



# Town Council Member Board of Trustee

## Relations Policy and Code of Ethics

Adopted 07/28/2008  
Revised 02/28/2011



*We Will Never bring disgrace to this, our Town, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice; we will fight for our ideals and sacred things of the Town, both alone and with many; We will never bring disgrace to this, our Town, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice; we will fight for our ideals and sacred things of the Town, both alone and with many; we will revere and obey the Town's laws and do our best to incite a like respect and reverence in those about us; we will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty; and thus in all the ways we will strive to transmit this Town not only not less but greater, better and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.*

*The Ephebic Oath was that taken by the young men of  
the ancient Athens when they became  
of age to assume the responsibility of citizenship*

The Westlake Town Council is the governing body for the Town of Westlake and the Board of Trustees is the governing body for Westlake Academy; therefore, they must bear the initial responsibility for the integrity of governance. The Council/Board is responsible for its own development (both as a body and as individuals), its responsibilities, its own discipline, and its own performance. The development of this policy is designed to ensure effective and efficient governance.

This policy will address Mayor/President and Council/Board relations, Council/Board and Staff relations, and Council/Board and media relations. By adopting these guidelines for elected officials, we acknowledge our responsibility to each other, to our professional staff, and to the public. The Council/Board will govern the Town/Academy in a manner associated with a commitment to the preservation of the values and integrity of representative local government and democracy, and a dedication to the promotion of efficient and effective governing. The following statements will serve as a guide and acknowledge the commitment being made in this service to the community:

1. The Council/Board has as high priorities the continual improvement of the member's professional ability and the promotion of an atmosphere conducive to the fair exchange of ideas and policies among members.
2. The Council/Board will endeavor to keep the community informed on municipal/academy affairs; encourage communication between the residents and the Council/Board; strive for strong working relationships among neighboring municipalities and elected officials.
3. In its governance role, the Council/Board will continue to be dedicated to friendly and courteous relationships with Staff, other Council/Board members, and the public, and seek to improve the quality and image of public service.
4. The Council/Board will also strive to recognize its responsibility to future generations by addressing the interrelatedness of the social, cultural, and physical characteristics of the ties of the community when making policies.
5. And finally, each Council/Board member will make a commitment to improve the quality of life for the individual and the community, and to be dedicated to the faithful stewardship of the public trust.

# **Town of Westlake Council/Board Member**

## **Statement of Purpose**

In order to ensure the proper discharge of duties for the improvement of democratic municipal and school governance, Westlake Council/Board Members should display behavior that demonstrates independent, impartial review of all matters addressed by them and be duly responsible to the residents of Westlake and to each other in their relationships.

### **SECTION I**

#### **MAYOR/PRESIDENT—COUNCIL/BOARD RELATIONS**

##### **A. MAYOR’S /PRESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The Mayor /President shall be the presiding officer at all meetings. The Mayor Pro-tem shall preside in his/her absence.
2. Except as provided for by State law pertaining to voting on Council/Board matters, the Mayor /President shall have a voice in all matters before the Council/Board.
3. The Mayor /President shall preserve order and decorum and shall require Council/Board members engaged in debate to limit discussion to the question under consideration.
4. The Mayor /President is the spokesperson for the Council/Board on all matters unless absent, at which time his/her designee will assume the role.
5. The Mayor/President will encourage all Council/Board members to participate in Council/Board discussion and give each member an opportunity to speak before any member can speak again on the same subject.
6. The Mayor /President may limit each speaker to five (5) minutes to ensure an efficient use of time. The Mayor/President is responsible for keeping the meetings orderly by recognizing each member for discussion, limiting speaking time, encouraging debate among members and keeping discussion on the agenda item being considered.
7. Should a conflict arise among Council/ Board members, the Mayor/President will serve as the mediator.

## **B. MAYOR/PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL/BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Any Council/Board member may request at a workshop and / or regular meeting, under “Future Agenda Item Requests”, an agenda item for a future meeting. The Council/Board member making the request will contact the Town Manager/Superintendent with the requested item and the Town Manager/Superintendent will list it on the agenda. At the meeting, the requesting Council/Board member will explain the item, the need for discussion of the item, the item’s relationship to the strategic priorities, and the amount of estimated staff time necessary to prepare the item for discussion. If the requesting Council/Board member receives a second, the Town Manager/Superintendent will place the item on the agenda calendar allowing for adequate time for staff preparation on the agenda item.
2. Requests for Administrative Inquiry. A Council/Board member may request that the Town Manager/Superintendent investigate a specific topic or subject and report staff’s response and/or findings back to the entire Council/Board by brief email. Administrative inquiries are strictly intended for items that are of interest to the Council/Board as a whole, will require only brief staff time to investigate and respond, and in the Council’s/Board’s view does not merit time or discussion at a Council/Board meeting. The requesting Council/Board member will explain the topic of the administrative inquiry and the reason(s) it is desired to have staff investigate this item.
3. Reports. Reports are prepared by staff and placed on Council/Board work shop agendas for informational purposes and will be accepted as presented. There will be no presentation for these items or separate discussion unless a Council/Board member requests that a report be removed and discussed separately.
4. Each Council/Board member is responsible for being prepared to attend the meetings and discuss the agenda and is encouraged to attend at least one Texas Municipal League or Texas Charter School sponsored conference each year in order to stay informed on issues facing municipalities and charter schools.
5. It is the responsibility of Council/Board members to be informed about previous action taken by the Council/Board in their absence. In the case of absence from a work session where information is given, the individual Council/Board member is responsible for obtaining this information prior to the Council/Board meeting when said item is to be voted upon.
6. When addressing an agenda item, the Council/Board member shall first be recognized by the Mayor/President, confine himself/herself to the question under debate, avoid reference to personalities, and refrain from impugning the integrity or motives of any other Council/Board member or Staff member in his/her argument or vote.
7. In the absence of a ruling by the Mayor/President on any procedural matter, a Council/Board member may move to change the order of business or make any other procedural decision deemed appropriate. The affirmative vote of a majority of the Council/Board members present and voting shall be necessary to approve the motion.

8. Any Council/Board member may appeal to the Council/Board as a whole from a ruling by the Mayor/President. If the appeal is seconded, the person making the appeal may make a brief statement and the Mayor/President may explain his/her position, but no other member may speak on the motion. The Mayor/President will then put the ruling to a vote.
9. Any Council/Board member may ask the Mayor/President to enforce the rules established by the Board. Should the Mayor/President fail to do so, a majority vote of the Council/Board members present shall require him/her to do so.
10. When a Council/Board member is appointed to serve as liaison to an affiliate board, the Council/Board member is responsible for keeping all Council/Board members informed of significant activities.
11. As much as practicable, Council/Board agendas, particularly workshop meetings, should be centered on the Council's/Board's strategic plans and related policy matters. To achieve that end, the Town Manager/Superintendent and his/her Staff will work to facilitate that focus.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MAYOR AND BOARD MEMBERS**

During the Council/Board meetings, members shall preserve order and decorum, shall not interrupt or delay proceedings, and shall not refuse to obey the orders of the Mayor/President or the rules of the Council/Board. Council/Board members shall demonstrate respect and courtesy to each other, to professional Staff, and to members of the public appearing before the Council/Board. Council/Board members shall refrain from rude and derogatory comments and shall not belittle Staff members, other Board members, or members of the public. They should not use their position to secure special privileges and should avoid situations that could cause any person to believe that they may have brought bias or partiality to a question or issue before the Council/Board.

Members of the Council/Board will not condone any unethical or illegal activity. All members of the Council/Board agree to uphold the intent of this policy and to govern their actions accordingly.

## **SECTION II**

### **BOARD AND STAFF RELATIONS**

No single relationship is as important as that of the Council/Board and their Town Manager /Superintendent in effectively governing the Town of Westlake/ Westlake Academy. It is for this reason that the Council/Board and Town Manager /Superintendent must understand their respective roles in that process. The Town Manager/Superintendent is the primary link between the Council/Board and the professional Staff. The Council's/Board's relationship with the Staff shall be through the Town Manager/Superintendent.

1. In order to ensure proper presentation of agenda items by Staff, questions arising from Council/Board members after receiving their information packet should be, whenever possible, presented to the Town Manager /Superintendent for Staff consideration prior to the meeting. This allows the Staff time to address the member's concern and provide all members with the additional information.
2. The Town Manager /Superintendent shall designate the appropriate Staff member to address each agenda item and shall see that each presentation is prepared and presented in order to inform and educate the Council/Board on the issues which require action. The presentation should be professional, timely, and allow for discussion of options for resolving the issue. The Staff member making the presentation shall either make it clear that no action is required, or present the specific options for Council/Board consideration.
3. The Town Manager /Superintendent is directly responsible for providing information to all the Council/Board concerning any inquiries by a specific Board member. If the Town Manager or his/her Staff's time is being dominated or misdirected by a Council/Board member, it is his/her responsibility to inform the Mayor/President.
4. The Town Manager/Superintendent will be held responsible for the professional and ethical behavior of himself/herself and the discipline of his/her Staff. The Town Manager/Superintendent is also responsible for seeing that his/her Staff receives the education necessary to address the issues facing municipal government.
5. Any conflicts arising between the Town Staff and the Council/Board will be addressed by the Mayor/President and the Town Manager /Superintendent.

All Staff members shall show each other, each Council/Board member, and the public respect and courtesy at all times. They are also responsible for making objective, professional presentations to ensure public confidence in the process.

7. The Town Manager /Superintendent, after an election, will make sure that the Staff has prepared information needed for the orientation of new Council/Board members and inform them of any Texas Municipal League/Texas Charter School conferences and seminars available. The Town Manager /Superintendent will also be responsible for meeting personally with new members and informing them about Town/Academy facilities and procedures.

8. The Town Manager/ Superintendent is responsible for the orientation of all new Council/Board members after an election. The orientation shall include meeting procedures, Staff and media relations, current agenda items and leadership training programs.

### **SECTION III**

## **COUNCIL/BOARD AND MEDIA RELATIONS**

Since the democratic form of government is only successful when the citizens are kept informed and educated about the issues facing their municipality, it is imperative the media play an important role in the council-manager-media relations. It is through an informed public that progress is insured and good government remains sensitive to its constituents. These guidelines are designed to help ensure fair relationships with print, radio, and television reporters. The Council/Board and the Town Manager/ Superintendent recognize that the news media provides an important link between the Council/Board and the public. It is desire to establish a professional working relationship to help maintain a well informed and educated citizenry.

1. During the conduct of official business, the news media shall occupy places designated for them or the general public.
2. All reporters will have access to an agenda and will be furnished support material needed for clarification if requested.
3. In order to preserve the decorum and professionalism of Council/Board meetings, the media are requested to refrain from conversing privately with other people in the audience and to conduct any interview with the public outside the meeting room while the Council/Board is in session.
4. Since each government body conducts business differently, it is requested that all reporters new to Board meetings meet with the Town Manager/Superintendent, Mayor/President, or the designated media relations representative prior to covering their first meeting to be informed of the policies and procedures to help foster a professional working relationship between the media reporter and the Town.
5. On administrative matters, the Town Manager/Superintendent is the spokesperson, unless he/she has appointed a media relations person to present staff information on the agenda.
6. The Mayor/President, or his/her designee, is the primary spokesperson for the Town/Academy on matters regarding policy decisions or any Council/Board information pertaining to issues on the agenda. In order to ensure fair treatment of an issue, any clarifications requested by the media on the issue should be addressed after the meeting. When opposing positions have been debated, regardless of the outcome, the public is better informed when all sides have adequate coverage by the media. This lets the public know that the item was seriously debated and options discussed before a vote



was taken, and helps build confidence in the democratic process.

7. The Town of Westlake Council/Board is made up of five (5) Council/Board Members and a Mayor/President, each elected by the residents of Westlake. In respect to each Council/Board Member and his/her constituents, his/her views as presented on an issue before the Board should provide equitable representation from all members. Even though Council/Board members may express differing ideas, equitable representation helps promote unity of purpose by allowing the public to be informed of each member's position during his/her term of office and not only during an election campaign.



*We all have the responsibility to protect the integrity  
of our governing process and therefore,  
have read and agreed to the above guidelines.*

## **Town of Westlake Council/Board Member**

### **Code of Ethics**

The office of elected officials is one of trust and service to the residents of the Town of Westlake and Westlake Academy. This position creates a special responsibility for the Westlake Council/Board Member. In response to this, the Westlake Council/Board is expected to govern this Town in a manner associated with a commitment to the preservation of the values and integrity of representative local government and local democracy and a dedication to the promotion of efficient and effective governing. To further these objectives, certain ethical principles shall govern the conduct of every Council/Board Member, who shall:

1. Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the residents of Westlake;
2. Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all of the people;
3. Be dedicated to public service by being cooperative and constructive, and by making the best and most efficient use of available resources;
4. Refrain from any activity or action that may hinder one's ability to be objective and impartial on any matter coming before the board. Do not seek nor accept gifts or special favors; believe that personal gain by use of confidential information or misuse of public funds or time is dishonest;
5. Recognize that public and political policy decisions, based on established values, are ultimately the responsibility of the board and
6. Conduct business in open, well publicized meetings in order to be directly accountable to the residents of Westlake. It is recognized that certain exceptions are made by the State for executive sessions; however, any action as a result of that type of meeting will be handled later in open session.