

ABINGDON LEARNING TRUST

XXXSCHOOL ACADEMY COMMITTEEXXX

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. POWERS OF THE TRUST BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- 1.1 The Trustees shall establish the Local Governing Body - known as Local Academy Committees – LACs for each school in the Trust, as a committee of the Trust as set out in the Trust’s Articles of Association (*Article 100a*).
- 1.2 The Trustees shall determine and approve the LAC Terms of Reference and shall review the Terms at the start of each academic year (*Article 104*).
- 1.3 The Trustees have a responsibility
 - 1.3.1 to set out the Trust’s vision, values, principles and goals, which shall recognise that the education, personal development and well-being of all pupils and students shall be a collective responsibility of all Trustees, governors and staff
 - 1.3.2 to support, monitor and challenge the quality of education provided by the Trust’s schools and the progress and attainment of all pupils and students
 - 1.3.3 to govern the Trust on the principle of balanced autonomy that recognises the accountabilities and responsibilities of Trustees, CEO and Headteachers versus Governors’ understanding of their school, pupils, students, staff and wider community
 - 1.3.4 to ensure that the Trust and its schools operates effectively, efficiently and compliantly, making best use of public funds
- 1.4 The Trustees shall determine and approve the delegation of powers, responsibilities and duties to the LAC and shall review this Scheme of Delegation at the start of each academic year (*Article 105*).
- 1.5 The Trustees shall have the right to intervene in the governance of an Academy where it has serious cause for concern, including:
 - 1.5.1 Standards of performance of pupils at the Academy are unacceptably low
 - 1.5.2 Serious breakdown in the way the Academy is governed or managed

1.5.3 Safety of pupils or staff is threatened

1.6 The Trustees shall set out a list of statutory, mandatory or required policies including the determination of those that are Trust policies and those that are School policies.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE

The primary responsibility of the LAC is to hold the school leadership to account for the academic performance, outcomes of and quality of care for the pupils within its school. To do that the LAC should know key aspects of the school well - particularly:

- Data relating to the academic outcomes of pupils both overall and specific groups;
- Performance against targets
- Timescales for, progress towards and impact of school improvement plans
- Stakeholder perceptions of the school
- How the staff complement, and organisation support school improvement plans in line with the school budget
- Student and Staff safety and well-being
- Site security

The LAC should carry out this responsibility in line with the Trust's objectives, the Local Governance Handbook, the Scheme of Delegation (See Appendix 1 which also sets out how these responsibilities interact with other elements of the Trust) and other guidance set out by or behalf of the Trust Board.

The LAC will operate using a portfolio structure – details of Governor portfolio roles are set out in Appendix 2. These may be adapted by LACs in response to the size and make-up of the governing body and changes to plans and priorities over time.

3. COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENT OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE

3.1 The composition of the LAC shall be as follows;

3.1.1 up to twelve (12) Trust Governors appointed by the Board, in addition to:

3.1.2 two (2) Parent Governors who are parents or carers of registered pupils at the Academy(ies), but not employees of the Trust working in that School;

3.1.3 two (2) Staff Governors elected by the staff of the School, ideally one from the teaching staff and one from the associate staff.

3.2 The LAC may appoint up to three (3) other persons as Associate Members, who shall not be entitled to vote nor to count as part of a quorum.

4. TERM OF OFFICE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNORS

- 4.1** The Term of Office for all Governors is 4 years, except that the first Governors shall be appointed for the balance of their terms of office as Trustees had they not resigned as Trustees. Subject to remaining eligible to be appointed, any Governor may be re- appointed or re-elected.
- 4.2** On appointment Governors are each required to familiarise themselves and to agree to comply with;
- 4.2.1** Trust Articles of Association,
 - 4.2.2** these Terms,
 - 4.2.3** current relevant legislation and guidance for Governors, and
 - 4.2.4** Trust Code of Conduct for Trustees and Governors.

5. MEETINGS OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY COMMITTEE

- 5.1** The LAC shall meet at least four times per year and at least once per term and in particular:
- 5.1.1** The LAC shall meet during the date periods as per the Trust Governance Planning Calendar
 - 5.1.2** The Governors will receive notice of each meeting seven (7) clear days before the date of the meeting
 - 5.1.3** The agenda, papers and minutes of LAC meetings will be posted on GovernorHub for the Governors and the Clerk to the Trustees to access.
 - 5.1.4** Minutes will be signed by the LAC Chair at the next meeting to verify that the minutes are a true record.
- 5.2** Quorum for a meeting of the LAC will be three or, if higher, one third (1/3) (rounded up to the next whole number) of the number of Governors entitled to vote. There must be a majority of non-staff governors present at the meeting.
- 5.3** Each question to be decided at a meeting of the LAC shall be determined by a majority of votes of Governors present and eligible to vote on the question. In the event that there are equal votes on the question then the Chair shall have an additional casting vote.

6. APPOINTMENT OF THE LOCAL ACADEMY BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

- 6.1** The LAC shall recommend the Chair and Vice Chair for approval by the Trust Board
- 6.2** The Trust Board shall have the right to remove the Chair, specifically in circumstances outlined in item 1.5 of these Terms of Reference.
- 6.3** The term of office for Chair and Vice-Chair will be 1 year and they shall be chosen prior to the first Trust Board meeting of each school year, and, in particular;

- 6.3.1** Recommendation of the Chair and Vice Chair will be by a ballot, conducted by the Clerk.
- 6.3.2** Governors will be able to submit written nominations prior to the meeting and verbal nominations at the meeting. A Governor can nominate him/herself for office and does not need to be present.
- 6.3.3** Nominee(s) will be asked to leave the room whilst the election takes place. If there is more than one nominee, the remaining Governors will take a vote and the Clerk will tally the vote.
- 6.3.4** If there are more than three nominees per office, the nominee polling the least votes shall be eliminated and a further vote taken. If there is a tie the Governors shall discuss the strengths of nominees and a further vote taken. This process will continue until a nominee polls a majority of votes.

7. LAC SUB-COMMITTEES

- 7.1** The general principle will be that the LAC shall operate as a flat structure. Where a sub-committee is seen to be required the LAC shall recommend such sub-committees as it sees fit to fulfil its powers, responsibilities and duties for approval by the Trust Board.
- 7.2** The LAC will set out sub-committee Terms of Reference and membership to be agreed and reviewed at the first meeting of the LAC each school year.
- 7.3** The practice for LAC sub-committee management shall be;
 - 7.3.1** Agendas will be circulated to all sub-committee members at least seven days in advance of the meeting.
 - 7.3.2** Sub-committee papers and minutes will be available to all Governors (not just those on the sub-committee).

8. LAC PORTFOLIO ROLES

- 8.1** The LAC will establish portfolio roles for each of the Governors so that they become experts in one area at the start of the academic year.
- 8.2** Approved portfolio roles and descriptions for the current year are contained in appendix 2.

9. APPOINTMENT OF A GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL

- 9.1** The Trust Board shall appoint and remove a Governance Professional.

10. GOVERNORS' EXPENSES

- 10.1** The Trust Board shall set out a policy for payment of exceptional expenses incurred by Governors, subject to prior application to and approval by the Chair of the LAC.

DECLARATION

The Trust Board of, at its meeting on 25th January 2024 resolved to adopt these Terms of Reference. A copy has been forwarded to the Clerk for the formal Trust Board records. These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually at the start of the academic year.

Signature (Chair of Trust Board): ... *J.H. Hopkins*.....

Date of Signature: ...31.1.24.....

APPENDIX 1

| # Sect | # Item | Task key: Approve (A), Recommend (R), Propose (P), Develop (D), Monitor and Report (M), Consulted (C), Implement (I) | Notes | Members | Board | F&GP Cttee | Educational Standards (ES) | Compliance Cttee | CEO | LAC | Headteacher | Sec Descr. |
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| 1 | 4 | Approve Trust Scheme of Delegation | | | A | | | | R | C | C | Governance |
| 1 | 5 | Approve school status (level of autonomy/authority) | | | A | | | | R | C | | Governance |
| 1 | 7 | Establish and approve Terms of Reference for Trust Committees including LABs and SB | Subject to school autonomy status | | A | | | | R | C | | Governance |
| 1 | 8 | Establish LAC sub-committees and their terms of reference | JMF6 Only | | | | | | | A | C | Governance |
| 1 | 11 | Appoint Chair and Vice Chair of LAC | | | A | | | | | R | | Governance |
| 1 | 15 | Appoint Governors to LAC | | | A | | | | | R | | Governance |
| 1 | 16 | Remove Governors from LAC | In exceptional circumstances | | A | | | | | R | | Governance |
| 1 | 22 | Appoint (and remove) Governance Professional to LAC | | | A | | | | R | C | | Governance |
| 1 | 25 | Trust Policy Matrix | | | A | | | | R | C | C | Governance |
| 1 | 26 | Trust Governance Calendar | | | A | | | | R | C | C | Governance |
| 2 | 1 | Trust Strategic Plan | | | A M | M | M | M | R/I | C | C | Planning & Perf |

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| 2 | 2 | Devise trust-wide Curriculum Statement. Developed by Trust Exec Team | | | | | A | | R | M | D I | Planning & Perf |
| 2 | 3 | Set School Performance Targets | | | A | | R | | p | P | D | Planning & Perf |
| 2 | 6 | School 1 Year Development Plan | | | | | | | | A/M | R/I | Planning & Perf |
| 3 | 1 | HR, Employment & Staff related policies | Trust Policies: See policy matrix | | A | | | M | R/I | M | I | Staff Policies and Pay |
| 3 | 7 | Headteacher Performance Review and Pay | | | | A | | | I/R | I/R | | Staff Policies and Pay |
| 3 | 8 | Individual Performance Pay Awards | As per Trust policy | | | A | | | R | R | P | Staff Policies and Pay |
| 4 | 2 | Trust staff structure & complement. LACs involved if joint appt under aegis of Trust. | | | A | | | | R | C | C | Staff Management |
| 4 | 4 | School staff structure & complement | Within School 1 Year Plan | | | | | | A | P | P | Staff Management |
| 4 | 5 | Headteacher appointment | LAC/CEO panel | | | | | | A | P | | Staff Management |
| 4 | 6 | Senior leadership appointments | | | | | | | C | A | P | Staff Management |
| 4 | 11 | Suspension of Headteacher | As per policy | | | | | | A | C | | Staff Management |
| 4 | 12 | Return of Headteacher | | | | | | | A | C | | Staff Management |
| 4 | 13 | Dismissal of Headteacher | | | A | | | | R | C | | Staff Management |

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| 4 | 14 | Dismissal of teaching and support staff | HR Panel as appropriate H/T must consult CEO/CoG | | | | | | C | C | A | Staff Management |
| 4 | 17 | Redundancy of school staff | Financial implications | | A | | | | R | C | P | Staff Management |
| 4 | 18 | Restructuring of school staff | Without financial implication | | | | | | A | R | P | Staff Management |
| 5 | 4 | Annual review of School Risk Register | Trust Handbook At least annual review | | | | | | M | AM | PI | Fin. Gvnce & Mgt |
| 5 | 7 | Trust Central Charges to schools | | | A | R | | | P | C | C | Fin. Gvnce & Mgt |
| 5 | 13 | School 3 year budget plans | Annually | | | A | | | R | C | D | Fin. Gvnce & Mgt |
| 7 | 1 | School times, terms and holidays | | | A | | | | R | C | P | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 2 | Change of School Age Range | | | A | | | | R | P | D | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 3 | Expansion of School Pupil Admission Number (PAN) | | | A | | | | R | P | D | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 6 | Child Welfare & Safeguarding Policy | Trust Policy INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL ADAPT LOCALLY | | A | | M | R | A (local adapt) M | | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 7 | School Statutory Policies | See policy matrix | | A | | M | M | M | | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 8 | School non-Statutory Policies | | | | | | | | AM | P/I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 9 | Suspensions (prev Fixed Term Exclusion - FTE) | | | | | M | | M | M | API | Policies & Procedure |

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| 7 | 11 | Permanent Exclusions | Via Governors Panel | | | | M | | C | A/M | R | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 12 | Appeals against Permanent Exclusion | LA Independent Panel | | | | | | M | I | | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 13 | Complaints Policy | Trust policy | | A | | | M | R | M | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 14 | Complaints Appeals | Panel incl. independent gov. | | I | | | M | R | I | | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 15 | Admissions Policy | School Policy | | A | | | M | R | C | P/I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 16 | Admissions allocation of places | As per Admissions policy | | | | | | | AM | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 17 | Admissions Appeals | Independent Panel | | | | | M | C | A | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 18 | School prospectus | Refers to overall branding and image guidelines | | | | | | C | A | D R | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 19 | School website | Refers to overall branding and image guidelines and DfE requirements for what schools must publish on their websites | | | | | | C | A | D R | Policies & Procedure |

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| 7 | 20 | School logo & branding | Refers to overall branding and image guidelines | | | | | | C | A | D R I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 21 | School uniform | Refers to overall branding and image guidelines | | | | | | C | A | D R I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 24 | Remote Learning Policy | | | | | | | | A | P I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 25 | Data Protection Policy | | | A | | | R M | P | M | | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 26 | Register of Pupil's admissions to schools and attendance | | | | | | | | M | A | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 28 | Early Career Teacher Induction Policy (ECT) | | | | | C | | R | A | | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 31 | Single central record of recruitment and vetting checks | Reviewed by S/G Trustee/Governors | | | | | A/M | I | A/M | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 33 | Designated teacher for children we care for (prev. looked after children). | Review alongside Safeguarding Policy | | | | | | M | A | P I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 34 | Children with health needs who cannot attend school. | Trust schools follow LA policy and procedures | | | | | | | A/M | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 35 | Early Years foundations stage (EYFS) - primaries only | Trust recommends on school website | | | | | | | A | R | Policies & Procedure |

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| 7 | 36 | Special educational needs and disability policy | Trust produces overarching policy - adapted locally | | A | | | M | R | A M | R I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 37 | Relationships and sex education policy | | | | | | M | | A M | R I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 38 | Behaviour policy (incl Anti-Bullying policy/strategy) | | | | | | | | A M | R I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 39 | First aid in schools | | | A | | | | P | A | | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 40 | Equality information and objectives | Authored by CEO/H/Ts | | A | R | R M | R | P | A M | P I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 41 | Register of Business interests | GPs collect returns. Approval Trust Chair/CEO/LAC Chairs | | A | | | | A | A | | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 42 | Careers guidance | Secondary only | | | | M | M | | A M | P | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 43 | Whistleblowing Policy | | | A | | | R M | P I | M | I | Policies & Procedure |
| 7 | 44 | Stakeholder feedback | | | | | | | | A/M | P/I | |
| 8 | 1 | Asset Management Policy | Trust Policy | | A | R | | | P | C | | Premises & Assets |
| 8 | 2 | Asset Management Plan | | | | A | | | R | A | R | Premises & Assets |
| 9 | 1 | Health and Safety | Trust policy suite | | A | | | M | P | M | I/M | Health and Safety |

Appendix 2

Please note that the expectation is that, in addition to promoting greater understanding of governors' own schools, the portfolio structure will be used to strengthen governance by sharing the experience of portfolio governors at different schools.

Portfolio roles summary

Chair

Key goals

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the board fulfils its role of supporting and challenging the school, particularly through liaising regularly with the head to agree the agenda for board meetings, chairing board meetings, taking part in the head's appraisal, liaising with the governance professional to review and improve the board's activity, and ensuring that the focus of the board remains strategic.

NB.: The chair has no special authority – only the board as a whole can take decisions and decisions which through urgency have to be taken outside the meeting cycle must be reported back to the full board at the next available opportunity.

Vice-chair

Key goals

To act as a sounding board for the chair; to share tasks with the chair when agreed to ensure a manageable workload; to be the chair's deputy in times of absence. To take a particular interest in staff-wellbeing, using the outcome of the staff survey and analysis of exit surveys to monitor staff views.

Safeguarding

Key goals

Be the board's expert on safeguarding, in particular ensuring that the board is up to date with safeguarding legislation. Undertake training to be up to date with government guidance and liaise with the governance professional to make sure that board members are up to date with safeguarding training. Receive confirmation from DSL that the school is complying with safeguarding requirements (single central record, recruitment, training, DSL training).

Site security

Key goals

Be the board's expert on how the site is secured and how those who work on the site are kept safe. Be familiar with good practice nationally and the range of measures that schools can take. Be familiar with how the site security of a school is judged nationally.

Standards

Key goals

Be the board's expert on standards: how they are measured (both at GCSE and A level, and also lower down the school), how students are doing compared with their own starting points and national standards, and the key school policies and SIP actions that have an impact on standards.

Teaching, learning and assessment

Key goals

Be the board's expert on teaching and learning, and on assessment. Be familiar with the school's policy for teaching and learning and what this looks like in practice in the school. Be familiar with the school's assessment policy and how this is implemented in the school. Be aware of how the school measures the impact of these policies.

Curriculum

Key goals

Be the board's expert on the curriculum. Understand what the curriculum is trying to achieve and what its purpose is. Understand the different levels on which the curriculum operates, and the aspects of school provision which go beyond

timetabled lessons (super-curricular and extra-curricular provision). Be familiar with the school's curriculum planning documents.

Special educational needs

Key goals

Be the board's expert on SEN: how effective the school is in improving provision, attainment and attendance for students with special education needs; the key school policies and SIP actions that have an impact on these students; how the SEN department works in practice.

Disadvantaged groups

Key goals

Be the board's expert on disadvantaged groups: those in receipt of pupil premium now or in the last six years; looked after children; army children and those on alternative provision. Be familiar with the issues these students face, the key accountability measures which schools have for these groups, and the specific provision the school is making for them.

Attendance, behaviour and student experience

Key goals

Know the key elements of the school's attendance strategy and understand the key indicators of its success. Be familiar with the school's behaviour policy and how the school measures its impact on students and its effectiveness.

Sixth form

Key goals

Be the board's expert on the sixth form and on the school's contribution to JMF6. Understand how sixth form attainment is measured and the way that JMF6 evaluates its success. Know how the school intends that teaching and learning should be experienced by sixth form students. Be familiar with sixth form destinations and how this compares with the national picture.

Stakeholder engagement

Key goals

Be the board's expert both on how the school gathers feedback from stakeholders (particular staff, parents and students). Be familiar with the trends in this feedback and how the school uses the feedback to improve.