

## Trustee Code of Conduct

The Association for the Study of Primary Education (ASPE) relies on the integrity, professionalism and commitment of its trustees. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and governance expected of trustees to safeguard ASPE's charitable objects, public trust and the wellbeing of those the charity serves. Trustees must read and act in accordance with this Code alongside the ASPE Constitution (Revised 2025) and all the charity's policies (including Safeguarding, Conflicts of Interest, Data Protection, Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption, Public Communications and Media and Whistleblowing). Compliance with this Code is a condition of holding office.

### Core Duties and Fiduciary Responsibilities

Trustees must act in good faith and in the best interests of ASPE. In particular, each trustee must:

- Understand and uphold ASPE's charitable objects and ensure the charity acts only for public benefit.
- Comply with fiduciary duties: act prudently with ASPE's assets, avoid personal gain from the trustee role, and exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in decision making.
- Ensure ASPE complies with the law, its governing documents and regulatory obligations, including accounting, reporting and annual return duties.
- Contribute to setting and reviewing ASPE's strategic direction, policies and risk appetite and monitor performance against agreed plans.
- Participate actively in governance duties, including preparation for meetings, constructive scrutiny of papers and collective oversight of financial and operational matters.

### Conflicts of Interest and Independence

Trustees must declare interests promptly and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts in line with ASPE's Conflicts of Interest Policy. In particular:

- Register relevant interests on appointment and update the register without delay when circumstances change.
- Recuse themselves from discussion and decision making where a conflict exists or may reasonably be perceived to exist; record recusals in meeting minutes.
- Not use ASPE information, opportunities or assets for personal or third-party advantage.
- Seek advice from the Chair, Secretariat or independent advisers to manage complex conflicts where appropriate.

### Integrity, Conduct and Professional Standards

Trustees must maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in fulfilling their role. Trustees must:

- Act honestly, fairly and respectfully in all ASPE activities and communications, modelling the charity's values of respect, integrity, inclusion, evidence-led practice and duty of care.
- Treat colleagues, volunteers, members, partners and the public with dignity and without discrimination.
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive and personal information acquired through trustee duties, disclosing only when required by law or authorised governance processes.
- Not bring ASPE into disrepute through behaviour in public or private life that is incompatible with the charity's objects or safeguarding responsibilities.
- Avoid conduct that could create a perception of impropriety or undermine public confidence in ASPE.

## **Safeguarding, Duty of Care and Confidentiality**

Trustees share responsibility for a culture of safeguarding and must:

- Ensure ASPE has and follows robust safeguarding policies and procedures, and that trustees are aware of statutory duties and reporting routes.
- Promptly report any safeguarding concerns about the charity's activities, volunteers or partners to the designated safeguarding lead in line with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Protect personal data and sensitive information in accordance with ASPE's Data Protection and Privacy Policy and legal obligations; only share confidential information on a need-to-know basis and ensure secure record keeping.

## **Financial Stewardship and Risk Oversight**

Trustees are collectively responsible for ASPE's financial health and risk management. Trustees must:

- Approve and monitor budgets, financial controls and reporting; satisfy themselves that proper accounting records and internal controls are in place.
- Ensure procurement, grant-making and contracting follow ASPE procedures, with transparency, value for money and appropriate due diligence.
- Identify and oversee major risks, ensuring proportional mitigation and timely escalation of material concerns to the Executive Committee.
- Declare any personal or organisational financial interests in funding, procurement or commercial arrangements and withdraw from related decisions.

## **Gifts, Hospitality and Anti-Bribery**

Trustees must not accept gifts, hospitality or benefits that could reasonably be perceived to influence, or appear to influence, their independence. Trustees must:

- Declare offers of gifts or hospitality in line with ASPE's Gifts and Hospitality Register and refuse or return any that are inappropriate.
- Prohibit facilitation payments or any form of corrupt practice in line with ASPE's Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy.
- Seek guidance from the Chair or Secretariat where the appropriateness of a gift or hospitality is unclear.

## **Communications, Media and Representation**

Trustees represent ASPE's governance and must ensure public communications reflect its values and legal duties. Trustees must:

- Not speak on behalf of ASPE in public or to the media unless authorised to do so.
- Use social media responsibly; not disclose confidential information or engage in conduct that undermines ASPE's reputation.
- Support a values-centred communications culture that is accurate, evidence-led and protective of participants and beneficiaries.

## **Meetings and Collective Decision-Making**

Trustees should engage constructively in board business and support collective governance. Trustees must:

- Attend meetings regularly, prepare in advance, contribute constructively and respect majority decisions once reached.
- Support good governance by ensuring accurate minutes record decisions, actions and declared conflicts.
- Maintain professional conduct in meetings: listen respectfully, allow others to speak, and address disagreements with appropriate professional language through appropriate channels rather than personal criticism.
- Where a trustee considers a decision unlawful or incompatible with the charity's objects, raise concerns promptly and, if unresolved, seek independent advice or, where appropriate, record dissent in the minutes.

## Whistleblowing, Reporting and Accountability

Trustees must encourage an open culture in which concerns about wrongdoing, misconduct or risk can be raised without fear of reprisal. Trustees must:

- Support ASPE's Whistleblowing Policy and protections for those raising concerns in good faith.
- Report suspected fraud, serious misconduct or material legal breaches to the Chair, the Secretariat and, where necessary, to regulatory or law enforcement bodies.
- Cooperate fully with any internal or external investigations and comply with remedial actions or recommendations.

## Breach, Remedial Action and Removal

Breach of this Code is taken seriously. Where a trustee is suspected of misconduct, the Executive Committee will follow fair, proportionate and documented procedures. Outcomes may include:

- Informal resolution, coaching or mediation; formal censure; temporary suspension from trustee duties; requirement to repay funds or return assets where applicable; removal from office in line with the Constitution; referral to professional bodies or statutory authorities where required.
- The trustee subject to investigation will be given an opportunity to respond to allegations and may be asked to stand aside pending investigation where necessary to protect the charity or individuals.

## Record of Acceptance

I, the undersigned, confirm that I have read, understood and agree to comply with the ASPE Code of Conduct for Trustees and with the charity's governing documents and policies. I agree to declare any relevant interests and to act at all times in the best interests of ASPE.

Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	