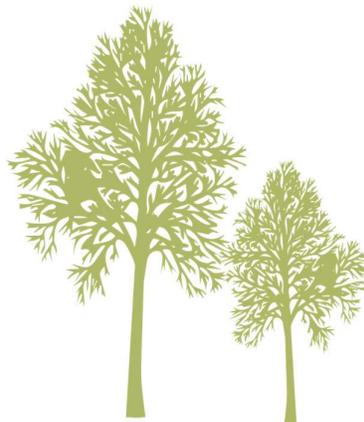




# LGB Chairs' Handbook

2025-2026

Our vision is to enable all to flourish



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## Welcome to the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

Dear Chair,

Welcome to The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT) Chairs of Governors' Handbook.

First and foremost, we would like to extend our thanks to you for taking up the important role of chair of governors. While we know that it can be a rewarding role, we also recognise the amount of commitment and work it takes to do well – thank you for all you do.

Local Governing Boards (LGB) play an important role in the life of the Trust and are valued within the Trust family. As well as bringing knowledge of the local context that the central team and Trust Board do not have, effective local boards are well connected to and are knowledgeable about the school and its community. As chair of governors, you provide an important link between the school and the Trust Board, and this is valued.

We hope that this handbook will support you and provide you with important information to enable you to fulfil your role effectively and we look forward to working with you through our regular Chairs' Group meetings.



The Reverend Canon Craig Huxley-Jones  
Chair of the Trust Board



Canon Rachel Howie  
Chief Executive Officer



## Acronyms used throughout this handbook

There are many acronyms used within the education sector, some of the common acronyms you will come across within this handbook are listed below. For a wider compendium of acronyms, you may come across in your time as chair of governors please see our DGAT Acronym Buster which is available in the Local Governance Member area on the [DGAT website](#).

Acronym	Long form
DGAT	Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
GHRO	Governance and HR Officer
LGB	LGB
CPD	Continued Professional Development
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
DfE	Department for Education
ATH	Academy Trust Handbook
SIAMS	Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools



### About DGAT

DGAT is an academy trust set up by the Diocese Board of Education. We are a family of 24 primary and infant schools united in enabling children and staff to grow, flourish and succeed in an environment of educational excellence.

Our vision and values are deeply rooted in the Christian faith and these permeate our decision-making, our relationships, our communication and our learning.

Our Trust is founded on shared values and principles. Together, the Trust Board, local governing boards, central team and school communities form one organisation. We are focused on providing children of all faiths, and none, with excellent educational provision in an aspirational, caring and supportive Christian ethos.

**OUR VISION IS  
TO ENABLE ALL  
TO FLOURISH**

Our core principles underpin all we do and each decision we take. We believe that the following are fundamental to each of our educational journey and should be experienced by all within the DGAT family.

- We aspire to be the best we can be in an ever-changing environment - providing opportunities for all to flourish.
- Within our DGAT family we cherish everyone as individuals; appreciating and celebrating diversity.
- We act with integrity; we are open to challenge and we are reflective about our practice.
- We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Through collaboration, in a nurturing community, we grow, learn and achieve.

As chair of a LGB you will have been appointed because we believe that you share the DGAT vision and values, and we trust and have faith that you will lead the LGB to live and demonstrate these in all governance work.

Our LGBs are an important and valued part of the governance of the Trust. The Trust Board has overall accountability for the management and governance of the organisation and all its schools but delegates some responsibilities and decision-making powers to members of the executive team and LGBs. The Trust's Members maintain oversight of the Trust Board.

The governance structure of the Trust is as follows:

### **Members**

DGAT's Members are responsible for ensuring the governance of the Trust is effective and that Trustees govern in accordance with their statutory and charitable responsibilities. Members are responsible for:

- Amending the Trust's Articles of Association
- Appointing and Removing Trustees
- Appointing the Trust's auditors
- Receiving a copy of the Trust's annual accounts
- Maintaining oversight of the governance of the Trust

DGAT maintains clear separation between Members and the Trust Board to ensure transparent and effective oversight of the governance of the Trust.

Our current Members are:

- The Diocese of Gloucester Education Trust as a corporate Member
- Mrs Sue Padfield
- Mrs Jo Grills
- Mr Jon Millin
- The Very Reverend Andrew Zihni

## **The Trust Board**

The Trust Board is responsible for the strategic direction, statutory policy framework and oversight of the Trust and all its schools. Trustees take decisions that are in the best interests of the Trust as a whole and are not representative of any one of the constituent schools. Trustees are also Directors of DGAT which is a company limited by guarantee and registered as such at Companies House.

Our current Trustees are:

- The Reverend Canon Craig Huxley-Jones (Chair)
- Mrs Charlotte Rawlings (Vice chair)
- Mr Tim Brock
- Mr Rob Stokes
- Mr Stewart Hunter
- Dr Robert Gwynne
- Ms Jane Borgeaud
- Mrs Catherine Leahy
- Mr Andy Aram (from 1 November 2025)



## **DGAT organisational structure**

In your role as chair of the LGB you are supported by a dedicated team based in the DGAT central office. The DGAT central team all have an intrinsic role in supporting our schools and school leaders and are an extended part of each school's staff team.

Meet the team!

## Central Team Organogram



There may be some people you have very little contact with, but they are each committed to providing their professional expertise, guidance and experience which will support the information you and the governing board receive about the educational and financial performance of the school.

There will be some members of the central team who you have more contact with, these are:

**Rachel Howie, CEO** – You will meet Rachel at the Chairs’ Group meeting and at other training and events organised by the Trust. Rachel sends regular communications out to headteachers and chairs of governors providing key updates and information via the Trust’s weekly briefing the ‘Herald’. You may also meet Rachel during your school’s Ofsted inspection.

**Helen Springett, Deputy CEO** – You will receive safeguarding and school effectiveness updates via email from Helen via the ‘Herald’. You may meet Helen during your school’s Ofsted inspection, SIAMS inspection or during your headteacher performance management meeting. Helen will send you a copy of the school effectiveness team’s ‘Note of Visit’ following their visits to the school. You will be asked to share key areas of focus with your LGB and monitor any actions arising from the visit.

**Nicki Wadley, Chief Operating Officer** – Nicki is one of your key points of contact in the central team. Nicki attends the Chairs’ Group meeting and delivers the DGAT governance training as well as providing day-to-day support and guidance for LGBs and clerks. Nicki also supports headteachers and chairs with complaints, HR policy and processes and leads on the conversion and on-boarding process for schools joining the Trust. Nicki also

has strategic oversight of the Trust's states and compliance functions.

**Vicki Cowan, Governance and HR Officer** – Vicki is the main key contact for you and is the person you should contact if you have any local governance procedure questions. Vicki plays a key role in reviewing and updating local governance resources. Vicki line manages the central clerks and leads on publishing the Governance Briefing, and the Clerks' Forum. Vicki also delivers some of our local governance training.

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## Support for you in your role as chair

The people you will likely have most contact with and who are your first point of contact for any queries are our Chief Operating Officer (COO), Nicki Wadley and our Governance and HR Officer (GHRO), Vicki Cowan.

Nicki's contact details are as follows:



[nwadley@cen.dgat.org.uk](mailto:nwadley@cen.dgat.org.uk)



01452 942415 Ext 5105 or 07818 360447

Vicki's contact details are as follows:



[vcowan@cen.dgat.org.uk](mailto:vcowan@cen.dgat.org.uk)



01452 942415 Ext 5016 or 07979833086

The COO supports our chairs of governors in their role and is responsible for:

- Being the executive on all strategic matters relating to governance and compliance within the Trust.
- Securing local governance with real impact within the Trust, ensuring there are fully effective LGB's who understand their role and their accountabilities to the Trust Board.
- Working closely with chairs of governors and clerks on Trust policy and process.
- Developing and delivering continuous professional development (CPD) for local governors on Trust policy and practice and effective governance.
- Participating in periodic governance reviews which look at governance policy, structure and practice.
- To be the executive leader for HR, having oversight of the Trust's external HR provider and providing template documentation, advise and support on non-casework matters across the Trust.

The GHRO supports our chairs of governors in their role and is responsible for:

- Being the lead officer on all matters relating to local governance and HR within the Trust.
- Providing support to clerks facilitating best practice in day-to-day activities including agenda preparation, timely and high-quality minutes, and maintenance of statutory records and registers.
- Providing a high level of administrative support for the governance and HR functions of the Trust
- Providing administrative support for the conversion and onboarding of schools into the Trust
- Providing administrative support for the review and publication of Trust policies
- Delivering local governance training
- Publishing the termly Governance Briefing
- Line managing central clerks

You are welcome to contact Nicki or Vicki to ask any questions you may have, to talk through an issue, to locate a resource or to seek confirmation of a governance process - anything goes. There are no silly questions, only the ones we don't ask!

If you would like to connect with any of the other Trust chairs of governors here are their contact details.

<b>Name</b>	<b>DGAT school</b>	<b>Contact email</b>
Will Howick	Amberley Parochial School	<a href="mailto:chair@amberley.dgat.org.uk">chair@amberley.dgat.org.uk</a>
Anthony Godwin	Bibury CofE Primary School and North Cerney CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@bibury.dgat.org.uk">chair@bibury.dgat.org.uk</a>
Kate Pope	Christchurch CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@christchurch.dgat.org.uk">chair@christchurch.dgat.org.uk</a>
Sharon Trotman	Clearwater CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@clearwater.dgat.org.uk">chair@clearwater.dgat.org.uk</a>
Carole O'Donnell	Coaley CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@coaley.dgat.org.uk">chair@coaley.dgat.org.uk</a>
Emma Gray	Dursley CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@dursley.dgat.org.uk">chair@dursley.dgat.org.uk</a>
Carl Curtis	Field Court CofE Infant Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@fcia.dgat.org.uk">chair@fcia.dgat.org.uk</a>
Carole O'Donnell	Hardwicke Parochial Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@hardwicke.dgat.org.uk">chair@hardwicke.dgat.org.uk</a>
Amanda Chong	Hatherley Infant School and St James Junior CofE School	<a href="mailto:chair@his.dgat.org.uk">chair@his.dgat.org.uk</a>
Andrea Welby	Lakefield CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@lakefield.dgat.org.uk">chair@lakefield.dgat.org.uk</a>

Paul Walker	Longney CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@longney.dgat.org.uk">chair@longney.dgat.org.uk</a>
Alex Chong	Minchinhampton CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@minch.dgat.org.uk">chair@minch.dgat.org.uk</a>
Tim Davies	Primrose Hill CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@prh.dgat.org.uk">chair@prh.dgat.org.uk</a>
Yvonne Webster	St David's CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk">chair@st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk</a>
Andy Goddard	St James' CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk">chair@st-jamespri.dgat.org.uk</a>
Katy Graham	St John's CofE Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@st-johns.dgat.org.uk">chair@st-johns.dgat.org.uk</a>
Freya Moreby	St Lawrence CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@st-lawrence.dgat.org.uk">chair@st-lawrence.dgat.org.uk</a>
Elizabeth Durning	St Mary's CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@stmarys.dgat.org.uk">chair@stmarys.dgat.org.uk</a>
Ali Spencer	St Matthew's CofE Primary Academy	<a href="mailto:chair@st-matthews.dgat.org.uk">chair@st-matthews.dgat.org.uk</a>
Brian Senior	Watermoor CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@watermoor.gloucs.sch.uk">chair@watermoor.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Jeremy Riley	Whiteshill Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@whiteshill.dgat.org.uk">chair@whiteshill.dgat.org.uk</a>
Lynne Banks	Winchcombe Abbey CofE Primary School	<a href="mailto:chair@win.dgat.org.uk">chair@win.dgat.org.uk</a>

### Chairs' buddy scheme

If you feel you would benefit from being linked to a DGAT chair who has been in the role or Trust a little longer we can connect you to someone to act as your buddy. Your buddy can be there to support with any questions you may have or lend a listening ear should you need one. Contact Vicki if you would like her to arrange this for you.

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## Culture and purpose of local governance

The Local Governing Board (LGB) is the anchor between the school and the wider Trust, ensuring that local knowledge, voice, and insight are reflected in Trust-wide understanding and decision making.

Our vision is to enable all to flourish — pupils, staff, and the wider community. Local governance plays a vital role in realising this vision; by anchoring the school it serves firmly within both its local context and the strategic framework of the Trust.

Local governors work closely with school leaders to monitor progress, support continuous improvement, and ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, inclusive, and enriching for all learners, with a clear focus on educational excellence.

Additionally local governors work with the school to monitor the effectiveness of strategies to promote diversity, belonging, and inclusion across the whole school community.

Local governors ask thoughtful, informed questions to explore and evaluate the impact of the school's provision on all within the community it serves. They challenge constructively, champion equity, and ensure that every pupil feels like they belong, are valued, and are supported to succeed and flourish to their own unique potential.

At the delegation of the Trust Board, the LGB contributes to effective governance by providing strategic insight, local intelligence, and robust oversight. While the Board of Trustees retains responsibility for statutory accountability and overarching strategy, the LGB ensures that those strategies are understood, enacted, and embedded in a way that resonates locally and drives improvement on the ground.

Our culture of local governance is rooted in collaboration, transparency, and trust. Local governors are empowered to ask the right questions, celebrate what is working well, and identify where more needs to be done. They are accountability partners in shaping a school culture where staff are supported, leadership is strengthened, and children can thrive. In doing so, the LGB not only upholds the Trust's vision and values but also makes a unique and essential contribution to the lived experience and outcomes of the school community it serves.



## Role of local governance

The role of the local governing board (LGB) is to maintain strong oversight and compliance with the responsibilities delegated by the Trust Board as set out in the Trust Scheme of Delegation. LGBs anchor the school and its local community into the Trust through its relationship with the school.

Monitoring the work of the school through being professionally curious is an important aspect of the local governing board's work.

The local governing board should always aim to:

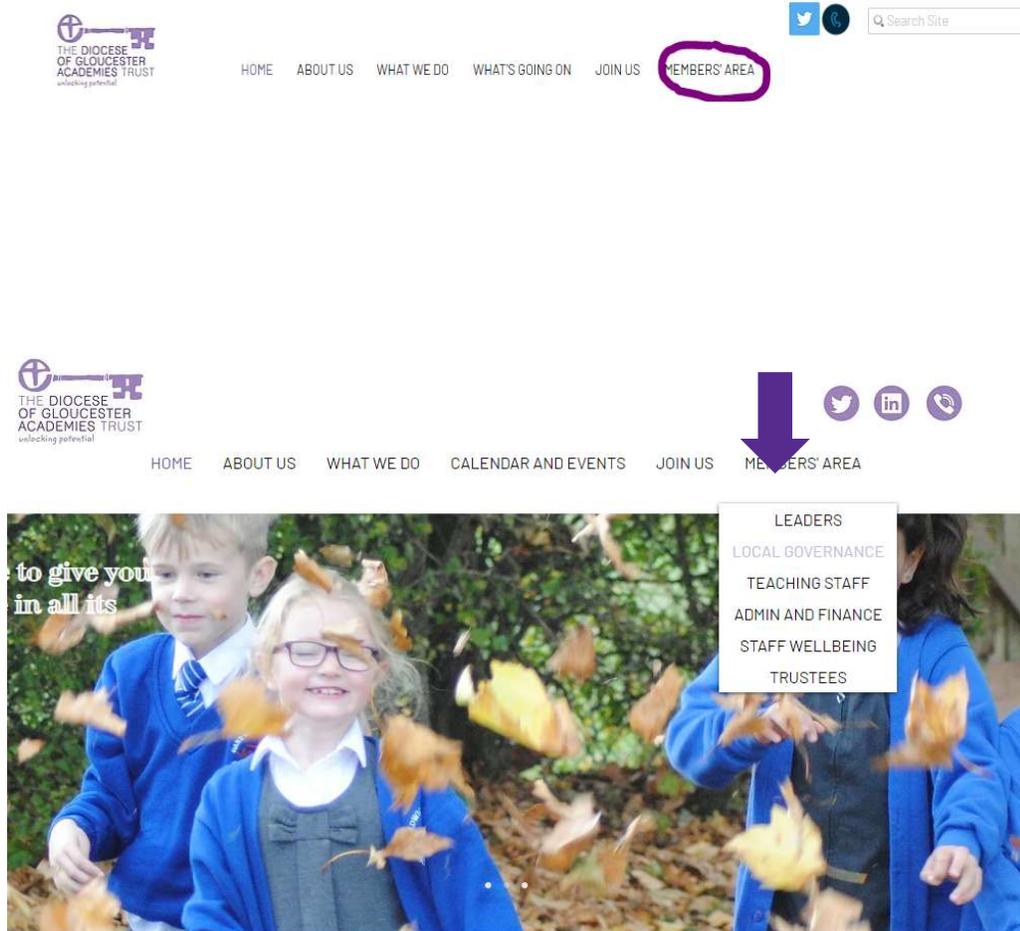
- Identify the impact of the school's vision and academic ambitions and priorities on the children in the school.
- Identify and celebrate evidence of good practice, progress and improvement.
- Identify and evaluate evidence of meeting the requirements of additional funding received by the school e.g. the Pupil Premium.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of policies and statutory requirements e.g. statement of entitlement for RE.



## DGAT governance resources

All DGAT governance resources, including templates for governance processes, Trust policies and guidance documents are stored on the [DGAT website](#).

To locate the governance resources, navigate to the DGAT homepage, click on 'Members' Area', then 'Local Governance'. You will now be prompted to enter a password which will have been given to you on your appointment. If you haven't yet received this password, please contact the Governance and HR Officer at the central team.





## Key governance resources

There are several key documents which chairs should maintain a good working knowledge of to lead the governing board and to undertake their role effectively and to understand clearly where responsibilities lie within the governance of academy trusts. It is not expected that you read these documents in one sitting, they are key reference documents to support you in your role, and it is recommended you access them as and when required.

Listed below are some key documents, both statutory and non-statutory, which you will find invaluable to have in your LGB chair 'toolkit'.

**DGAT Scheme of Delegation** - The Academy Trust Handbook requires the Trust Board to publish a scheme of delegation in the governance statement published within its annual accounts and on the Trust's website.

- The scheme of delegation details clearly the levels of delegation for any decisions that need to be made throughout the Trust. The Trust Board does not need to be responsible for all decisions – there are several decisions and responsibilities which can be delegated to individuals or committees – including LGBs. Each school within the Trust has its own scheme of delegation, you should be aware of the scheme of delegation for your school to ensure that any decisions are made at the correct level of delegation and recorded appropriately.
- The scheme of delegation is reviewed by the Trust Board on an annual basis, as a minimum. The Trust board has the right to change the delegations within the scheme of delegation at any time.

**DGAT Terms of Reference for the LGB** – This document should be used and read in conjunction with the Trust scheme of delegation. It sets out the requirements for how LGBs should conduct business, organise meetings, manage appointments and make decisions. It is a requirement that this document is complied with.

**DGAT Annual Schedule of Work** – The Trust provides all LGBs with an annual schedule of work which sets out the responsibilities of LGBS across each term and reflects the scheme of delegation.

This annual schedule of work provides a framework for compliance and ensuring accountability, the LGB will still need to identify appropriate monitoring activities of local governance relevant to its school and local context.

The annual schedule of work can be found on the Trust website in the Local Governance Members areas.

## External support and guidance

The Trust has access to [The National College](#), (formally TheSchoolBus) a school leadership and compliance resource and guidance platform. The National College summarises official documents into need-to-know facts you can digest in just a few minutes. If you need to access a resource, please contact Vicki.

Each local governor also has access to GovernorHub Knowledge which can be accessed via the GovernorHub portal. GovernorHub Knowledge provides many different resources and training courses to support you and your local governors in your roles. If you need any help in accessing this, please contact Vicki.



## DGAT governance training and CPD

The Trust is committed to supporting you in your role as chair and the continued development of your LGB members. We offer a varied CPD programme, which is all free to access. All our local governance training is specific to the Trust, its vision and values and scheme of delegation.

There are key expectations about attendance at Trust training.

- **CORE** is training that someone from each school **must** attend.
- **KEY** is important and someone for the school team **should** attend.
- **OPTIONAL** is just that.

Please take a look at the [DGAT CPD Brochure](#) and use to plan the training needs for your local governing board.

We offer comprehensive new local governor induction training to all new local governors, the training explains the role of local governors within the trust and their responsibilities as part of the LGB. It is expected that all new local governors attend this training and ask for your support in ensuring this.



## Roles and responsibilities

### Role of the chair of the LGB

#### Appointment process

The appointment of the chair of each LGB is the responsibility of the Trust Board. Prior to the last LGB meeting of the academic year the LGB should propose the governor

they consider suitable for appointment. This proposal is made to the Board of Trustees via the GHRO. The Board of Trustees will consider the proposal at their last board meeting of the academic year and will confirm their decision to the LGB via the GHRO. The Board of Trustees' decision is final.

The Board of Trustees will consider a co-chairing arrangement if they are satisfied that the LGB have considered the opportunities and challenges of a shared role and have discussed with the potential chairs ways to ensure the role is successful.

The Board of Trustees are entitled to remove the chair of the LGB at any time, the process for this is set out in the Local Governor Code of Conduct.

The headteacher, staff governor, staff members or pupils are all disqualified from being proposed or appointed as chair.

### **Term of office**

The term of office for the chair of the LGB is one academic year. Local governors are permitted to stand for the position of chair for consecutive years should they wish to but will only be appointed for an academic year at a time. The maximum number of years any one governor can serve as chair is six years, this is in-line with guidance from the National Governance Association who advocate that this policy enables governing boards to develop new leaders and continue the development of effective governance with a flow of new energy and new ideas. A local governor who has served as chair is not permitted to be re-elected as chair within two years of their last appointment.

The chair is permitted to resign at any time and given this is a voluntary role there is no notice period required but in order to support effective succession planning and recruitment, notice is appreciated. The chair should submit their resignation in writing to the COO.

### **Responsibilities of the chair**

The role of the chair is to lead the LGB in ensuring governors meet the responsibilities delegated to them via the scheme of delegation. The chair should ensure that the LGB sets, in partnership with the headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT), a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school.

The chair is also responsible for achieving effective and regular communication within the LGB, and ensuring meetings are well organised so that everyone can contribute and be heard.

The chair should lead effective governance by:

- Proactively maintaining a good relationship between local governors, the headteacher and the SLT.
- Supporting the LGB through clear leadership and direction.
- Ensuring local governors work as an effective team.
- Ensuring local governors understand their accountability and responsibilities.
- Setting the culture of the LGB – recognising that the collective board makes decisions rather than individuals.

- Ensuring local governors are committed to, and working towards, driving school effectiveness.
- Recognising when the LGB or an individual member, is not behaving as expected, and take appropriate action to address this.
- Ensuring the LGB understands the scope of any issues in question and is clear about decisions they need to make.
- Leading discussions and decisions about what functions to delegate to specific governors and committees.
- Ensuring the LGB develops a governor monitoring plan, including monitoring activities and objectives that have been allocated to specific governors.
- Chairing meetings effectively to keep objectives on track and to avoid governors drifting into operational activity.
- Working in partnership with DGAT central team and Trust Board.
- Developing a culture of self-evaluation and reflection and committing to the LGB taking responsibility for its own growth and development.
- Championing equality and diversity and meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The chair is not solely responsible for the local governance of the school. An effective chair has the leadership skills to ensure all local governors understand their own role and responsibilities, as well as the collective responsibilities of the LGB. The ability to delegate is a key skill for the chair and to work in partnership with an LGB made up of people with diverse skills, knowledge and experience.

#### **The relationship between the chair and headteacher**

It is important that the chair develops a positive and successful relationship with the headteacher based on trust and a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.

The chair will often act as a confidant for the headteacher and should provide a supportive safe space for them to share concerns or worries. Many chairs and headteachers meet on a regular basis for an informal conversation as part of the support the chair provides for the headteacher. There is no need for the chair to share details of one-to-one meetings with the headteacher with the rest of the LGB, unless there is an issue that other governors should be made aware of. It is, however, important that this relationship does not exclude the rest of the governing board or replace collective decision making.

Within the Trust the performance management of the headteacher is led by the Deputy CEO and the chair of the LGB is invited to participate in the process.

#### **Removal of the chair**

If the LGB has concerns about the performance or conduct of the chair, local governors should make a written representation to the Board of Trustees, via the chair, outlining their concerns. The Trust Board follow the process outlined in the Local Governor Code of Conduct. Only the Board of Trustees has the right to remove the chair from office.

#### **Support during Ofsted inspections**

The Ofsted [School inspection handbook](#) explains that during an inspection, the

inspectors will seek to meet with those responsible for the governance of the school. In a Trust such as DGAT this is the Trust Board.

Either the Deputy CEO or member of the Trust school effectiveness team attends Ofsted inspections in support of the headteacher. The chair of governors and/or other local governors with the knowledge to support the inspection will be invited to attend the inspection. This involvement is at the discretion of the Trust.

All local governors are invited to attend the inspection final feedback meeting when the provisional judgment is shared along with feedback explaining the provisional judgement.

If any local governor is unable to attend the final feedback meeting it is permissible to share the provisional judgement with them, with a clear directive that this is confidential information and must not be shared with any other person.

### **Support during SIAMS inspections**

The Deputy CEO or member of the Trust school effectiveness team attends SIAMS inspections in support of the headteacher. The chair of governors or local governor with responsibility for monitoring the vision and ethos of the school will also be invited to attend and contribute to the inspection. The headteacher and chair of governors or governor with responsibility for monitoring the vision and ethos of the school are responsible for engaging with the school's interim monitoring visit.

Further information on SIAMS inspections can be found on the Diocese of Gloucester website [here](#).

SIAMS training for all local governors can be booked [here](#).

## **Role of the vice chair of the LGB**

### **Appointment process**

As set out in the LGB Terms of Reference the LGB will appoint a vice chair at the first meeting of the academic year by way of a vote, this appointment is not required to be authorised by Trust Board. The clerk to the local governing board should ensure this is included as an agenda item for the first meeting of the academic year.

### **Term of office**

The term of office for the vice chair of the LGB is one academic year. Local governors are permitted to stand for the position of vice chair for consecutive years should they wish to but will only be appointed for an academic year at a time. The vice chair is permitted to resign at any time and given this is a voluntary role there is no notice period required but in order to support effective succession planning and recruitment, notice is appreciated. The vice chair should submit their resignation in writing to the LGB via the clerk to governors.

### **Responsibilities of the vice chair**

The vice chair of the LGB plays an important role in assisting with leadership and carrying out the tasks of the LGB, ensuring it meets its statutory responsibilities. The vice chair assumes all responsibilities of a local governor, with further additional leadership

responsibilities in terms of supporting the chair, leading others and building relationships – these additional responsibilities should be agreed between the chair and vice chair.

In the absence of the chair, the vice chair is required to stand in and meet their responsibilities.

### **Removal of the vice chair**

The LGB has the right to remove the vice chair from office by following the procedure set out in the Local Governor Code of Conduct.



## **Succession planning**

The chair should maintain an active role in considering succession planning for all local governance roles. The skills audit should be used to identify talent on the governing board, inform local governor recruitment, elections and training and CPD.

An open culture of discussion about succession planning is important for the chair to establish and lead.

Supporting the development of other local governors through distributed leadership is a key responsibility of the chair, who should provide opportunities for other local governors to chair committees and lead projects, working parties or engagement with stakeholders. Providing support for local governors to act as mentors for new local governors joining the LGB is another good opportunity to support board development and succession planning.

The chair should maintain contact with the HoGP regarding vacancies on the LGB and succession planning.



## **LGB skills audit**

It is a requirement of the ATH that all governing boards, including LGBs identify the skills and experience it needs and address gaps through recruitment, and/or induction, training and other development activities.

DGAT LGBs are asked to meet this requirement through completion of an annual skills audit, which we recommend is completed at the end of the summer term in preparation for the autumn term and organisation of committee membership and local governors' roles for the new academic year.

LGBs must use the Trust's skills audit which is completed via GovernorHub. Your clerk will support the LGB to complete this.

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## GovernorHub

It is the Trust's expectation that all LGBs use GovernorHub for the secure storage and administration of LGB meetings. It is a requirement for all schools joining the Trust to use GovernorHub. As a minimum, the following should be organised via GovernorHub:

- A schedule for all LGB and committee meeting dates and all meeting dates added to the GovernorHub calendar.
- Signing of all annual confirmations – clerks will be advised of these and provided with relevant documents on an annual basis
- An up-to-date training record for all local governors
- Storage of signed meeting minutes and all meeting documentation
- The constitution of the LGB, including current membership and terms of office
- A copy of the LGB register of interests
- A copy of meeting attendance

It is important to ensure that any confidential information is secured securely on GovernorHub. Membership and access should be limited only to members of the LGB. If local governors wish to allow access to an associate governor or member of school staff, please speak with the GHRO to agree the most secure way for this to happen. The COO and GHRO have admin access to all LGB's GovernorHub.

For support to use GovernorHub to its full capacity please contact the GHRO.

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## Policy management

The Trust Board has ultimate accountability and responsibility for policy management and compliance across the Trust, but the scrutiny, local adaptation and delivery of certain policies and guidance may be delegated to the LGB through the Trust's scheme of delegation. Oversight of the way in which LGBs deal with and implement the requirements of the policy lies securely with the Trust Board, who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of each policy implemented.

Within the scheme of delegation there are four policies which the Trust Board have

delegated to the LGB to review and ratify at local level to ensure they reflect the school's local context and arrangements; these are:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Relationships, Sex, Health and Education Policy
- Behaviour Policy – including suspensions and exclusions
- SEND policy

There may be other policies that the LGB decide it is relevant to consider at a local level. The Trust provides a Policy Arrangements and Process guidance resource which is available on the Trust website. The guidance sets out the statutory policies which must be adopted by all schools. The most up-to-date version and policy review dates of each policy can be found in each members' area on the Trust website. The guidance also sets out whether the policy is required to be noted locally by the LGB. The LGB is not required to ratify a policy provided by the Trust but should ensure that any local contextual information is included where necessary.

Where a local decision can be made, local governors and headteacher should take a pragmatic approach and determine if a policy should be noted by the LGB. It is recommended that these decisions are made in consideration of the school's strategic priorities and the strategic responsibilities of the LGB.



## Complaints

The Trust Complaint Policy must be followed whenever a complaint is received. The policy provides clear timelines for the complaint process, including response times and should be referred to before acknowledging a complaint or starting the process set out in the policy. Any complaint which is received against the headteacher or reaches stage two of the policy must be discussed with the COO prior to any response being made or further action taken.

The COO will support the school, chair of governors and clerk throughout the process. If a complaint is considered vexatious or unreasonable, please contact the COO for support.



## LGB committee structure requirements and panels

LGBs are able to set their own structure but this must reflect the LGBs delegated responsibilities and consider the wellbeing and workload of school leaders and local governors. If the LGB is having a committee structure, it is strongly recommended that a

standards and ethos committee is established, and suggested terms of reference are provided for LGBs to adopt.

LGBs are discouraged from forming committees that are unnecessary and do not have clear impact. It is considered that the delegated responsibilities of the LGB can be met in the structure above or through LGB meetings only. Not having more committees than necessary also supports the workload of the headteacher, school staff and local governors. If an LGB intends to have more committees than described above this should be discussed with the GHRO.

As chair, you should ensure that the committee structure is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the committee structure is effective and purposeful, repetition between committee meetings and LGB meetings is avoided and that the right local governors, with the right skills are on the appropriate committee. The LGB should use its skills audit to decide which local governors should sit on a committee; this ensures that local governors' skills are best placed to ensure committees are as effective and efficient as possible.

There are a number of panels that the LGB should have in place, or have arrangements to be convened should the need arise; these are:

- A complaints panel
- A suspension and exclusion panel
- A disciplinary and grievance panel
- An admissions appeal panel

The LGB should ensure its membership is sufficient to also include provision of appeal panels, should the need arise. It is permitted for the LGB to utilise the skills of governors from other Trust LGBs to serve on these panels should there be an issue with convening a panel from its own membership. Please contact the GHRO to arrange this.

There should be a minimum of three local governors on each panel, and no local governor should sit on panels where they have an actual or perceived conflict of interest, either generally, or because of another panel they sit on. Unless there is a clear conflict of interest, a local governor should not be prohibited from serving on a panel due to the nature of their local governor role, e.g., a parent governor has no less right to serve on a panel just because they are a parent, unless a specific conflict of interest has been identified.

Staff governors are not permitted to serve on panels relating to a member of staff or pupil or where they have information available to them which may taint their impartiality.



## Ethical leadership

As well as governing within the Trust vision and values and ensuring these permeate throughout the work of the LGB, it is also expected that all local governors reflect the 'The

7 principles of public life' or as they are also known, the Nolan Principles in all aspects of their governance. These should be modelled by the chair and set as a clear cultural expectation within the LGB.

**'The 7 principles of public life'** are a set of seven behaviour principles and values which apply to anyone who holds a position of public office.

The seven principles are:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership



## **LGB Code of Conduct**

The Trust provides a code of conduct for LGBs, which we ask is signed at the start of each academic year - the processes within the code will be invoked in the event of a breach whether a local governor has signed the document or not. The code of conduct sets out the behaviour and conduct expectations of all local governors and also provides a process for responding to a breach of the conduct expected and agreed to.



## **Conflicts of interest**

All members of the LGB have a duty to ensure that no real or perceived conflicts of interest can arise from their professional, personal or family interests that may benefit them or a person they are directly or indirectly connected to. This may include familial relationships, business relationships or friendships.

It is important that the LGB has a system in place to identify potential conflicts of interest. This should include maintaining an up-to-date register of interests for all members of the LGB, the Trust provides a register of interests declaration via GovernorHub for local governors to complete and this creates each LGBs register of interests.

The induction process for new local governors should include information on the

different types of conflicts which may arise in their role, and guidance on how to declare these.

At the start of each academic year, the clerk should prompt all governors to declare any conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest can be declared by either signing a declaration of interest form to confirm that there are no changes to their previously declared conflicts of interest or by declaring any new conflicts that have arisen since the last declaration signed or conflict declared. Declarations of potential conflicts of interest must not be held back until the start of the academic year – it is important that they are declared immediately when they arise to enable the governing board to appropriately manage them. At the start of every LGB or committee meeting, the chair of governors should ask if there are any new conflicts of interest to be declared or if there are any specific conflicts of interest relevant to any agenda item.

The chair should ensure that they seek clarification of any potential conflicts of interest of new members recruited to the board. The LGB reserves the right not to appoint a person if it is decided that their interests outside of the role present conflict which is too complex or serious to manage. Changes to a local governor's declared conflicts of interest, and how these can be managed, should also be considered when reappointing an existing member of the LGB.

The chair must ensure that all local governors and the clerk to governors are aware of their own responsibility to report any conflicts of interest which they are aware of but which have not been declared. These can sometimes be missed if an assumption is made that, because everyone is aware of the conflict, it does not need to be recorded.

Local governors must declare any conflicts of interest prior to their participation in decisions which directly affect their interests or the interests of a person they are directly or indirectly connected to. The local governor must be prepared to withdraw from any subsequent discussion if they consider, or if it may be perceived by other interested parties, that they are unable to remain objective. They may also not vote on any matters directly affecting their interest, nor be involved in managing or monitoring any contract or area of school operational activity in which they have an interest.



## **Recruitment, election, and appointment of local governors**

The membership of each LGB is set out in each LGBs scheme of delegation and must be adhered to. Each LGB will be required to have a set number of the following categories of local governors:

- Parent governors – elected by the school's parent body.
- Staff governor – elected by the school's staff body.

- Foundation governors – nominated by the relevant parochial church council (PCC) and appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education.
- Ex-officio Foundation governor – usually taken up by the parish incumbent. If they are unable to serve, it is possible with the permission of the relevant Archdeacon to appoint a substitute ex-officio.
- Ex-officio headteacher governor.
- Co-opted governors – appointed by the LGB.
- Trust governor – appointed by the Trust where determined by the Trust Board

There are formal processes in place for the appointment or election of each type of local governor. These are all available on the Trust website and should be referred to each time a vacancy arises. If the relevant appointment or election process is not followed, the appointment will be invalid.



## Role and responsibilities of the clerk to governors

The Trust scheme of delegation requires each LGB to appoint a clerk to clerk all meetings of the LGB. It is not permitted for a local governor or associate governor to be appointed as clerk – although it is acceptable for a local governor, excluding the headteacher or staff governor, to clerk a meeting in an exceptional circumstance.

It is the Trust’s expectation that moving forward any clerk vacancies are recruited via the Trust’s central clerking service. If a clerking vacancy arises, please speak with the GHRO prior to commencing recruitment.

Where clerks are employed by the school, they should be treated like any other member of school staff. In this circumstance, each school and LGB is responsible for identifying the number of hours a clerk is employed for and the tasks within their job description. Support to identify adequate hours of employment can be provided by the GHRO.

The minimum responsibilities of the clerk are expected to be:

- Meeting with the chair of the local governing body and the headteacher
- Organising, planning and writing the meeting agenda
- Collating and distributing meeting papers
- Minuting the meeting
- Writing up the minutes
- Liaising with the chair and the headteacher.
- Sending out draft minutes to governors
- Creating an action plan and sending this to local governors
- Advising local governors on their duties, including the DGAT scheme of delegation.
- Carrying out any necessary additional task.

- Providing the GHRO with a signed copy of all minutes of meetings of the LGB and its committees as soon as reasonably practicable after the meeting – this can be done via GovernorHub.

The LGB should ensure the clerk is supported to access appropriate training and CPD. The Trust hosts three Clerks' Forum meetings per year and it is an expectation that clerks attend all sessions. Chairs should discuss this with the clerk and identify any barriers to non-attendance and agree a way for information from the meetings to be shared with the LGB.

DGAT provide clerks with a copy of the Trust Clerk to Governors Handbook, which can be accessed in the Local Governance member area of the Trust website. This handbook provides a one-stop shop of guidance and signposting to templates and additional resources for clerks.



## Communication and reporting

Effective, consistent, timely and professional communication is vital to all organisations. The Trust central team communicates with LGBs in a variety of ways, and it is expected that chairs maintain effective and regular communication with the Trust, COO and GHRO.

The Herald, a weekly update email, is shared each Friday to ensure that headteachers and chairs of governors have important information, including latest Trust and DFE updates, along with any relevant Local Authority and DBE information. Headteachers must ensure that all relevant information is then shared with their wider staff team including their SBMs and chairs of governors must share any relevant and pertinent information with the LGB and clerk.

The Board of Trustees host three meetings per year which all chairs across the Trust or their representative are expected to attend. The meeting is chaired by either the chair or vice chair of the Trust Board in line with the group's terms of reference. In these meetings feedback is sought on local issues that are then shared with the Trust Board to inform its strategic decision making and policy development. It is expected that chairs feedback the key information from these meetings to local governors and we recommend this is included as a standard agenda item for each LGB meeting. It is also expected that chairs ask LGB members if there are any issues they would like brought to the Chairs' Group meetings.

To promote consistent communication within the Trust it is the expectation, in normal circumstances, that emails between colleagues within the Trust family should receive a response as swiftly as possible and at the latest within five working days. It is likely that a response will be provided more quickly than this but equally, in exceptional

circumstances, this may not be possible, for example during residential, school holidays, power outages etc.

Chairs of governors should set an out of office message on their school email account during school holidays or if they are unavailable during term time due to a holiday or work commitment. The message should state clearly that emails will not be responded to during this time stating when emails will be replied to, e.g., the first day that the school is open following the holiday.