

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:	

Our Vision – Transforming education: Transforming performance: Transforming lives

Putting children and young people at the heart of all that we do.

We will ensure that all our children and young people, regardless of their background, fulfil their educational potential. We will do this in safe, supportive and ambitious environments, ensuring we maximise life chances for them all.

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 – detailed in appendix one, page 3). 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.