CHINESE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHAMPTON

TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

Trustees of the Chinese Association of Southampton (CAS) are expected to uphold the core values that guide the mission and activities of the organisation. These values include:

A. Core Values

1. Accountability

   Trustees are expected to act with the highest degree of accountability. Decisions and actions should stand up to scrutiny from members, stakeholders, funders, the public, media, Charity Commission, and other regulatory bodies.

2. Integrity and Honesty

   Integrity and honesty should guide all interactions within CAS and with external partners.

3. Transparency

   CAS is committed to an atmosphere of openness in its operations, promoting public and stakeholder confidence.

B. Legal Compliance, Mission, and Policies

1. Trustees must act in accordance with CAS's governing documents, policies, and procedures.
2. Trustees must comply with all relevant laws and charity regulations.
3. Trustees are expected to support and promote the mission and objectives of CAS, acting as guardians of its values and purpose.
4. An up-to-date understanding of CAS and its environment is essential for effective governance.

C. Conflicts of Interest

1. Trustees are to act in the best interests of CAS, prioritising the needs of present and future beneficiaries.
2. Trustees should promptly disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to maintain trust and objectivity.
3. Trustees must accept the Committee's decisions regarding conflict management.

D. Related Parties Disclosure

1. Trustees are required to disclose any relationships, transactions, or interests involving themselves, their immediate family members, or affiliated entities that could influence, or be perceived to influence, their decisions or actions on behalf of CAS.

2. All related parties' disclosures must be documented accurately to ensure transparency, maintain trust, and protect the integrity of the Committee's governance processes.

3. Where applicable, trustees shall recuse themselves from discussions or decisions involving any disclosed related parties to uphold objectivity and impartiality.

E. Interpersonal Conduct

1. Trustees are required to follow laws, regulations, and CAS policies in all interactions with fellow trustees, staff, volunteers, members, service recipients, contractors, and others.
2. Respectful, collegial, and courteous relationships should be fostered with everyone involved in CAS activities.
3. Trustees serving as CAS volunteers must distinguish their roles as trustees and volunteers.

F. Protecting the Organisation's Reputation

1. Public statements about CAS should only be made with proper authorisation.
2. When representing CAS, trustees' statements must align with organisational policy.
3. Trustees should uphold CAS's reputation in private and maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information related to CAS, the Committee, and its stakeholders.

G. Zero Tolerance for Bullying

1. Policy

CAS enforces a zero-tolerance policy toward bullying, including verbal, physical, and psychological harassment.

2. Respectful Communication

All trustees and committee members are expected to communicate respectfully, avoiding any form of disrespectful language or behaviour.

3. Reporting

Bullying incidents should be reported confidentially to the Chair or Vice Chair and will be addressed with seriousness and thorough investigation.

4. Consequences

Disciplinary measures, including possible suspension or removal, will be taken for trustees or committee members found engaging in bullying.

5. Support for Victims

CAS commits to supporting individuals affected by bullying to ensure their safety and well-being within the organisation.

6. Promoting a Safe Environment

Trustees and committee members must work actively to foster an inclusive, respectful culture within CAS.

H. Procedure for Addressing Bullying Incidents

CAS is committed to a safe and inclusive environment for all members. Any instances of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will be addressed promptly and thoroughly according to the following procedure:

1. Reporting an Incident

- Any trustee, committee member, staff, volunteer, or service recipient who experiences or witnesses bullying should report the incident to the Chair or Vice Chair through a confidential reporting channel.
- Reports should include details of the incident(s), individuals involved, and any witnesses if applicable.

2. Initial Assessment and Response

- The Chair and/or Vice Chair will acknowledge receipt of the report and conduct an initial review to assess the nature and severity of the incident.
- In cases where the Chair or Vice Chair is involved in the allegation, an alternative senior trustee or an external party will be appointed to manage the process to ensure impartiality.

3. Independent Investigation

- An independent investigator, either a designated senior trustee without conflicts of interest or an external party, will be assigned to conduct a fair, objective, and confidential investigation.

- The investigation process will include interviews with relevant parties and witnesses and a review of any supporting documentation or evidence.
- The independent investigator will compile findings and recommendations for appropriate actions.

4. Outcomes and Disciplinary Actions

- Based on the investigation's findings, the Committee will determine appropriate actions, which may include:
- Informal Warning: For minor breaches, an informal warning may be issued, and corrective actions recommended.
- Formal Warning: A written warning will be issued if the bullying incident is substantiated, specifying unacceptable behaviours and expectations for future conduct.
- Further Disciplinary Actions: Severe or repeated bullying behaviour may lead to suspension, removal from the Committee, or other disciplinary measures deemed appropriate by the Committee.

5. Support for Affected Individuals

- CAS will provide support to those affected by bullying, ensuring a safe, respectful, and supportive environment. Support measures may include access to counselling or other resources as needed.

6. Appeal Process

- The accused individual has the right to appeal any disciplinary decision within a specified period. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the Chair or, if applicable, an alternative designated party.
- An independent review of the appeal will be conducted to reassess the findings and decision, with the final outcome communicated to all parties involved.

7. Follow-Up and Monitoring

- After resolution, CAS will monitor the situation to ensure that the workplace environment remains respectful, safe, and free from further incidents.
- The Committee will review procedures regularly to reinforce a zero-tolerance approach toward bullying and to identify opportunities for improvement in handling such cases.

I. Avoiding Personal Gain

1. Trustees must not seek personal material or financial gain from their roles unless explicitly authorised.
2. CAS resources should be used responsibly, and any expenses should be documented and claimed according to CAS procedures.
3. Trustees should not accept gifts or hospitality without prior approval from the Chair.

J. Responsibilities within the CAS Committee

1. Trustees are expected to demonstrate leadership and uphold the trust placed in them by CAS.
2. Trustees should contribute to CAS's effective management by raising issues and ideas constructively.
3. Trustees are to adhere to Committee governance practices and procedures.
4. Full participation in Committee meetings is expected, with advance apologies provided when unable to attend. Preparation for meetings, including reviewing relevant materials, is essential.
5. Trustees should respect each other's roles, engage respectfully in discussions and voting, and accept majority decisions as final.
6. Confidentiality regarding Committee discussions and decisions must be maintained unless authorised to share information.

K. Enhancing Governance

1. Trustees are encouraged to participate in induction, training, and ongoing development.
2. Trustees should actively seek to improve governance practices within the Committee.
3. New trustees should be identified and appointed based on merit, and efforts to support the leadership development of the Chair and Vice Chairs are encouraged.

L. Exiting the Committee

1. Trustees should be aware that a significant breach of this code may result in removal from their trustee or Committee role.
2. Trustees subject to removal will have the opportunity to be heard, and they are expected to respect the Committee's final decision.
3. Resigning trustees should inform the Chair in writing, stating their reasons, and participate in an exit interview if requested.