

AN OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE AT THE CHARTER SCHOOLS EDUCATIONAL TRUST

For the schools in our Trust, a sense of place matters: the history, geography, social and economic context underpins the views and experiences of pupils, staff, and parents. A well-functioning local tier of governance provides the Trust Board with insight into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by our various communities.

With this in mind each school the Trust has a local governing body ('LGB') composed of a group of volunteers drawn from the wider community. These volunteers bring a range of skills, experience, and professional expertise to support the school's senior leadership team at a strategic level. We are dedicated to diversity in our governance structure, and to ensuring that every voice is heard respectfully.

Our Local Governors provide essential links between the school, parents/carers, the local community, and the Trust board, which is ultimately responsible to the Department of Education for the performance of all its schools.

An effective local tier helps to ensure:

- a better understanding of the Trust's role and how each school fits into the Trust's structure
- a positive contribution to the checks and balances of Trust governance
- more diverse views being expressed, adding to the richness of discussion and challenge
- active engagement between individual schools and their wider community
- more support for individual schools and the Trust from stakeholders
- the voices of local communities being reflected in Trust board decisions

How do Local Governing Bodies work in our Trust?

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) are a committee of the main Trust Board and have functions and responsibilities delegated as directed by the [Trust scheme of delegation](#). Each school in the Trust is, and should be, distinct from others in the Trust, able to respond to the needs of its pupils and its community. The Trust works as one team for the good of all the children and young people in our communities with the schools collaborating, sharing resources, knowledge and best practice.

Our LGBs provide strategic oversight at the local level of the management and operation of each school on behalf of the Trust Board, with the aim of improving the quality of education and raising standards, in line with the overall strategic direction of the Trust and school's development plan. The LGB does not run the school on a day-to-day basis; this is the job of the Headteacher and other senior staff.

Each LGB has a key role to play in the overall development and success of the Trust and in contributing to joint working and sharing best practice between all the schools within the Trust.

Local Governors responsibilities are to:

To create an effective local tier that supports school improvement and strengthens trust governance local governors main responsibilities are:

Area	Delegated Functions
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor safeguarding practice in the school, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance and trust wide policies. • Each LGB must appoint a link governor for safeguarding.
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor school performance – reviewing data, including pupil outcomes, attendance rates, and behaviour. • Work with school leaders to identify areas for improvement. • Pay close attention to the progress, attainment and opportunities for those pupils from a disadvantaged background to ensure delivery of the overall Trust Mission of Better Futures for all Children and Young People. • Secondary School LGBs must appoint a link governor for Careers
SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) get the support they need and seek assurance that staff are adequately resourced and trained. • Each LGB must appoint a link governor for SEND
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the school has well developed marketing and communication channels, and consults with stakeholders (parents, staff, pupils and the wider community) on a regular basis • Ensure the school works in partnership with the local community • Ensure stakeholder views are accounted for.

Other areas of delegation are specified in the [Trust Scheme of Delegation](#) and include:

- **Vision and strategy** – As a committee of the Trust Board the LGB acts as champion for the overall Trust Mission, Vision and Values when reviewing the school vision and strategy to ensure that these align.
- **Policy review** – LGBs will review and approve school level policies such as attendance, behaviour or uniform and will be consulted on Trust level policies where significant changes are made - via the Chairs Forum
- **Panel work** – Local Governors are expected to occasionally sit on panels to consider suspensions and exclusions, and complaints.
- **Financial oversight** – it is good practice for LGBs to be aware of the school’s budget and spending plans, but strategic oversight of finance is held at Trust Board level.

Local Governors are appointed by the Trust Board except for parent governors, who are elected by parents and carers in the school, and staff governors, who are elected by school staff.

What does the role of local governor involve?

- **Local Governing Body meetings** - Full LGB meetings are normally held a minimum of four times per year and, whilst there are many important aspects of the role, the most important is the business that takes place at these meetings.
- **School visits** – School visits help local governors to understand more about their school and the reality of school life. Governor visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection but serve as a clear monitoring function on the implementation of the school's strategic planning and help the LGB triangulate the information they receive from the school leadership team.
- **Training** – The Trust provides variety of training provision including the National Governance Association and The Key. The Trust also arranges bespoke training delivered by the central governance team on areas specific to our Trust and schools.

We expect that all governors complete a governor induction course as soon as possible after taking up their position, which included mandatory training on Safeguarding and Cyber security.

All governors also have access to the NGA membership and The Key GovernorHub.

Time commitment

Volunteering to be a local governor does require time commitment but is a rewarding position that provides essential support for the school and the Trust.

Local governors are expected to attend at least 4 full local governor meetings per year, usually held in the evening and lasting approximately two hours and which will have required reading of reports from the school leadership before each meeting. There is also an expectation that all local governors will wherever possible make themselves available to sit on Pupil Disciplinary or Complaint panels for their school, and they may also be asked to take on a specific link governor role which will involve termly visits with the link area staff lead at the school and producing a report for the wider LGB.

Local governors are encouraged to attend school events such as annual school productions, parent forums, concerts and art shows and complete appropriate training.

An appointed or elected local governor's term of office is usually four years.

The Department for Education [Academy Trust Governance Guide](#) provides information on the various roles and duties within a multi academy trust.

Find out more about the Trust and its schools [HERE](#)