

Ethical leadership – statement of principles

September 2018

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Associated documents:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASCL Ethical Leadership Commission • The Ethical Framework for Leadership 	
Links to:	

Approved by the Trust Board, September 2018

Our Vision

We have one core purpose:

To have the biggest positive impact in the varied communities we serve through ensuring top drawer education for our learners. #TransformingLives

How do we ensure this across our trust?

In all we do we are:

1. Ethical to the core, ensuring that education is always front and centre
2. Futures focused system leaders – never simply followers
3. Collaborative in every endeavour
4. Resolutely learner centred.

What does this look like across our trust?

Education

We are:

1. Ruthlessly ambitious for all who learn and work with us
2. Unwaveringly inclusive – determined on eradicating barriers to educational success
3. Committed to excellent teaching
4. Determined upon academic excellence for all in our communities
5. Compassionate, ethical and caring advocates for all in our communities
6. Outwardly facing and globally conscious

Operations

We are:

1. Committed to the very best people development and empowerment
2. Determined to shout loudly and share proudly our successes
3. The best professional and technical experts (supporting education) in the sector
4. Committed to the very best understanding and management of risk

Financial

We are:

1. Providing the best possible public service for the best possible value
2. Determined to supplement our public income with shrewd income generation
3. Building financially sustainable models of educational improvement in our communities
4. Demonstrably efficient in all we do

Our values

- We will work inclusively within our communities, embracing the varied localities we serve while sharing our common vision and values.
- We will develop the very best leaders of the future, working to improve education and transform lives.
- We will adhere unwaveringly to the ‘Nolan Principles’ of Public Service, which is made clear in our commitment to Ethical Leadership.

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1 The national context

1.1 The MAT system has been somewhat beleaguered by understandable media interest in some poor MAT ethical behaviours. This is in danger of damaging the hugely positive impact the evolution of the system is having in countless communities across the country.

1.2 In addition, recent works by the ASCL Ethical Leadership Commission (ELC – <https://chartered.college/ethical-leadership-commission>) has exposed a “system gap” in leadership training and development. The National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (DfE) (THE benchmark by which English Headteacher/Principal effectiveness is currently judged (we will use it in EPAMLS and ECALMS across ATT) has very little to say on the matter of professional ethics. It does make some loose statements about professional behaviours; but there is no explicit reference to professional ethics or codes.

1.3 Similarly, the Teachers’ Standards (DfE – Part B) does make a more explicit statement (Teachers should: ‘Uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour’). However, the document references broad behaviours rather than the specific responsibilities of those in leadership positions – especially in the most senior roles and in governance.

1.4 ASCL has established its ELC in response to the above context. It has also started that the current fragmented English education system along with multiple, high stakes accountabilities, makes leaders more vulnerable to rash, hasty decision – often not ethically framed or referenced.

1.5 Finally ASCL believes that the principles ultimately produced via its ELC (an ‘Ethical Framework for Educational leadership) will help all educational leaders operate in a healthier, more transparently ethical manner. The ELC’s ultimate aim is to embed the framework in professional development programmes – and a proposal will be passed to the DfE in September 2018.

2 The ATT context

2.1 We need to reassure ourselves, across the group, that our culture is one dominated by the very strongest ethical behaviours.

2.2 To that end, we have adopted, in full, the Ethical Framework for Leadership – <https://chartered.college/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ELC-final-report.pdf>)

3 Governance

3.1 We currently ensure that all members, trustees and governors are made explicitly aware of the seven principles of public life (often known as the Nolan principles. This is done at the point of induction into the group.

3.2 Every year members, trustees and governors sign a Code of Conduct which states the Nolan principles.

3.3 From September 2018 all common agendas for members, trust and LAC meetings will have an explicit reminder of the Nolan principles at the top of the agenda. Chairs of the relevant meetings will remind all attendees, (when appropriate/necessary) of the principles – especially when making significant strategic decisions. This will be pertinent, for example, when considering permanent exclusions of students or executive/senior pay and reward arrangements or what school/academy type to accept into our MAT.

4 Operations

4.1 Expectations of operational leaders, at both senior and middle leadership are rooted in professional standards. In addition to the Nolan principles and our use of the ISBL professional standards, broader value for money is central to our core operational objectives.

5 Education

5.1 Our senior executives, principals, senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers' employment contracts all currently reference either the Teachers; Standards and (where appropriate) the National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers.

5.2 From September 2018, all ATT employment contracts will also reference this statement.