



## TRUSTEE INDUCTION POLICY

### TO APPROVE

Signature of CEO	
Date:	
Signature of Chair of Board:	
Date:	
Agreed at the Board Meeting on:	
Minute Reference:	

Document reference:	<b>Version 2.0</b>
Created by:	<b>Jenny Hanlon</b>
Creation date:	<b>Jan 20</b>
Reviewed by:	<b>Board</b>
Review date:	<b>July 20</b>
Master File location:	<b>SharePoint BEST Policies</b>
Next review due:	<b>July 21</b>

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This Trustee Induction Policy<sup>1</sup> applies to all trustees within the Believe Engage Succeed Trust (BEST).

## **1 GET TO KNOW YOUR MAT**

The first thing that you should do is to start to get to know the Believe Engage Succeed Trust.

### **1.1 Understand the MAT's purposes**

You should know about what makes it a Charitable Trust and why it exists:

- its purposes,
- how it works to achieve them,
- who it helps – the beneficiaries.

Clarity on these is essential to making a successful contribution to the Charitable Trust as a trustee. They are also at the heart of how BEST promotes itself and accounts to the public.

### **1.2 Read all relevant governing documentation of the MAT and understand the rules**

There are a set of key documents<sup>2</sup> that need to be read annually by all trustees of the MAT and confirmation of this will need to be provided by the end of September each year. On becoming a trustee, you should read these prior to becoming an active board member. They will help you understand how the MAT operates, what is expected of you and the key aspects of providing services for children, **specifically your safeguarding duties**. Make sure you know and understand these documents, as they form the foundation for your role as a trustee.

### **1.3 Meet your fellow trustees**

Get to know all the trustees, because you are collectively responsible and accountable for the overall management of the MAT, including areas where you may not be directly involved. These relationships will be key to the MAT's success, particularly in times of challenge. Encourage and respect each other and the time and effort you are all prepared to give. Find time outside of board meetings to get to know one another.

The BEST Board Organogram, located on the SharePoint site – BEST Board shows the inter-relationship between governance and executive structures with the roles involved and the names of those in each role, includes an outline of each trustees skills and experience, together with details of all BEST committees that the trustees serve on. In addition, a short bio of each trustee is available

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Charity Trustee Welcome Pack located at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-trustee-welcome-pack/charity-trustee-welcome-pack>

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1

on the BEST website <https://best-education.co.uk>. Note that as a new trustee you will be asked to submit your bio for publication during the Induction process.

#### **1.4 Find out how the MAT operates**

A wealth of information is available on the BEST SharePoint site. Not only the Key Documents (as referred to above), but also:

- previous board minutes,
- monthly management accounts,
- annual financial statements,
- internal audit reports and subsequent actions taken by the MAT,
- the risk register,
- governance structure/organisation chart.

In the absence of a formal trustee communication policy if you are approached in your capacity as a trustee by the press you should refer them to the CEO. No communications should be made as a trustee via social media unless expressly given permission to do so by the Board. BEST - Code of Conduct for Trustees offers further guidance in this area, in particular, Sections 5 and 6.

It is possible that you will be personally approached by a member of staff, a parent, or a student with a complaint/grievance or information that requires action. In this instance you should inform the CEO, or if not appropriate to do so, contact the Chairman.

It is important to understand the MAT's finances:

- how much money does it have?
- where is it held?
- where does it come from, how is it calculated and what plans are in place for spending it?

Bear in mind that MAT funding is different to some other public services, charities, and the private sector.

#### **1.5 Visit the schools that are governed by the MAT**

Aim to visit to all BEST schools in the first 12 months. Each visit ought to be with another trustee to minimise time taken up by the school. The visit should always be arranged in conjunction with the Board and the relevant Head Teacher.

#### **1.6 Meet the members of the trust**

The Board aims to meet with the members at least once a year.

## **2 REGULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **2.1 Attend trustee meetings**

Meetings will be a necessary and consistent call on your time as a trustee. It is important to prepare for them and use them to contribute your views and ideas. Use these occasions to make sure that the MAT is on track, and expect to be able to monitor its performance against plans and any key risks.

Be prepared to ask questions, particularly on things you are unclear about to increase your knowledge.

### **2.2 Make decisions**

This is such an important part of your role. Some decisions will be straightforward, others more complex. Use relevant guidance, research and robust discussion with your fellow board members to help you make sure your decisions are properly made, particularly when you are taking those more difficult strategic decisions, such as those affecting the provision of services by the schools, assets or future direction.

If a Trustee feels expert support is required to assist them in understanding issues around which they must make a decision, then they have a right to access that support externally, with the help of the Trust or on their own initiative. Costs of this external support would normally be paid for by the Trust

You should ensure that you have the information you need and that decisions are considered as a group. While some trustees may have specialist knowledge that you will want to rely on, be careful not to let any one individual dominate the actual decision-making process.

### **2.3 Conduct**

The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the board are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable board members to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team and make an active contribution to effective governance. BEST - Code of Conduct for Trustees (being one of the Key documents referred to in Section 1.2 above) includes essential information and guidance in this area.

All those elected or appointed to boards should fulfil their duties in line with the 7 principles of public life (the Nolan principles) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>. They should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation, recognising and encouraging diversity and inclusion. They should understand the impact of effective governance on the equality of education and on outcomes for all children and young people.

If conflicts of interest exist, they can be relatively straightforward to manage. Good awareness and having a system in place to handle them are crucial.

You will need to:

- identify conflicts of interest when they arise,
- prevent them from affecting any decision,
- record how they are handled.

Getting this right is not just a matter of meeting legal requirements, it also shows integrity, honesty and openness about what the MAT does and how it does it. These values influence your stakeholders' willingness to support the MAT, and their trust and confidence that the MAT is run appropriately.

### **3 KNOW YOUR STATUTORY DUTIES**

It is important that you know your statutory duties. In almost any trustee activity or decision at least one of these duties will be relevant. Trustees must comply with the trust's charitable objects, with company and charity law, and with their funding agreement.

Company directors<sup>3</sup> duties in summary are to:

- act within their powers,
- promote the success of the company,
- exercise independent judgement,
- exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence,
- avoid conflicts of interest,
- not accept benefits from third parties,
- declare interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

### **4 BEST ADMINISTRATION**

All documentation and administration for board and committee members is held on the BEST SharePoint site. Upon becoming a trustee, you will receive:

- a Business Interest Registration form to complete and return,
- a request for copies of your identification, to be taken in person, so that a DBS check can be completed,
- a BEST email address,
- access to the relevant sections of the BEST SharePoint site,
- an overview of how the SharePoint site is constructed, where data is held and how it is filed,

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<sup>3</sup> Trustees act as company directors.

- when sharing data, all documents should be loaded on the SharePoint site, using emails to communicate with Board members referring to the file location. Files should not be attached to emails as this will avoid version control issues and minimise the risk of data loss,
- training on how to use the related software applications if required, including access to templates,
- relevant Wi-Fi codes and manual proxy keys so that each member can utilise relevant hardware at meetings and when on site,
- an overview of how GDPR<sup>4</sup> impacts you as a trustee.

## 5 IF THINGS GO WRONG

It is recognised that in your role as trustee mistakes could be made and things might go wrong. While it is rare for trustees to be held personally liable, understanding your potential liabilities will help you protect yourself. If something does go wrong, make sure that you and the other trustees:

- act quickly to minimise loss or damage,
- let the right people know, for example contact the police if there has been a crime,
- Decide on a coherent and honest communication strategy review the situation and learn how to stop it happening again.

## 6 WHISTLEBLOWING

**The Whistleblowing policy is available on the Trust website. This policy applies equally to employees, and volunteers including explicitly Members and Trustees.**

## 7 TRAINING

As a member of Academy Ambassadors (this is free to join), you have access to various courses and events. Once a member, you will receive emails about these. Three to look out for are

- Introduction to MAT Governance – 1-hour webinar, occurs monthly.
- Building better trust boards – all day event, ideal for big picture view, insight, and networking opportunities.
- NSPCC's online training: Child protection for school governors  
[https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/schools/child-protection-for-school-governors-online-course/?utm\\_source=our\\_elearning\\_courses&utm\\_medium=nspcc\\_learning&utm\\_campaign=nspcc\\_training](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/schools/child-protection-for-school-governors-online-course/?utm_source=our_elearning_courses&utm_medium=nspcc_learning&utm_campaign=nspcc_training)
- Government online training for Prevent Duty  
<https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html#>

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<sup>4</sup> General Data Protection Regulation

## 8 CONTACT BOOK

There are several organisations that can provide information or assistance to trustees. These include:

[Charity Commission for England and Wales](#) the regulator of charities in England and Wales.

[Department for Education](#) is the department of government responsible for child protection, education, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

[Ofsted](#) is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills and is a non-ministerial department of the UK government.

[Association of Chairs \(AoC\)](#) – offers resources and support to chairs and vice-chairs of charities and non-profit organisations.

[Charity Finance Group \(CFG\)](#) – champions best practice in finance management in the voluntary sector.

[Directory of Social Change \(DSC\)](#) - provides trustee training courses, publications and several free resources.

[Ethical Property Foundation \(EPA\)](#) UK charity which offers voluntary organisations free property guidance, advice and workshops and a wide range of expert advice on legal issues and premises management.

[Financial Conduct Authority \(FCA\)](#) - provides support and guidance in your role as a trustee/non-executive director. This financial regulatory body in the United Kingdom, operating independently of the UK Government, financed by charging fees to members of the financial services industry. The FCA regulates financial firms providing services to consumers and maintains the integrity of the financial markets in the United Kingdom.

[The Foundation for Social Improvement \(FSI\)](#) - provides strategic support for small charities.

[Fundraising Regulator](#) the independent regulator of charitable fundraising.

[ICSA: the Governance Institute](#) – trains, informs and represents the interests of governance professionals across all sectors and offers free to access guidance notes specific to the charity sector.

[Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#) UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights.

[National Association for Voluntary and Community Action \(NAVCA\)](#) - England's largest network of local charities and community groups.

[National Council of Voluntary Organisations \(NCVO\)](#) – champions the voluntary sector and volunteering. Connects, represents, and supports voluntary organisations, from the smallest community groups to the largest charities.

[National Governance Association \(NGA\)](#) - provides support and guidance. It is a membership organisation for governors, trustees, and clerks of state schools in England.

[Reach Volunteering](#) – provides a trustee recruitment service and useful resources for charities and people interested in joining trustee boards.

[Small Charities Coalition \(SCC\)](#) – helps trustees, staff, and volunteers of small charities (those with an income of less than £1 million) access the skills, tools, and information they may need.

## APPENDIX 1

### KEY TRUST DOCUMENTS

1. Articles of Association
2. BEST governance structures – short form
3. BEST Trustee Code of Conduct policy
4. Academy Financial Handbook ESFA
5. Governance Handbook – Department for Education
6. Governance Competency Framework – Department for Education
7. Keeping Children Safe in Education – Parts 1,2,3,4 and Annex A
8. The Prevent Duty
9. Safeguarding & Child Protection Policies for all schools in the trust