
- contact details
- Board of Trustees structures, membership and meetings schedule
- guidance for safer working practices for Trustees
- a calendar of the school term
- the school prospectus
- the school's staffing structures
- the school's Improvement Plan
- current information about student performance
- the school's three year financial forecast & plan
- the school's most recent OFSTED inspection report.

## Training

14. It is important that all Trustees regularly receive relevant advice, guidance and training to ensure that they are able to undertake their role in the most effective manner.

15. Training opportunities for Trustees may arise from a variety of sources including:

- National College online registration
- Training courses provided by the local authority
- Training courses provided by other organisations
- Other training opportunities provided by individuals or organisations who support the school

16. The process for assessing external training is outlined below:

- Trustees must complete the application form as their request to attend a training course, and return this to the Chair of Trustees who will decide whether to approve requests before forwarding to the school's management support officer.
- Where approved the school's management support officer will make arrangements for places to be reserved for training courses and will in turn confirm to Trustees that reservations have been made.
- Upon completion of courses, Trustees will be asked to complete evaluation feedback reports.

17. The process for accessing other training opportunities is outlined below:

- Senior leaders will inform lead Trustees of additional training opportunities that may be of benefit to them or other Trustees.
- Lead Trustees will share this information with other Trustees to establish the extent of the training needed.
- Senior Leaders will facilitate the opportunity in line with Trustee need.

18. School leaders will retain, summarise and share with Trustees a record of Trustee requests for training and the impact that training has had on Governance.

## Code of Conduct

19. Trustees will be committed to ensuring they work within the following frameworks:

- Blue Coat School Trustee Code of Conduct (Annex D)
- 7 Principles for Public Life (Annex E)
- Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education (Annex F)

## Visits to School

22 Trustees at The Blue Coat School will visit the School on a regular basis. Trustee visits will be graded according to type:

- Level 1: Introduction to the school. All new Trustees will:
  - Be invited by the Headteacher to visit the school
  - Have the opportunity to tour the school and meet staff and students
  - Receive an informal briefing on the school from the headteacher
  - Have an opportunity to ask the headteachers questions about the school.
- Level 2: Getting to know the school. Trustees will be encouraged to attend a minimum of 2 calendar events each year. These may include:
  - Open evening
  - Progress and Choices evenings
  - Celebration of achievement events
  - School exhibitions
  - Entrance exam
  - School productions and sporting events
  - Induction evenings
  - School events
  - Assemblies
- Level 3: Understanding the school. The Board of Trustees will identify which aspects of the school they want to focus on most. Individual Trustees will work within this focus to identify opportunities for focussed visits to school. Trustees will use these focussed visits to explore and understand the school in some detail so that they enhance their knowledge and confidence to help the Board of Trustees evaluate the school's performance better. Such visits may include:
  - School meetings
  - Staff briefings
  - Discussions with senior/middle leaders
  - Observing leaders undertake their work
  - Scrutinising school information
  - Talking to staff and students.

Trustees will always ensure that during visits to school they focus on observing the work of the school in line with the Trustee protocols for visits to school (Annex A).

- 24 When visiting the School, Trustees will:
- agree in advance a mutually convenient time and duration for the visit with the Headteacher or other members of staff where agreed with the Headteacher
  - ensure that visits have a clear focus as informed by school improvement priorities, recent Trustee meetings and other information about the school
  - report to reception and sign the visitor book
  - wear an appropriate identification badge.
- 25 Trustees will feed back their observations and outcomes from their visits to the Headteacher and Board of Trustees by:
- Completing an online record of visit form or where this is not possible, a hardcopy (Annex B)
  - submitting the forms for the attention of the Headteacher and Chair of Trustees
- 26 The Headteacher and Chair of Trustees will keep a record of visits to school.

## Expenses

- 24 The Blue Coat School Trust values the time and support given voluntarily by those who undertake Trustee roles and responsibilities. Trusts have a significant level of autonomy which makes it all the more important for the board to consider the regularity, propriety and value for money of all aspects of trust business.
- 25 The Blue Coat School Trust has the discretion to pay allowances from the Trust's annual budget allocation to Trustees for certain allowances which they incur in carrying out their duties to ensure equality of opportunity to serve as a Trustee for all members of the community. This is considered an appropriate use of Trust funds
- 26 Trustees may be eligible to claim expenses from the school budget for expenditure incurred when undertaking trustee business. All expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with Annex H and the school's financial procedures.
- 27 Annex H expense protocol was developed in accordance with the Department of Education's Governance Handbook, the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) Academy Trust Handbook, the trust's articles of association and guidance provided from the Charity Commission.
- 28 Reimbursements for purchases made on behalf of the Trust are not regarded as expenses and are accounted for as part of the Trust's general expenditure. All purchases must be made in accordance with financial procedures.

## Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 29 The Board of Trustees will ensure that this policy's procedures and practices are monitored, reviewed and evaluated through the Board of Trustees.
- 30 The Headteacher and Chair of Trustees will jointly review:
- Notes of Trustee visits to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the work of Trustees so that they may jointly report to the Board of Trustees.
  - Records of training and the impact that this has had
  - Factors that have had an impact on the implementation of this policy.
- 31 The Board of Trustees will undertake an annual review of its work informed by individual Trustee evaluations.

# Trustee protocols for visits to school

# Annex A

Do	Do not
Challenge information provided by the school	Instruct the school to provide information in a specific format
Ask challenging questions about leaders processes and practices	Instruct leaders to undertake practices and processes in a specific way
Make judgements about the effectiveness of leaders' approaches	Make judgements about the effectiveness of a leader
Observe leaders in action across range of duties	Interrupt, interfere with or impede leaders whilst they are undertaking their duties
Challenge the effectiveness of leadership roles and structures	Instruct how leadership should be structured
Positively engage with school information, students, staff and parents	Share or infer criticism of any aspect of school life during engagement activities
Observe teaching to gain insight	Observe teaching to make judgements
Agree and plan focussed visits in consultation with the HT/DHT/DOR	Observe the school's work without agreement or focussed planning
Be courteous, considerate, respectful and understanding	Undermine any staff with actions, words or implication
Positively engage with school information, students, staff and parents	Share or infer criticism of any aspect of school life during engagement
Join leaders in visits to lessons	Visit lessons alone
Get to know different parts of the school with leaders	Travel the school unaccompanied
Confidentially record your own observation and share with other Trustees	Disclose your observations beyond the Board of Trustees
Adhere to safeguarding protocols	Become involved in safeguarding matter
Discreetly inform the HT/DHT/DOR if you are concerned about something	Inform any other members of staff about your concerns



## Lead Trustees' record of visit and progress:

## Annex B

<b>Trustee :</b>		<b>Committee :</b>	
<b>Date :</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Activity :</b>		<b>Level:</b>	1/ 2/ 3
<b>Purpose of activity:</b> <i>(Reason for visit or activity)</i>			
<b>Who else was Involved?</b>			
<b>Trustee notes from visit / 'seeing the school in action' / receipt of data / SIP Progress</b>			
<b>Summary of issues explored</b>			
<b>Current progress achieved by school relating to area of discussion or activity:</b>			
<b>Actions for ongoing school progress</b> <i>(for discussion at next meeting)</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>			

**The purpose(s) of your meeting** with your SLT counterpart are to:

1. Scrutinise the School's work in relation to **statutory requirements** applicable to your lead function.
2. **Focus on the priorities** you have selected from the **School Improvement Plan** to monitor, review and evaluate school evidence of progress (when applicable) during the academic year, providing appropriate & supportive challenge.
3. Record & report as necessary to the GB on the School's work to improve provision in your lead function.

**The following key questions may assist the effectiveness of your meeting:**

- What provision, processes, practices, systems and policies have you discussed
  - To what extent are you satisfied that provision meets statutory requirements and is well led
  - Tell me about your system to monitor & evaluate in this area
  - What does tell you
  - What are you doing about it
  - What appropriate challenge & evaluation did you provide to the senior leader responsible for that area
- Your completed record of your meeting should be shared with your lead colleague, copied to them and then forwarded to the Chair of Trustees, Headteacher, SLT counterpart, Clerk to the Board**



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

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law and Articles of Association.

## **The Board of Trustees has the following 3 strategic functions:**

Establishing the strategic direction by:

- Setting and ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability by:

- Appointing the Headteacher
- Monitoring the educational performance of the school and progress towards agreed targets
- Performance managing the Headteacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation
- Ensuring the Headteacher appropriately and effectively consults with students, parents and staff in order to shape the school's culture and the underpinning strategy and policies.

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

## **As individuals on the board we agree to the following:**

### **Role & Responsibilities**

- We understand the purpose of the board and its strategic role.
- We understand how the role of the board differs from and works with others including the Headteacher and where appropriate, senior leaders.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.

- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of The Blue Coat School. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the board.
- We will actively support and challenge school leaders.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will respect the role of school leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.
- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the board as set out by the relevant governing documents and law.
- 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.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the Board of Trustees.

## Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a Trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know The Blue Coat School well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with senior leaders and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a Trustee.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Board of Trustees, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of Trustee and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to Trustees will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's national database (Get information about schools).

## Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other Trustees, the clerk to the board and school staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities' any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life (see annex) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with school leaders, staff and parents, the local authority and wider community.

## Confidentiality

- We will observe at all times complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or students, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## Conflicts of Interest

- 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 board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- 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 board.

## Ceasing to be a Trustee

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a Trustee leaves office.

## Breach of this Code of Conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate;
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another board member, such as the vice chair will investigate.
- Where necessary and appropriate, matter will be referred to the Members group.
- Suspension/removal will only be used as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

October 2022

*Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations)*

**Selflessness** - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity** - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability** - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty** – Holders of public office should be truthful

**Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education Annex F

*The Ethical Leadership Commission has developed the following Framework for Ethical Leadership to help school leaders take difficult decisions. As important as the language is, these aren't just fine words, they are meant to support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish.*

1. **Selflessness:** leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.
2. **Integrity:** leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. Before acting and taking decisions, they must declare and resolve openly any perceived conflict of interest and relationships.
3. **Objectivity:** leaders must act and take decisions impartially and fairly, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias. Leaders should be dispassionate, exercising judgement and analysis for the good of children and young people.
4. **Accountability:** leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
5. **Openness:** leaders should expect to act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from scrutiny unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
6. **Honesty:** leaders should be truthful.
7. **Leadership:** leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles, and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Leaders include both those who are paid to lead schools and colleges and those who volunteer to govern them.

Schools serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. As role models for the young, how we behave as leaders is as important as what we do. Leaders should show leadership through the following personal characteristics or virtues:

*a. **Trust:** leaders are trustworthy and reliable*

We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. We are honest about our motivations.

*b. **Wisdom:** leaders use experience, knowledge and insight*

We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness. We act calmly and rationally. We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

*c. **Kindness:** leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper*

We give difficult messages humanely where conflict is unavoidable.

*d. **Justice:** leaders are fair and work for the good of all children*

We seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.

*e. **Service:** leaders are conscientious and dutiful*

We demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures, conventions and rules which safeguard quality. Our actions protect high-quality education.

*f. **Courage:** leaders work courageously in the best interests of children and young people*

We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. We hold one another to account courageously.

*g. **Optimism:** leaders are positive and encouraging*

Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education to change the world for the better.



## Introduction

Recruiting for new trustees is a timely opportunity for the board to consider the size and composition of our board, and whether it is fit for purpose.

If some trustees often do not attend or do not participate actively when they do, the BCS Trust Board should think about whether their place on the board is surplus to requirements i.e. if we are functioning properly without them. Likewise, if we have a number of vacancies on paper but are running efficiently without filling them, we should consider formalising a reduction in size.

However, if we should decide to fill any vacancies with new Trustees, then the first step is to understand the skills and knowledge gaps we may have around the table. We are able to do this by analysing the skills and knowledge assessment exercise the board regularly undertakes.

The next step should be to designate who on the board (including the clerk) will be responsible for all the elements of the recruitment and selection process, and other factors, including:

- ✓ Writing and promoting information about the vacancy (advertising)
- ✓ Who to direct enquiries to from potential applicants and responding to questions
- ✓ To consider how long we will advertise the position for (i.e. start and a cut-off point for applicants)
- ✓ Reviewing the applications
- ✓ Contacting and interviewing volunteers
- ✓ Presenting recommendations to the board
- ✓ Arranging and conducting the induction
- ✓ The timescale of the process, giving regard to the meeting schedule

## The Recruitment Process

### Advertising

Once we know where our gaps lie, we will embark upon a wide-ranging advertising programme in order to alert potential candidates to our vacancies using the role description below and a criteria of skills and knowledge and what we expect from Trustees at The Blue Coat school. We should use this criterion when selecting or deselecting candidates.

The advertisement(s) should be within a previously agreed window using a start and closing date. Attached to this document is the application form which should be sent to all applicants.

Advertising the role may include (*but not limited to*) using the following outlets: -

- ✓ The school's website
- ✓ Letter to parents
- ✓ Letter to significant local employers
- ✓ The school newsletter
- ✓ Alumni
- ✓ The local press
- ✓ Social media
- ✓ Free external agencies such as 'Governors for Schools'
- ✓ The Local Authority
- ✓ Any other outlet deemed appropriate by the Director of Resource and Chair of Trustees

## The Initial Selection Process

The success of the recruitment process will depend on this journey being as smooth as possible for the volunteer.

Those responsible for the initial election of trustees should review all the applicants against the set criteria (i.e. compare what we have with what we asked for) and reject any unsuitable candidates. It may seem choosy to reject a potential volunteer, but ensuring that we have the right skills, attributes and motivations in potential trustees is vital.

After the closing date, the designated Trustee(s) will finalise the shortlist (*if we are in the fortunate position of having more candidates that we need to interview*). The shortlisted candidate(s) will be those whose knowledge, experience and skills best match the previously set criteria and add the most value.

These candidates can now be invited for an interview with the Chair (or Vice-Chair) and at least one other trustee.

## The Interview

Before recommending a candidate to the full trust board for board approval, the candidate should be interviewed to make sure that they are suitable to join the board. This also gives the candidate an opportunity to ask questions and make an informed decision about whether governing at our school is right for them.

An interview at this stage is imperative because: -

- Interviewing ensures that the role is seen as a professional one to which the volunteer must commit time and energy.
- An interview allows us to understand the candidate's motivations as well as their knowledge and skills
- Some candidates will be in contact with other governing boards who may also be recruiting, so an effective interview process will make a positive impression with a committed volunteer
- If possible, it is an opportunity for candidates to meet members of the SLT and other staff
- Seeing the school 'in action' will really enforce that governance is about improving outcomes for students and will serve as a useful insight for potential volunteers
- Safer Recruitment legislation states that all those working or volunteering in schools must be interviewed and suitable checks carried out.
- Interviewing helps the candidate to experience the ethos of the school to decide whether it is a good fit for them

### Suggested Interview questions

Interview questions should be relevant to the role and to the skills and attributes we are looking for. For each question chosen, consider what we are trying to find out by asking it, and what we expect to hear in a strong answer. Here are some suggestions:

Why are you looking to be a trustee at the BCS?

What do you know about the school and what have you found out about it?

What do you think are the challenges of the role?

School governance is a collective responsibility – can you tell me about a time when you have worked in a team to achieve a goal?

What attracted you to want to join the BCS trust board?

What experience, knowledge or skills would you bring to the role?

Our school is dedicated to improving educational provision for children and young people. In what ways would you hope to be able to support us in meeting our goals?

What experience (if any) do you have of developing an organisation?

What opportunities or challenges for schools does the current political, social and economic environment present?

Which professional/voluntary role have you enjoyed the most and why?

What do you consider to be your strengths and weakness?
How would colleagues or peers describe you?
What do you understand the role of a trustee to be?
What is your understanding of conflict of interests?
If you felt uncomfortable with a decision that has been made by the governing board, how would you raise and discuss the matter?
Will you be happy to abide by the Nolan principles of public life and code of conduct our governing board operates under?
What do you consider to be your greatest achievement to date?
How do you think the strategic role of the governing board differs from the operations of the school?
What is your understanding of ethical leadership in the context of education?

## Making a Decision

If after conducting the interview with a given candidate(s), the interviewing Trustees must present their findings relating to each candidate to a session of the full trust board. They should offer an opinion as to whether they recommend a candidate and the reasons for that recommendation and then be in a position to support the board in making a decision.

The board must decide if they, as a body, wish to endorse a given candidate for appointment to the board. If the board wishes to endorse a candidate, then the candidate application and a short summary of board considerations should be forwarded to the BCS Members group for appointment subject to the required checks taking place. All required checks in line with Government guidance will be undertaken by the school.

The Chair of Trustees will inform each applying candidate of the outcome of the process offering suitable feedback if requested.

-----

## Role Description

### TRUSTEES WORK TOGETHER TO CARRY OUT THEIR CORE FUNCTIONS:

1. Ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its students and the performance management of staff
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. Ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

Trustees are responsible for governing a charitable company and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees must also ensure that the trust complies with all legal and statutory requirements. Trustees should seek the advice of the board's governance professional and other professional advice as appropriate.

### THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES' STRATEGIC RESPONSIBILITIES

The board of trustees works closely with their senior executive leaders. Senior executive leaders are responsible for day to day operational management of the school, whereas the role of the board is strategic.

As such, trustees are responsible for:

- Determining the mission, values and long-term ambitious vision for the trust
- Deciding the principles that guide trust policies and approving key policies
- Appointing and appraising the senior executive leader and making pay recommendations
- Working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision

- Ensuring that stakeholders are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- Ensuring that the school delivers a broad and balanced curriculum such that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life
- Taking ownership of the trust's financial sustainability and ensuring effective resource management across the trust
- Agreeing the trust's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy
- Ensuring robust risk management policy and procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATING TRUST PERFORMANCE**

Trustees must monitor the priorities that have been set to ensure progress is being made by:

- Measuring the trust's impact and progress towards its strategic objectives
- Ensuring the required policies and procedures are in place and the trust is operating effectively in line with these policies
- Holding the senior executive leader to account for standards, financial probity and compliance with agreed policies
- Evaluating relevant data and feedback provided by senior executive leaders and external reporting on all aspects of trust performance
- Asking challenging questions of the senior executive leader in order to hold them to account
- Ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively

## **CONTRIBUTION TO THE GOVERNING BODY**

Trustees should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the board by:

- Attending board meetings (typically 6 full board meetings each year), reading papers and preparing questions for the senior executive leaders.
- Attending assigned Committee meetings as scheduled, reading papers and preparing questions for the senior executive leaders.
- Establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior executive leaders and colleagues on the board of trustees
- Getting to know the BCS school, including visiting occasionally during school hours.
- Undertaking induction training and developing knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis



# TRUSTEE APPLICATION FORM

**For  
internal  
use only.**  
Candidate  
No:

Please complete all sections as fully as possible and return to:

**Recruitment@bluecoatschool.org.uk**

## *Personal Details*

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr, Other):			
Surname:		Forename(s):	
Previous names (if applicable):			
Home Address:			
Postcode:		Mobile Telephone:	
Email:		Daytime Telephone:	
Are you the parent of a child attending The Blue Coat School? Please detail.			
Are you related to a Member, Trustee, member of staff or student at The Blue Coat School? Please detail.			

<b>Current membership of relevant professional bodies</b>		
<b>Professional Body/Association</b>	<b>Status/Membership</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Professional training relevant to this voluntary post</b>		
<b>Organising Body</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Date</b>

<b>Current or most recent employment</b>	
Current or most recent employer:	
Is this your current employer?	
Occupation:	

<b>References</b>		
Please supply the names and contact details of two referees. References cannot be from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.		
	1 <sup>st</sup> Referee	2 <sup>nd</sup> Referee
Full Name:		
Occupation:		
Organisation (if applicable):		
Address (incl postcode):		
Telephone:		
Email:		
In what capacity do you know this person?		

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Having read the information made available for governance recruitment and additional online materials, please provide details of:

1. The knowledge and experience you would bring to the role
2. Your reasons for wishing to become part of The Blue Coat School Board of Trustees
3. Anything else that you would like to tell us in support of your application

<b>1. Your knowledge and experience</b>				
Aspect	Your experience and knowledge			
	None	Some	Wide	Provide examples
<b>Strategic leadership:</b>				
Setting direction				
Culture and ethos				
Decision making				
Collaborative working with stakeholders and partners				
Risk management				
<b>Accountability for educational standards and financial performance</b>				
Educational improvement				
Rigorous analysis of data				
Financial frameworks and accountability				
Financial management and monitoring				
Staffing and performance management				
External accountability				
<b>People</b>				
Building an effective team				
<b>Structures</b>				
Roles and responsibilities				
<b>Compliance</b>				
Statutory and contractual				
<b>Evaluation</b>				
Managing self-review and development				

Managing and developing effectiveness				
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

**2. Your reasons for wishing to become part of the Blue Coat School Board of Trustees (250 words maximum)**

**3. Other relevant information in support of your application (250 words maximum)**



### **Eligibility, responsibility and declaration**

By completing and signing this application form, I declare that

I have read the trustee disqualification criteria and I am unaware of any impediments that would render me ineligible to serve as a company director or charity trustee.

I am willing to act as a Trustee of The Blue Coat School and aware of the roles, responsibilities and duties that would be placed upon me.

Signed:

Date:

Trustees will be able to claim reimbursement of expenses providing they are incurred in carrying out their duties as a Trustee.

Trustees may be able to claim for the following on a case-by-case basis:

1. The reasonable cost of travelling to and from Trust meetings and on trust business. This can include the cost of using public transport, taxi fares and petrol allowances to the level permitted by HM Revenue and Customs before tax becomes payable.
2. Mileage will be calculated according to the shortest route to and from the required destination. Mileage rates are currently 45p per mile for less than 10,000 per year, 25p per mile thereafter.
3. Subsistence costs, payable at the specified rates for trust staff, for the cost of meals taken whilst on trust business.
4. The reasonable cost of postage and telephone calls on trust business.
5. Reasonable communication support; translating documents into braille or into different languages; provision of learning and listening devices etc.
6. Cost of reasonable overnight accommodation and subsistence while attending trust meetings or other essential events.
7. Claims for reasonable cost of childcare, or care of other dependents whilst attending meetings or other agreed activities, such as training events. This excludes situations where the individual has a spouse, partner or other responsible adult who normally lives in the family home to help care for their children or other dependents. This will not normally exceed £50 in any school year.

Expenses must be affordable within the school's budget or allocated budget for trustee expenses and should follow the principle of value for money.

### **Expense payments which will not be paid:**

- Any expense in connection with foreign travel
- Payment of hotel accommodation or travel costs for spouses or partners who are not themselves travelling on Trust business.
- Expenses that can be claimed from another source.
- Compensation for loss of earnings whilst carrying out Trust business.
- Attendance allowance.

### **Arrangements for making claims:**

Where possible, Trustees should agree the anticipated cost of any expenditure which is to be reclaimed with the Chair before incurring such expenses. However, any expenditure which exceeds £25 must always be pre-approved by the Chair prior to being incurred.

The following process and principles will apply to the approval of expenses:

- The actual cost must be notified to the Chair within four weeks of incurrence
- A claim for reimbursement must be submitted to the Chair using an approved claim form within four weeks of the expense being incurred.
- A receipt is required in order to obtain a refund.
- In cases where the above principles have not been followed, the claim will be forwarded to the Audit and Risk Committee for review. If the Committee decides not to approve the claim then the claimant will be notified in writing of the reasons the expenses have not been approved and the claimant may then appeal in writing to the Chair of the Board of Trustees whose decision is final.
- All approved claims will be countersigned by the Director of Resources before being processed for payment.

**Accounting for Trustee Expense Claims**

A schedule of all expenses reimbursed will be created on an annual basis and submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee for review.

As part of the applicable Statement of Recommended Practice, the Trust will disclose as a note to its annual accounts:

- The total amount of trustee expenses
- The nature of various expenses
- The number of trustees involved
- If trustees have received no expenses this should also be stated.

**Other payments:**

No Trustee may receive any other financial benefit from the Trust such as payment for services unless this is permissible under the Articles of Association.

The Board of Trustees has agreed that arrangements will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis unless government guidance or legislation forces an earlier review. Any review will take into consideration all aspects of applicable legislation and advice current at the time of the review.