

Navigating the educational moral maze

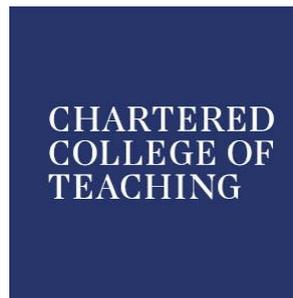
Ethical Leadership in
Education



The Ethical Leadership Commissioners

2017-2019

- Martyn Beer, Deputy Head, Bootham School, York, and ASCL Council member
- Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive, Confederation of School Trusts (CST)
- Professor Becky Francis, Director of University College of London Institute of Education
- The Rev Nigel Genders, Chief Education Officer of the Church of England
- Dr Peter Kent, International Confederation of Principals
- Emma Knights, Chief Executive, National Governance Association (NGA)
- Anne Lyons, President of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
- Julie McCulloch, Director of Policy, Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Dr Jane Martin CBE, Committee on Standards in Public Life
- Valentine Mulholland, Head of Policy, NAHT
- Stephen Munday, Teaching Schools Council
- Dame Alison Peacock, Chief Executive, Chartered College of Teaching
- Dr William Richardson, General Secretary, Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC)
- Carolyn Roberts (chair), former ASCL Honorary Secretary and Headteacher, Thomas Tallis School, Greenwich
- Amanda Spielman, HM Chief Inspector, Ofsted
- Roger Steare, Corporate Philosopher in Residence at the Cass Business School
- James Toop, Chief Executive, Ambition School Leadership
- Malcolm Trobe CBE, independent education specialist, NPQEL Programme Director for ASCL



What are schools for?

What does the taxpayer expect of us?

What does *in loco parentis* mean?

What does society need us to do?

Who are school leaders?

We are professional and voluntary

We are simultaneously

- public intellectuals with
- advanced interpersonal skills and
- a liking for children

Leaders make decisions

We work with ambiguity and impossible choices.

We weigh the needs of one child against hundreds; we make hard decisions with insufficient funding; we deal with traumatised children and desperate parents. We manage hard-pressed, devoted and occasionally truculent colleagues.

We are gatekeepers for educational standards and happy communities that build up confident neighbourhoods.

‘What the leaders are themselves’

Kipling:

No printed word or spoken plea

Can teach young hearts how we should be

Nor all the books on all the shelves

But what the leaders are themselves

We make all our decisions under scrutiny as diligent professionals and the watchful eyes of the young.

What we do matters.

How we do it matters even more.

Where is the wisdom in the system?

Decision-making and external pressures

With professionals in a system that values autonomy highly.

Thousands of individuals making decisions and setting examples day after day, child after child.

The system relies on us, alone, together.

The dark night of the decision-maker

Imagine the most difficult decisions you make, those that wake you at two in the morning and again at three and four. Choices that only you can make. Decisions that could derail a child's education, unravel his home or finish a career. Judgements where the 30 seconds of quiet you give yourself before picking up the phone or opening the door offer only noisy silence and competing claims. Decisions when you have to do what's right without KPIs or quality standards.

Ethics, the language of how to live

What are the values and virtues of the good life?

Professional standards?

National standards?

We offer no code: we have enough boxes to tick.

The Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education

The draft framework is based on the *Seven Principles for Public Life*.

1. Selflessness

Leaders should act solely in the interest of children and young people.

2. Integrity

Leaders must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Leaders must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Leaders are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Leaders should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Leaders should be truthful.

7. Leadership

School and college leaders should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

This needs expanding in the context of our dual duty of

- *public service to the young*
- *modelling the behaviour of a good society*

Seven Virtues

Schools and colleges serve children and young people and help them grow into fulfilled and valued citizens. In our role as leaders we should demonstrate the *Standards for Public Life* and demonstrate leadership through the following virtues.

When acting as role models for the young, how we behave is as important as what we do.

1. Trust

Leaders are trustworthy and reliable.

We hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach.

We are honest about our motivations.

2. Wisdom

Leaders use experience, knowledge and insight

We demonstrate moderation and self-awareness.

We act calmly and rationally.

We serve our schools and colleges with propriety and good sense.

3. Kindness

Leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper.

Where unavoidable conflict occurs, difficult messages are given humanely.

4. Justice

Leaders should be fair and work for the good of all children.

We should work fairly for the good of children from all backgrounds.

We should seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives.

5. Service

Leaders should be conscientious and dutiful.

We should demonstrate humility and self-control, supporting the structures and rules which safeguard quality.

Our actions should protect high-quality education.

6. Courage

Leaders should work courageously in the best interests of children and young people.

We protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education.

We hold one another to account courageously.

7. Optimism

Leaders should be positive and encouraging.

Despite difficulties and pressures we are developing excellent education provision to change the world for the better.

The language of ethical leadership

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

Leadership

Trust

Wisdom

Kindness

Justice

Service

Courage

Optimism

Our work now

1. The *Framework* and the *Pathfinder* programme
2. Leadership development
3. The *Ethics Forum*

Most of all, use the language.

Pathfinder Programme

We have a *Pathfinder Programme* for schools, trusts and boards to recognise values and virtues needed in decision-making. We hope participants will identify themselves publicly as colleagues who try to work in accordance with the Framework.

Nearly 250 schools have signed up so far. There's an *Ethics Exchange* meeting twice a year to share experiences.

ethicalschools@nga.org.uk

Sustaining the profession

We will work with government and providers to *embed the Framework in leadership and teacher training.*

We hope that young colleagues joining the profession will recognise their own vision and motivation in the work of leaders, stay the course and aspire to join us.

The Ethics Forum

We have a space to discuss ethical issues in an *Ethics Forum*, open to anyone.

We consider issues that concern us most or hover on the horizon, and offer collaborative FELE guidance to encourage colleagues.

hello@charteredcollege.org

croberts@thomastallis.org.uk

We are none of us perfect

Professionalism requires us to make judgements in situations of unavoidable ambiguity. The Framework aims to offer support in those difficult times.

Why does it matter? Schools are where society looks after its young until they take on the mantle of adult citizenship. We need to be confident that we are building the kind of society we all want to live in.

We hope that the language of ethics will help us do that.

Annual Summit 2020

Thursday 30 January 2020, Institute of Education, London

Bring your questions, and your answers



