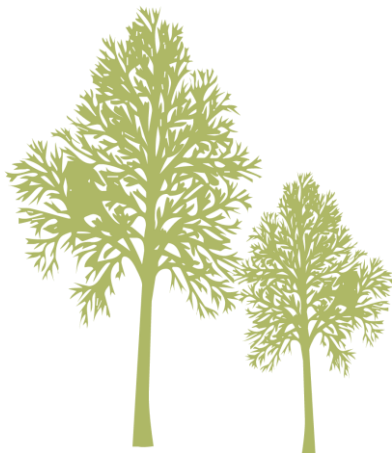




LGB Chairs' Handbook

2023-2024

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 Venerable Hilary Dawson
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
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DGAT	Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust
HoGP	Head of Governance and People
LGB	LGB
CPD	Continued Professional Development
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
DfE	Department for Education
ESFA	Education, Skills and Funding Agency
ATH	Academy Trust Handbook
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
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 21 primary 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, 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 of 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 Venerable Hilary Dawson (Chair)
- Tim Brock (Vice Chair)
- Rob Stokes
- Phillip Perks
- Charlotte Rawlings
- Stewart Hunter
- Canon Rachel Howie
- Robert Gwynne



DGAT organisational structure

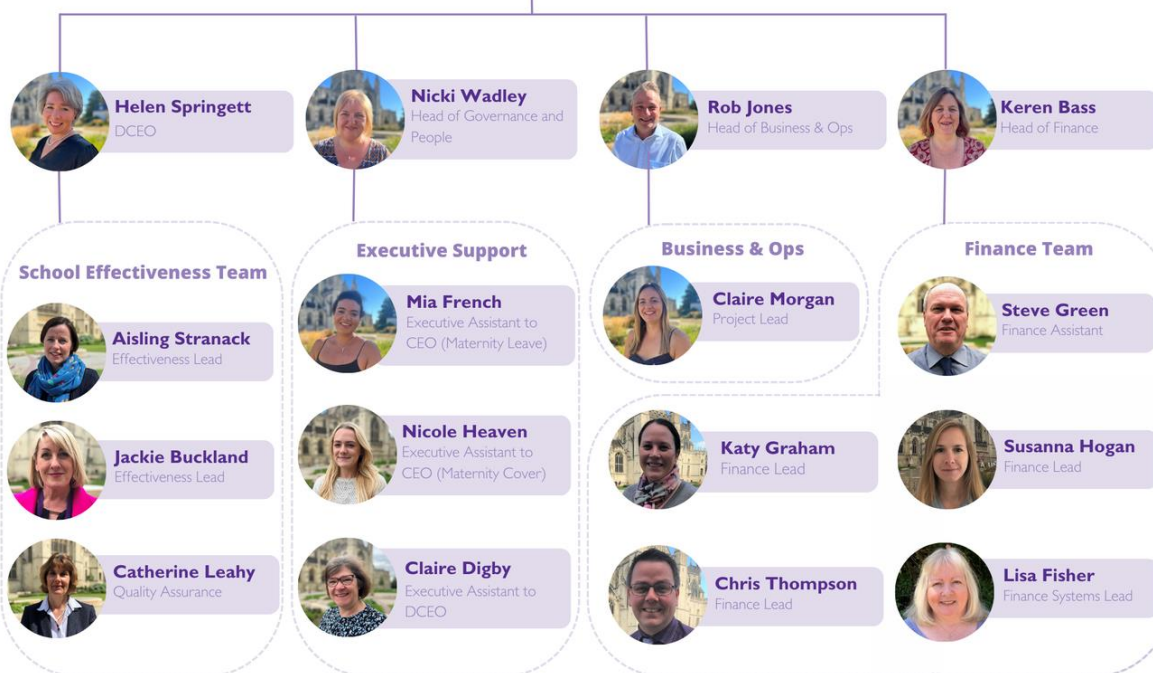
In your role as chair of the LGB you are supported by a dedicated team based in the DGAT central office in College Green. The DGAT central team all have an intrinsic role in supporting our academies and school leaders and are an extended part of each school's staff team.

Meet the team!

Central Team Organogram



Rachel Howie
CEO



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 improvement 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, which you will be asked to share key areas of focus with your LGB and monitor any actions arising from the visit.

Rob Jones, Head of Business and Operations – If your school has any proposed or planned building work or concerns related to buildings or operations then you will likely meet or hear from Rob as part of discussions related to this. Rob also leads on the Trust’s procurement and IT strategy.

Nicki Wadley, Head of Governance and People – Nicki is your key point of contact in the central team. She will contact you when you take the role of chair and offer any support you need. 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 and leads on the conversion and on-boarding process for schools joining the Trust.



Support for you in your role as chair

The person you will likely have most contact with and who is your first point of contact for any queries is our Head of Governance and People (HoGP), Nicki Wadley. Nicki 's contact details are as follows:



nwadley@cen.dagt.org.uk



01452 835597 or 07818 360447

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

- Being the lead officer 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.
- 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.
- 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 lead officer 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.

You are welcome to contact Nicki 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 DGAT chairs of governors here are their contact details.

Name	DGAT school	Contact email
Lynne Banks	Winchcombe Abbey CofE Primary School	chair@winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk
TBC	St John's CofE Academy	chair@st-johns.gloucs.sch.uk
Carl Curtis	Field Court CofE Infant Academy	c.curtis@fieldcourt-inf.gloucs.sch.uk

Carole O'Donnell	Coaley CofE Primary Academy	CODonnell@coaley.gloucs.sch.uk
Diane Bainbridge	Longney CofE Primary Academy	chair@longney.gloucs.sch.uk
Ali Spencer	St Matthew's CofE Primary Academy	a.spencer@st-matthews.gloucs.sch.uk
Dr Jo Grills	Clearwater CofE Primary Academy	chair@clearwateracademy.co.uk
Tim Davies	Primrose Hill CofE Primary Academy	chair@primrosehill.gloucs.sch.uk
Keith Withers	Lakefield CofE Primary School	kwithers@lakefield.gloucs.sch.uk
Andy Goddard	St James' CofE Primary School	chair@st-james-pri.gloucs.sch.uk
Anthony Godwin	Bibury CofE Primary School	chair@bibury.gloucs.sch.uk
Annemarie Thurgood	Dursley CofE Primary Academy	athurgood@dursley.gloucs.sch.uk
Anthony Godwin	North Cerney CofE Primary School	chair@northcerney.gloucs.sch.uk
Carole O'Donnell	Hardwicke Parochial Primary School	chair@hardwicke.gloucs.sch.uk
Kimberly Downton	Minchinhampton CofE Primary Academy	chair@minchgovs.net
Freya Moreby	St Lawrence CofE Primary School	chair@st-lawrence.gloucs.sch.uk
Dr Katie Blaney	Whiteshill Primary School	chair@whiteshill.gloucs.sch.uk
Brian Senior	Watermoor CofE Primary School	chair@watermoor.gloucs.sch.uk
Dr James Holmes	Amberley Parochial School	jholmes@amberley.gloucs.sch.uk
Elizabeth Durning	St Mary's CofE Primary School	chair@st-marys.gloucs.sch.uk

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 Nicki if you would like her to arrange this for you.



Core functions of governance

The [Governance Handbook](#) identifies the following three core functions of effective governance for all governing boards.



Every governing board is required by the DfE to meet these core functions but depending on the responsibilities of the governing board, how these are carried out may differ, e.g. the Trust Board will deliver these functions in a different way to one of its LGBs. The DGAT scheme of delegation explains and sets out how our LGBs meet these core functions of effective governance at a local level.



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 People Administrator at the central team.



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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'.

DfE Governance Handbook - The '[Governance Handbook](#)' is produced by the DfE and is relevant to all governing boards in any type of school. It sets out the DfE and government's vision and priorities for effective governance. It is regularly updated to reflect any changes in legislation or governance procedures. The Governance Handbook sets out the purpose of governance, the governing board's core functions, and explains the six key features of effective governance, which are:

- Strategic leadership

- Accountability
- People
- Structures
- Compliance
- Evaluation

Within the handbook, these six key features are broken down into actions the governing board should take to provide effective governance.

Academy Trust Handbook - The '[Academy Trust Handbook](#)' details the financial and governance framework within which academy trusts must work in their capacity as companies, charities and public bodies. All Academy Trusts must be compliant with the handbook as required by their funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. The Academy Trust Handbook sets out the required roles and responsibilities of the board – compliance with the handbook is a condition of the Trust's funding agreement.

The handbook provides guidance for:

- The roles and responsibilities of the ESFA and academy trusts
- The financial and governance requirements for academy trusts
- The financial freedoms and limits applicable to academy trusts
- The audit requirements of academy trusts
- Also included is a useful list of definitions for terms used within the handbook

DGAT Articles of Association - Articles of association are a requirement for all academy trusts. The articles of association set out the legal procedures within which the Trust must operate, and to offer guidance on any matters detailed in the document, including arrangements for local governance. The DGAT Articles of Association can be found on the DGAT website.

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 academy 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 DGAT 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 DGAT 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 – DGAT provides all LGBs with an annual schedule of work which sets out the responsibilities of LGBs across each term and reflects the three core functions of governance and DGAT 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 to meet the three core functions of governance relevant to its school and local context.

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

External support and guidance

The Trust have purchased a license for each school to access [TheSchoolBus](#), a school leadership and compliance resource and guidance platform. TheSchoolBus summarises official documents into need-to-know facts you can digest in just a few minutes. To access TheSchoolBus contact Nicki to receive your login and password.

TheSchoolBus resources can help you in your role as chair of the LGB to:

- Know immediately when legal requirements have changed.
- Effectively hold your senior leaders to account.
- Always be ready for inspection using our Ofsted preparation resources.
- Rest assured that you're always acting on accurate information.
- Get everything you need to know in a weekly newsletter.
- Read daily summaries of the latest news in Education.
- Delegate duties and establish responsibilities using our role descriptors.



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, much of which is free to access. All our governance training is specific to DGAT, the Trust's 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 do take a look at the [DGAT CPD Brochure](#) and use to plan the training needs for your governing board.



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 HoGP. 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 HoGP. 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 HoGP.

Responsibilities of the chair

The role of the chair is to lead the LGB in ensuring governors meet the three core functions of governance in line with 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. Often,

the chair will meet with the headteacher on an informal basis to offer support and receive any pertinent updates regarding school issues.

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 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 DGAT 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 have 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 MAT 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 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 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 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.

We currently recommend that LGBs use the NGA skills audit. A copy is available on the DGAT website.



GovernorHub

It is the Trust's strong preference 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
- 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 HoGP to agree the most secure way for this to happen. The HoGP has admin access to all LGB's GovernorHub.

For support to use GovernorHub to its full capacity please contact the Governance and People Administrator.



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 DGAT scheme of delegation there are three 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

There may be other policies that the LGB decide it is relevant to consider at a local level. DGAT provide a Policy Arrangements and Process guidance resource which is available on the DGAT website. The guidance sets out the statutory policies which must be adopted by all academies. The most up-to-date version and policy review dates of each policy can be found in each members' area on the DGAT 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 2 of the policy must be discussed with the HoGP prior to any response being made or further action taken.

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



LGB committee structure requirements and panels

Each LGB must have in place a finance committee and DGAT provide terms of reference for the committee to adopt. It is recommended that LGBs also establish a standards and ethos committee

and suggested terms of reference are provided for LGBs to adopt. If a LGB would like to propose an alternative committee structure this must be discussed and agreed with the HoGP.

LGBs are permitted to establish any other committee required.

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 governors should sit on a committee; this ensures that governors' skills are best placed to ensure committees are as effective and efficient as possible. The workload and wellbeing of the headteacher and local governors must be considered when reviewing and deciding upon a committee structure.

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 pay panel
- 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 DGAT LGB to serve on these panels should there be an issue with convening a panel from its own membership. Please contact the HoGP 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 a conflict of interest, either generally, or as a result of another panel they sit on. For instance, local governors on the pay panel are not able to also sit on the pay appeals panel, as any appeals will be against their original ruling on the pay panel. 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 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 DGAT vision and values and ensuring these permeate throughout the work of the LGB, it is also expected that all 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

DGAT provide 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, DGAT provide a register of interests form for governors to complete and a template to maintain the register of interests.

The induction process for new 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 governing board 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 within the Trust is set out in each school's 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.

There are formal processes in place for the appointment or election of each type of governor. These are all available on the DGAT 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. Organisations who can support the recruitment of local governors include (click on image to

access):



Role and responsibilities of the clerk to governors

The DGAT 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 strong preference that moving forward any clerk vacancies are recruited via the Trust's central clerking service. If a clerking vacancy arises, please speak with the HoGP 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 HoGP.

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 HoGP 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. DGAT host 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 DGAT Clerk to Governors Handbook, which can be accessed in the Local Governance member area of the DGAT 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 and HoGP.

The Trust newsletter is written to bring the whole Trust family together to share key messages and celebrate individual school and staff messages. This is sent out half termly. All schools are invited to contribute to this newsletter by sending photos and articles to the central team.

The Herald, a weekly update email, is shared each Friday, to ensure that headteachers and chairs of governors have important information, including latest 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 a termly meeting which all chairs across the Trust or their representative is 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 DGAT 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 5 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 residentials, 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 to 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.