

## RSSKL TRUSTEE COMMITMENTS AND CODE OF CONDUCT October 2017

### **The purpose of the Trustee Council**

The Trustee Council is the school's accountable governing body. It is responsible for the strategy, ethos and conduct of the school and for promoting high standards, and fulfilling the School's Mission and Charitable Objects. The RSSKL Trustee Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### **The Trustee Council has the following core functions:**

1. *Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined, and that the School is an active member of the local community*
  - a. Setting the values, aims and objectives for the school
  - b. Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives and targets
  - c. Agreeing the school improvement strategy
  - d. Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
2. *Ensuring the effectiveness of leadership and management, and that the Principal and SLT perform their responsibilities well*
  - a. Appointing the Principal who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the Council
  - b. Performance managing the Principal and holding them to account for the performance of the school
  - c. Responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
3. *Ensuring that the School is delivering an excellent education for all its children rooted in Steiner Waldorf education principles*
  - a. Monitoring information about pupil progress, attendance and behaviour
  - b. Evaluating implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - c. Signing off the school's self-evaluation report
  - d. Monitoring the continual professional development of staff
  - e. Ensuring the strengthening of the Steiner ethos of the School
4. *Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's resources*
  - a. Setting and monitoring the School budget, including staffing structure
  - b. Monitoring spend and ensuring value for money and that risks are managed
5. *Ensuring that the governance of the School is strong and able to respond to current and future challenges.*

For the Trustees to carry out their role effectively, they must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

In law the Trustee Council is a corporate body, which means:

- No Trustee can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full council;
- All Trustees carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- Although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, community), the overriding concern of all Trustees has to be the welfare of the children, and school as a whole.

## Commitments of the Trustees

### General:

- We understand the purpose of the council and the role of the Principal set out above
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life (see appendix)
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the council has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the council when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- 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 accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the council or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the council meetings.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We will promote tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation.
- 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.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Council.

### 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 Council, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to. Apologies will be noted in all cases, but accepted only in exceptional circumstances.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the trustee council and agreed with the Principal.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the Principal.
- We accept that in the interests of openness and transparency, our names, terms of office, details of positions of responsibility on the Council, category of Trustee will be published on the school's website
- At RSSKL we expect all Trustees to read papers in advance of meetings, sit on at least one committee, make an arranged visit during the school day three times a year and attend Trustee training sessions appropriate to their role.

### 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.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other Trustees 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 Principal, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

### **Steiner principles**

- We are committed to promoting education of the whole child, in keeping with the principles of Steiner education
- We are committed to the School's Mission Statement:

*"Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education."* – Marie Steiner

'The primary task of Rudolf Steiner School Kings Langley is to provide the best possible education for its pupils so they may become not only knowledgeable, but also inwardly free, secure and creative adults. The school strives to provide an environment in which pupils find security, moral strength and confidence to face the challenges of life with initiative and responsibility.'

### **Confidentiality**

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

### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the Council'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 website.
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We will act in the best interests of the school and not as a representative of any group.

### **Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the trustee council should 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 Trustee, such as the vice chair will investigate;
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any Trustee shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of Trustees, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.

- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school Trustee, Schedule 6 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 and Schedule 4 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, relating to the disqualifications from the role of school Trustee (held as a separate document) and the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013

**The Trustee Council of RSSKL adopted this code of practice on 16 October 2017.** Trustees will sign the Code at the first Full Trustee Council meeting of each school year.

**Undertaking:**

As a member of the Council I will always have the well-being of the children and 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 say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Trustee Council, the Principal or staff.

*Signed by all Trustees*

October 2017.

**Appendix: The Seven Principles of Public Life**

*(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. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

**Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

**Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**Related areas/Policies:**

- Role Profile for all Trustees