

Academy Committee Member Code of Conduct

September 2024

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1. Purpose

The purpose of Pele Trust is as follows:

- To build a learning community, brought together by choice, that enables our schools to support and challenge each other to provide consistently outstanding education whilst offering a stable pathway for students, parents and staff
- To have an influential voice and be instrumental in contributing to the development and enrichment of education in the north-east of England

2. Ambition

The ambition of Pele Trust is as follows:

To be a learning community where strong relationships ensure that everyone ...

- is happy
- learns and improves
- is known well and valued for who they are
- is included and listened to
- is fulfilled
- feels safe and secure
- promotes health and well being
- consistently experiences a rich, stimulating and challenging learning environment
- experiences a broad and balanced curriculum including a varied enrichment offer
- strives for excellence in all they do
- receives high quality and timely advice, support and guidance
- treats others with respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- contributes positively to the improvement of all of our schools
- recognises the important partnership between parents and school
- achieves exceptionally well from their individual starting points

3. Core values

Pele Trust is founded upon values at both Trust and School level

1. Our schools are each driven by a set of explicit values that guide and shape the culture and ethos
2. We are committed to pursuing excellence in a manner that we can be proud of and that values every child, pupil, and student equally
3. We are committed to acting with integrity and honesty in all of our decision-making
4. We are committed to operating with openness and transparency and welcome the benefits of peer review and external scrutiny
5. We are committed to making a positive contribution to the development of the Trust and recognise that we will receive support and challenge in return
6. We believe that all individuals should be treated with compassion and kindness
7. We are optimistic in our outlook and see a positive future for our schools and pupils as we work together to meet the challenges ahead
8. We believe that leaders at all levels should demonstrate humility and a sense of service to others
9. We will seek to uphold and model the Nolan principles of public life, namely: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership

4. The purpose of Academy Committee

Local Academy Committees (ACs) play a critical role to ensure each school delivers high-quality performance and upholds the values our partnership represents. ACs know their school best and are an integral partner to our Trust's continued improvement.

As a core function, the Academy Committee will ensure accountability by:

- Working within agreed policies
- Meeting agreed targets
- Managing its finances well
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Reporting to the Trust Board
- Delivering on its curriculum objectives to provide an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils
- Ensuring highly effective communication with parents, the wider community and key stakeholders

5. Individual responsibilities

As individuals on the Academy Committee we agree to the following:

5.1 Role & Responsibilities:

- We understand the purpose of the Academy Committee and the role of the headteacher
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Academy Committee has given us delegated authority to do so within the constraints of the Pele Trust Scheme of Delegation, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the school when we have been specifically authorised to do so
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Academy Committee or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Academy Committee meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and insofar as we have responsibility for all staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and all schools within Pele Trust
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the Academy Committee and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the Pele Trust Board of Directors
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher. We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We will fulfil our role and responsibilities as set out in the scheme of delegation
- We will not discriminate against anyone and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all

5.2 Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as an Academy Committee member involves the commitment of time and energy
 - We commit to serving 1-2 terms of office, i.e. up to 8 years
 - The expectation for the Chair is to serve no more than 2 terms of office and up to 6 years as Chair
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Academy Committee, 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 our school well and consider opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction and development and will undertake relevant training
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school website
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to Academy Committee members will be collected and logged on the Pele Trust website

5.3 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 Academy Committee members and the clerk to the Academy Committee
- We will support the Chair and Vice Chair in their roles of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times
- We are prepared to answer queries from other Academy Committee 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 the Pele Trust CEO, headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies, and the community
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally

5.4 Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils
- We will exercise the greatest prudence and discretion at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside an Academy Committee meeting
- We will not reveal the details of any Academy Committee vote
- This confidentiality extends to any use of social media we undertake

5.5 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 Academy Committee'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 individual group

6. Implementation 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; the Academy Committee will only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways
- Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another Academy Committee member, such as the Vice Chair will investigate.
- We recognise that removing an Academy Committee member from office is a last resort and that it is the Directors that have the power to remove those they appoint
- If the need arises to use the sanction of removing an Academy Committee member, a clear recommendation from the Academy Committee Chair will be made to Directors for their consideration

7. Undertaking

As an Academy Committee member of a Pele Trust school I will always have the achievement and well-being of the pupils in the school, and the reputation of the school and Pele Trust at heart.

I will strive to be an ambassador for the school and Pele Trust, publicly supporting its aims, ethos, and values. I will never say or do anything that would embarrass the school, headteacher, Pele Trust, the CEO, other Trust schools, headteachers, or the staff. This includes any use of social media.