



DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER  
ACADEMY TRUST

# Governors Handbook

February 2020



# Governor Handbook



The March CE Primary School

*With God's help  
we will live kindly,  
love each other,  
learn and laugh together*

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## Welcome from the DCAT Team

### Chief Executive – Mark Talbot

A warm welcome to the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT). We exist to provide a first-class option for schools choosing to become an academy. We currently have seven academies making up our Trust, each maintaining its own unique character and identity, serving their own distinct community.

We consider, and our schools tell us, that the strength of our Multi Academy Trust is that all our schools are an equal part of our DCAT family; schools that share ideas, stories and, when appropriate, resources to *help every child achieve their God-given potential*, which is our Trust vision.

To support this, we have clear and stated aims. We aim to be a Trust in which:

**D**eveloping the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential  
**C**ontinued development of staff is valued and improves education for young people  
**A**ll schools are improving and perform above national expectations  
**T**he distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated

As well as now helping the 366 staff best support the 3307 children in the Trust, we are forward thinking and our Trust 7-year strategy is about meeting our vision and aims alongside three drivers of growth, innovation and collaboration. I would be delighted to speak to you about this or any aspect of Trust life.

On behalf of our Trust Board, as Chief Executive Officer, I am determined to work with our distinct Academies to best serve their children and communities.



**Mark Talbot**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Introduction from our Chair of the Board of Trustees – Archdeacon Luke Irvine-Capel

It is a great privilege to have been appointed to this role, and I am much looking forward to working with the children, staff, parents, Local Governing Bodies, Directors and Trust Members from across our Academies as we build and develop the life and work of the Trust.

In addition to being Chair of DCAT I am also Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education. Between DCAT and the DBE we serve 155 schools with around 38,000 children in them.

This year the Diocese of Chichester has been celebrating the Year of Vocation. During this year our schools and churches have been reflecting on how God is calling us to know, love and follow him. Whilst this is true for us as individuals, called to serve the Lord in different ways for the building up of his Church and the furthering of his Kingdom, it is also true for us as bodies within this household of faith. DCAT, in partnership the Board of Education, has a distinctive vocation which we continue to discern and articulate. At a time of continuing change and uncertainty, within education and more widely, the importance of being attentive to the work of discernment is paramount. I hope that within DCAT, as well as within the wider household of faith in the Diocese of Chichester, we might be attentive to one another as we grow and develop in our life together.

All of our academies are committed to offering the children entrusted to our care the very best in educational opportunities because we know that each child is of infinite value and worth. We pray that they may develop a life long love of learning and a desire for God, who desires that we may all rejoice in life in all its fullness. Our recent results show that the staff in our academies are working with commitment and rigour in pursuing excellence for our children in keeping with the Trust's vision of helping every child achieve their God-given potential. It is wonderful to be able to celebrate their accomplishments, and to congratulate our children and staff on their academic performance.

I am looking forward to visiting the Academies across our Trust and to working closely with Mark Talbot and his team as we look back in thankfulness for all that has been, and look forward with confidence and trust to the future.

With my prayer and all good wishes,



**The Venerable Luke Irvine-Capel**  
Archdeacon of Chichester

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## Welcome from Governance Manager – Jo Saunders

Welcome to our DCAT Governance Handbook. We recognise that in volunteering to become a governor you have done so because you want to give something back to support education in your community, using the skills you have acquired in your professional careers and putting them to good use. As a governor you will also have the opportunity to:

- improve your work skills
- receive valuable training
- gain experience of managing an organisation
- raise questions, discuss issues and help make decisions.

Being a Church Trust we have set our vision and values and we expect the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) to set the strategic direction for the academy to *help every child achieve their God-given potential*. We are here to provide support to governors and clerks to ensure that all statutory responsibilities are discharged and we equip the LGBs with the support they need to meet the demands of governing an academy in our MAT.

If you are a new governor, please ask your academy about the induction handbook for new governors as this has a wealth of useful information key to your role as a new governor. We also recommend that you are given a mentor to help you through those first few months of joining the LGB. A mentor can help you understand your role and support you in applying the skills you have to a school governance context.



**Jo Saunders**  
**Governance Manager**

## Our Vision and Values

Our **vision** for our Trust is we exist to:

***Help every child achieve their God-given potential***

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (John 10 vs 10)

Our **aims** are clear. We aim to be a Trust in which:

**D**eveloping the whole child means pupils achieve and maximise their potential

**C**ontinued development of staff is valued and improves education for young people

**A**ll schools are improving and perform above national expectations

**T**he distinct Christian identity of each academy develops and is celebrated

Our work as a Trust is underpinned by shared **values**. They are taken from the Church of England's vision for Education and guide the work of Trust Centre team. They are:

### **Aspiration**

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4 vs 13)

### **Wisdom**

Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise (Proverbs 19 vs 20)

### **Respect**

So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you (Matthew 7 vs 12)

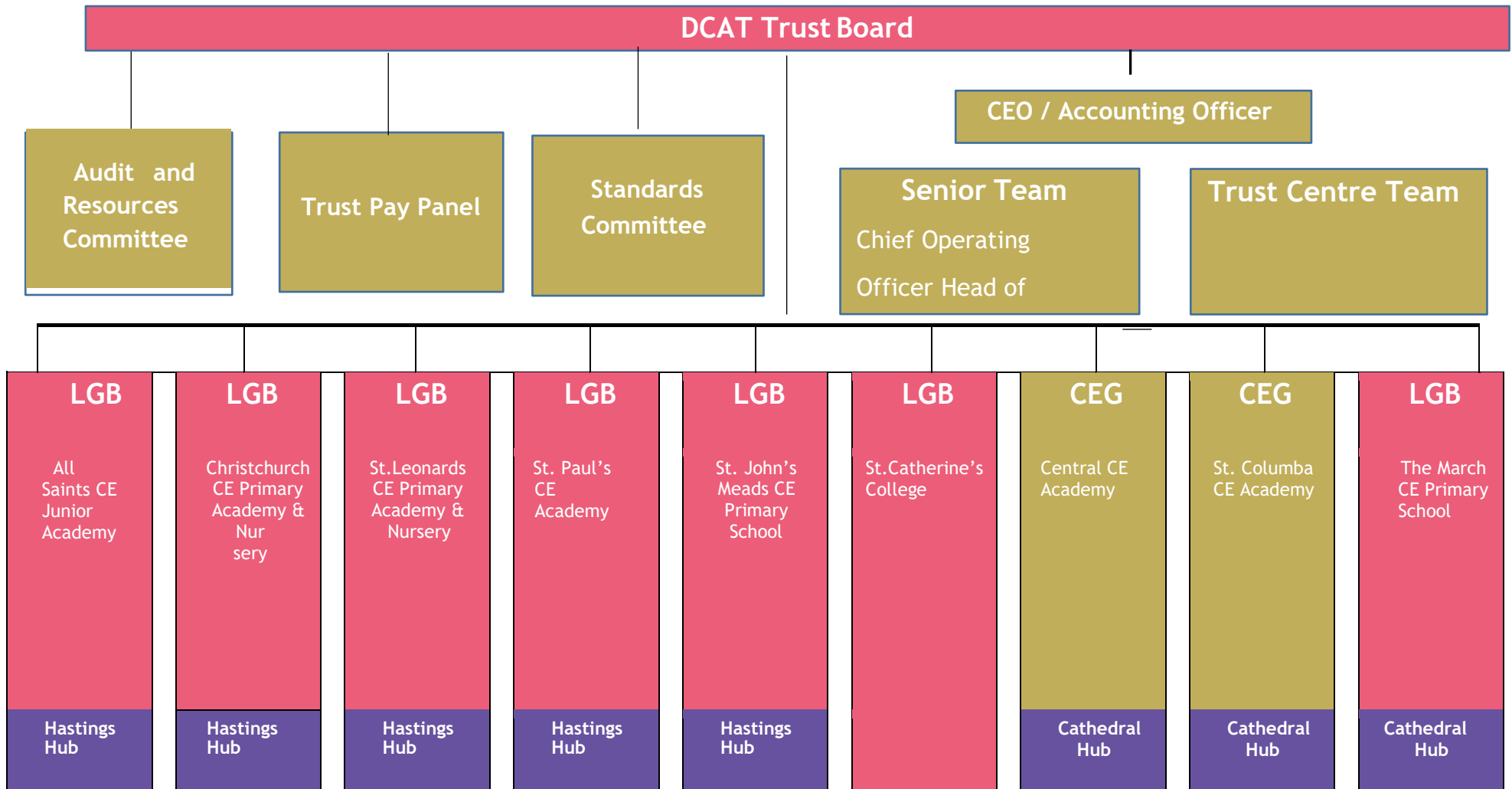


The following are expectations of each of our Academies within the Trust. They are not exhaustive but are seen as the non-negotiables that sit alongside the individual approaches our distinct Academies choose to take. They should be read in conjunction with the Trust Handbook. **Each Academy must have:**

Vision, Culture & Ethos	People & Partners	Teaching & Learning	Curriculum & Assessment	Quality Assurance & Accountability	Leadership & Governance
A Christian vision which is underpinned by the Bible and an ethos based on Christian values	A known staffing profile that informs high quality CPD including NQT and new staff induction	Good or better teaching	A curriculum intent statement that articulates the Academy's approach to curriculum design. This is on the academy website and is informative to parents/carers	Embedded systems in place to regularly review data and evaluate progress against key performance indicators	An ambitious approach to school improvement with a tireless pursuit of excellence
An improvement culture that is fixed on performance above national averages in line with Trust aims.	Regard to all staff wellbeing and workload is meaningful and supportive	Systems to swiftly challenge and improve teaching performance that is below 'good'	Curriculum coverage which is understood, monitored and evaluated against outcomes	Data cycles which have been carefully structured to ensure that information is collected in a timely enough manner to enable effective quality assurance and intervention	A high quality, evidence based self-evaluation informing an ambitious development plan. Both are quality assured by Trust leaders.
A culture of keeping children safe in which leaders: know that all staff and governors have read and follow Keeping Children Safe In Education (Part 1); receive high quality training, including on how to listen to, report and record concerns	Trust and external expertise used to inform improvement	A high-quality behaviour policy which is followed with strong communication at every level	A common standardised assessment system that is agreed and shared with the Trust. It is used purposefully to track children's progress across the Academy to inform support	Shared performance data which is informing open and effective conversations between Academy and Trust leaders	A balanced in-year and 3-year budget approved by the Trust (using Trust software). These are focused on directing resources to make the most difference for children and their progress. All actions on the academy planner are also completed by the specified due dates.
Named and trained DSL and Deputy DSLs with one on site at all times. In exceptional circumstances if this not possible then alternative arrangements must be made	Consistent performance management that is of a high quality, rewarding improvement and challenging underperformance	Research-based practice informing training and development	Marking and assessment systems which are regularly evaluated for their merits in relation to pupil outcomes and teacher well-being	A collaborative approach to Hub Headteacher meetings including to review progress and seeking ways to contribute to Trust improvement	A motivated local governing body that is clear of its role and accountabilities and which offers challenge to leaders in terms of teaching and pupil outcomes
All visitors/volunteers signing in and wearing identification badges as set out in the Trust handbook	A range of ways to listen to stakeholder voice which is evaluated and informs next steps	A consistent approach to observation and monitoring alongside an ambitious approach to target setting	A culture of purposeful learning	A self-reflective approach including the use of peer review models seeking parental and pupil input	Leaders at all levels following the Nolan principles of public life and insisting that the staff they lead do the same
An outward facing viewpoint, by playing an active part in the Trust	Leaders who ensure that the Academy is compliant with HR and H&S legislation and that Trust policies and procedures are consistently applied	Purposeful learning as the day-to-day experience which can be evidenced by leaders	An evidence-based approach to change and development	Learning walks/book looks and other measures used to triangulate standards and the quality of education	Safeguarding is effective with policy & practice that keeps children safe at all times

# DCAT Members

## Governance Accountability Structure within the Trust (DCAT)



## Who's Who at the March

### Governing Board

Full Name of Governor	Governor Category	Date of current appointment	Term of office
John Proctor	Chair Foundation	01/12/18	3 years
Nicky Metcalfe	Head Teacher	N/A	
Justine Howard	Vice Chair Foundation	01/12/18	3 years
Mary Isgar	Foundation	01/12/20	4 years
Liz Coyne	Staff Governor	01/12/20	4 years
Rachel Bryan	Community	01/12/20	4 years
Rev Rachel Hawes	Foundation	01/12/20	4 years
Rod Hague	Community	01/12/20	4 years

Members of Local Governing Bodies are normally appointed initially for a four-year term of office which is renewable. Local Governing Bodies may, after consulting with the Board of Trustees, appoint up to three persons to be “Co-opted” as Local Governors.

The Chair of the Local Governing Body will be elected by the LGB and approved and appointed by the Board of Trustees for a four-year term, which will be appraised at the end of year one. The Board of Trustees will take into account any representations made by the academy or the local community prior to appointment.

### Staff

Details of the staff can be found [here](#)

## Local Governing Body (LGB)

**Purpose:** The Local Governing Bodies in the Trust's academies operate as local committees of the Board of Trustees, providing the local knowledge in line with the Scheme of Delegation. The Local Governing Board (LGB) exists to provide strong strategic leadership to a school, ensuring accountability for its educational and financial performance. The LGB works with the Board of Trustees:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- To oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

### Membership:

The composition of the Local Governing Bodies is determined by the Board of Trustees and would normally consist of:

- (a) the Headteacher;
- (b) up to two Parent Local Governors;
- (c) one Staff Local Governor;
- (d) Foundation Local Governors;
- (e) Business and Community Local Governor(s).

The Trust actively encourages the local Priest-in-Charge to be a member of the LGB as one of the allocated Foundation Governors. It will be in order for the composition of the LGB to state that the Parish Priest will be one of the Foundation Governors.

Members of Local Governing Bodies are normally appointed for a four-year term of office which is renewable. Local Governing Bodies may after consulting with the Board of Trustees appoint up to three persons to be "Co-opted" as Local Governors, for a term of 2 years.

### DCAT Representation:

DCAT reserves the right for representatives to attend LGB meetings.

### Meetings:

The LGB will meet at least 6 times per year. The quorum for any meeting is 50% of those eligible to vote. The trustees will appoint the chair.

## Responsibilities:

The Local Governing Bodies are accountable to the Board of Trustees for:

- a) Adherence to Trust Red Lines;
- b) Ensuring local processes are in place and are adequate for safeguarding, health & safety, and overall compliance;
- c) Ensuring the efficient and proper management of resources in line with the Trust's policies, including setting draft budgets and monitoring income and expenditure throughout the year.
- d) Ensuring the Board of Trustees are kept informed through agreed mechanisms and procedures.
- e) Ensuring that the aims and objectives, vision and values and ethos of the school and Trust are faithfully upheld.
- f) Ensuring that effective strategies are used which lead to the continual improvement in pupils' progress and the quality of education for all pupils.
- g) Ensuring, with the Headteacher, that the highest standards of pupil attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance are known, achieved and sustained.
- h) Monitoring the effective provision of Religious Education and high quality Collective Worship is taking place within the academy.

The responsibilities of the Local Governing Body:

Subject to the Scheme of Delegation, the Board of Trustees delegates the day to day running of the academy to the Local Governing Body and specifically the following duties:

- a) Implementation of actions required to comply with statutory regulations and the Funding Agreements;
- b) Implementation of the policies agreed by the Board of Trustees. Where no Trust policy exists, maintain an effective academy policy;
- c) Oversight of the academy's activities;
- d) Monitor the SEF and Academy Development Plan (ADP) undertaking required monitoring, including the Christian vision of the school and effectiveness of Religious Education as required by SIAMS;
- e) Responsibility for the setting and review of the curriculum, ensuring it is broad and balanced and meets the expectations set out in the Ofsted handbook;
- f) Developing and implementing strategies which lead to the continual improvement in pupil's progress, attainment and the quality of education;
- g) To provide high quality challenge and support to the school leaders;
- h) To undertake monitoring visits and ensure other checks are used regularly to triangulate evidence provided by the academy.
- i) Producing and agreeing draft budgets for the Board of Trustees' approval which are supported by key documents e.g. the academy development plan;
- j) Monitoring and reviewing the school budget on a regular basis and ensuring compliance and effective record keeping for the academy;
- k) Monitoring the compliance of health and safety, including premises and buildings, following guidance and policies established by the Trust;
- l) Notifying the Trust of any changes to fixed assets used by the academy;
- m) To oversee the work of the Headteacher with regards to recruitment, retention

- and high quality performance management of staff, as set out in Trust policies;
- n) To convene a Pay Panel annually in line with the Trust Pay Policy;
  - o) Submit copies of the unapproved minutes to the Trust within ten working days from the date of each Local Governing Body meeting and forward the approved minutes after each subsequent meeting.

*The governors are not, and nothing within this document is intended to make them, charity trustees within the terms of section 177(1) of the Charities Act 2011.*

### **Involvement of the Local Governing Body in the appointment of Head Teachers**

The Local Governing Body (and Parish representation if appropriate) will be invited to contribute to recruitment process for the Headteacher. A representative(s) of the LGB (usually to include the Chair) will be invited to participate in the selection panel for any Headteacher recruitment. The final decision on any appointment will be made by the Trustees, on the recommendation made by the Trust CEO, informed by the recruitment panel, in keeping with national requirements on Academy Trusts.

It is the expectation of the Trust that Headteachers will be practising Christians.

The effectiveness of the work of Local Governing Bodies:

It is expected that LGB governors will have completed the following:

- Read the Trust Governance Handbook;
- Signed the Governors’ Code of Conduct;
- Read Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Completed safeguarding training as set out in Trust Red Lines.

The LGB will provide feedback and local intelligence of the Academy to the Trustees. This will be obtained through the following processes:

Face to face meetings	Academy Improvement Review (AIR), Finance Meetings, Chairs Hub Meetings, Compliance Meetings
Observations	Trust staff attendance at LGB meetings, School visits by Trust Staff and Trustees
Review	LGB minutes and review of improvement plans and associated documents, including LGB self evaluation, Stakeholder feedback

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

External evidence for the effectiveness of the Local Governing Bodies will be provided mainly by:

1. Inspection and audit report outcomes;
2. Evidence from other external verification processes.

### Local Governing Body Self-Evaluation

The LGB are expected to complete a self-evaluation exercise annually to review their effectiveness. This will include a skills audit of the governors on the LGB. Self-Evaluation is key to:

- Providing evidence that governors have played a part in formulating the school's development priorities, and have acted on them to bring about real improvement
- Providing evidence that the governing body has carried out self-evaluation exercises aimed at supporting its own development

### Involvement of the Local Governing Body in the appointment of Head Teachers

The LGB and Parish will be invited to contribute to recruitment materials for Headteacher appointments and representative(s) of the LGB (usually the Chair) will be invited to take a full part in the work of the selection panel for any Headteacher appointment. The final decision on any appointment will be made by the Trustees in keeping with national requirements on Academy Trusts. It is the expectation of the Trust that Headteachers will be practising Christians.

### Meeting arrangements for Local Governing Body

LGBs normally meet at least six times per year. The quorum for any meeting is 50% of those eligible

to vote (rounded up). However, the non-staff members should be in the majority. LGB members are expected to:

- Arrive on time and fully participate in the meetings
- Read pre-circulated paperwork coming ready to ask questions and challenge academy leaders in line with Trust values of respect, wisdom and aspiration alongside the individual academy vision and values
- Conduct and feedback key learning from monitoring visits in line with a pre-agreed schedule between the Headteacher and Chair of the LGB
- Where linked to an area, be the critical leader
- Raise any concerns with the Chair and, where appropriate, academy leaders
- Adhere fully to the 7 Nolan Principles of Public Life

Members of the Board of Trustees or the Trust Central Team may attend any LGB meeting. The Board of Trustees reserve the right, with good reason, to withdraw delegated powers from any LGB in the Trust and to disband it at any time.

## Standing Agenda

The agenda and associated papers will be circulated, via email, to all LGB members 7 days prior to the meeting. Whilst the Trust does not prescribe a set agenda, the following are items that should be covered at LGB meetings:

- Opening prayer
- Welcome, apologies and declaration of interest
- Actions from previous meeting
- Headteacher's report (including SIAMs focus)
- Feedback from External Partner and regard to any other external validation
- School improvement focus (e.g. SEND/PP)
- Staffing and personnel updates
- Safeguarding
- H&S
- Finance
- Governance - e.g. membership, training for LGB members
- A.O.B (tabled 48 hours in advance to the chair / clerk)

## Apologies for Absence

If a governor is unable to make a meeting, then apologies should be given to the chair / clerk 48 hours prior to the meeting. It is appreciated that in exceptional circumstances this may not be possible.

Regular attendance is an expectation of all governors and will be reported annually on the school's website. Any governor not attending on a regular basis may be suspended or removed.

## Expectations of Individual Governors

Local Governors shall act in the best interest of the Trust and their academy at all times. They uphold public trust in their roles and maintain high standards of ethics, behaviour and confidentiality. Governors are expected to follow the Trust's policies and procedures - copies of which are available on the [Trust's website](#).

The DfE sets out in the [Competency Framework for Governance](#) the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for effective governance. The framework is divided into 2 parts. The first outlines the "principles and personal attributes" that underpin effective governance, and the second considers the practical skills, knowledge and experience needed by governing bodies.

This second section indicates where skills are needed by:

- Every member of the governing board
- The chair only
- At least 1 member of the governing board

Members of any LGB may be invited to support in another of the Trust's academies where their particular skills/experience may be of use. Similarly, they may be invited to join review/appeals panels relating to personnel and disciplinary matters, including the conduct of staff in any of the Trust's academies.

Where the conduct of a LGB member falls short of Trust expectations then the Trust will, with good reason, remove the governor from office.



## Appointment of Local Governors

The membership of the LGB should focus on the skills required. Appointment decisions should be focused on the skills, experience and diversity that the LGB needs to be effective. LGBs led by the Chairs of Governors should annually complete a LGB 'skills audit' and copy this to DCAT. Areas where skills are not fulfilled on the LGB should be considered when taking on a new Governor. It is for the community of the academy, governors, church and DCAT to promote and help with recruiting new governors, this includes parent governor elections should there be more than one parent applying.

The guidelines for local governors' applications can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## Code of Conduct for Local Governing Bodies

All governors are expected to sign and follow the Code of Conduct ([Appendix B](#)). This code of conduct is based on the code produced by the National Governors Association and is adapted by the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust. Failure to do so may result in removal as a governor.

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from academy governors in order for the LGB to properly carry out its work within the academy and the community. Unless otherwise stated it applies to all levels of academy governance.

All governors should be aware of and accept [The 7 Principles of Public Life](#) as set out by Lord Nolan and applying to anyone who is elected or appointed as a public office-holder.

## Declarations of Business Interests

Governors have a statutory requirement to declare their interests and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role. As a general rule, interests are things that would affect your ability to act impartially and influence your decisions.

A [conflict of interest form](#) is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest you should declare. To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated annually and also when any changes occur. The Declaration of Interests Register for governors will be published on the school's website. The declaration must include:

- Directorships, partnerships and employments with businesses
- Trusteeships and governorships at other educational institutions or charities
- Relationships with other members, trustees or local governors
- Relationships with trust employees It may be best to declare:
- Membership of any professional bodies
- Any gifts or hospitality offered to trustees or local governors
- Contracts held by trustees or local governors that involve the school

If you're not sure an interest counts, err on the side of caution and declare it. You will have the opportunity to declare interests of this sort before meetings. The LGB may decide it is appropriate for you to withdraw from the discussion of relevant items of business.

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

All governors are required to have an enhanced DBS check. A section 128 check will also be undertaken. Governors need to apply for their check, following the relevant academy's procedure within 21 days of appointment.

## Whistleblowing

The Trust encourages governors to raise any concerns that they may have about any wrongdoing at any level within the Trust. Wrongdoing in this context means a governor has a reasonable belief that disclosure of any of the following, for example, would be in the public interest: any breach of a legal obligation; risk to health and safety; a criminal offence being committed, a miscarriage occurring or likely to occur; or damage to the environment.

Any initial concern should be raised with the Chair of Governors. . If it is not appropriate to raise your concern with your Chair of Governors then you should contact the CEO, a member of the Trust's senior management team, the Chair of Governors or the Trust Board, who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed.

Governors are encouraged to raise concerns internally. However, should it not be appropriate to do so using the normal management structure, or if your concerns are about management, you can use any of the contacts listed below:

- Chair of the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT)
- Chair of the Audit and Resources Committee
- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Head of Improvement
- Ofsted
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (for safeguarding matters)
- Department of Education (DfE)
- Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA)

If you wish to raise your concerns in writing to any of the above officers of the Trust, please address your letter to: (Marked 'confidential') Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust, Church House, 211 Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 4ED, or email [contact@dcac.academy](mailto:contact@dcac.academy).

Academy based governors whose concerns relate to the Chair of Governors may wish to approach the Chair of Governors, the CEO or any of the individuals listed above.

Remember that, to allow us to investigate and assess the situation, it would be helpful to provide as much information as possible. We encourage you to put your name to allegations, as anonymous concerns are more difficult to investigate, and we want to be able to take any appropriate action to protect you and provide you with feedback.

Governors who raise a concern which is in the public interest under this policy are entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result. However, the governor must reasonably believe that the disclosure they are making is true.

### **How will the Trust respond?**

Your concern will be assessed and appropriate action will be considered. This may involve a formal review, an internal enquiry or a more formal investigation. You will be told who your point of contact is to be, what further assistance we may need from you, and agree a timetable for feedback. If you ask, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it. If we have misunderstood the concern or if there is any information missing, please let us know.

When you raise the concern please comment on how you think the matter might be resolved. Please tell us at the outset if you have any personal interest in the matter. If we think your concern falls within another relevant policy, you will be informed.

Regardless of what action may be appropriate in resolving your concern, we will not tolerate victimisation or harassment, and will take all necessary steps to protect you from any detriment. Wherever possible, we will give you feedback on the outcome of any investigation. Please note, however, that we might not be able to tell you about the precise actions we take where this would infringe the duty of confidence we owe to other persons.

Whilst we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.

### **External contacts**

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigation and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases the governor should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for the employee to report his/her concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely be appropriate to alert the media. If a governor is not satisfied with the Local Governing Body's / Trust response, the Chair of Governors should ensure that s/he is made aware with whom s/he may raise the matter externally.

For concerns about the safety and welfare of children in our academies, the Safeguarding Policy provides details of who to contact: the Senior Education Leader or Head Teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body or the Local Authority Designated Officer. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.

Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from management, colleagues or any other employee of the Trust. Making a deliberately false allegation, however, against the Trust, your Academy, an employee, fellow governor or any other person will be treated as a breach of the governors code of conduct, which will usually result in removal.

If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing, then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story.

### Allowances Policy

Governors will be able to claim allowances providing the allowances are incurred in carrying out their duties, as a Governor or representative of the March CE Primary These must be claimed in line with the Governor Allowances Policy for the March CE Primary.

Governors wishing to make claims under these arrangements, once prior approval has been sought, should complete a claims form, attaching receipts where possible, and return it to the School within two weeks of the date when the allowances were incurred, when they will be submitted for approval by the Chair of Governors for final approval.

### Governor Monitoring Visits

One of the key roles and responsibilities of the LGB is to monitor the progress and performance of the academy. Undertaking visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the academy by helping to hold the academy to account and evaluate its progress.

The LGB has approved Terms of Reference for Monitoring by Individuals or by pairs/groups of Governors, which anticipate that at least three monitoring visits will take place each year. In some cases, (i.e. SEND, Safeguarding), more frequent monitoring may be appropriate.

A programme of monitoring visits will be approved annually by the LGB and will take account of the priorities set out in the approved Academy Development Plan. Governors should refer to their individual academy's monitoring plan and policy, which should include:

- Signing in and following the academy's safeguarding systems
- Wearing a governor badge throughout the duration of the visit
- Being a pre-agreed visit as part of the programme of monitoring visits. Exceptional cases may dictate an unannounced governor visit but this should be with the agreement of the Chair of Governor and CEO of the Trust.
- Completing a governor visit form to report back to the LGB. This should be sent to the Headteacher to be agreed before being circulated amongst the LGB. A copy of the DCAT

Governor Visit Form can be found in [appendix C](#), however LGB forms can be used if they contain the information as a minimum.

Visits may also be made in an informal capacity by:

- attending school assemblies and worship
- supporting a school event
- helping in a class
- attending a school function or educational visit

### Training and Support for Governors

The LGB's code of conduct sets an ethos of professionalism and high expectations, including an expectation that governors undertake whatever training or development activity is needed to fill in the gaps they have to contribute to effective governance. Individuals persistently refusing to undertake training and development to contribute to the effectiveness of the LGB are likely to be in breach of the LGB's code of conduct.

Each LGB will annually review the collective skills of the governors to support training and development and recruitment. The clerk will keep a record of the skills audit, along with any training undertaken by the governors.

Any training requirements identified through the skills audit should be addressed. LGBs are encouraged to contact [Jo Saunders](#), Governance Manager, to discuss requirements and options available for individuals and the LGB as a whole.

### Online Support

DCAT provides all governors with membership to the following online resources to support their understanding of local and national issues:

- [The Key for School Governors](#)

The Key's online information service keeps more than 30,000 school governors up to date and equipped to make confident decisions on governor recruitment, headteacher performance reviews, assessment and curriculum, funding and finance, GDPR, staffing issues, inspection, and all the nitty- gritty of school governance.

- [NGA Learning Link](#)

The NGA, working with one of the UK's top e-learning companies, Virtual College, have launched Learning Link that provides users with access to over 50 modules curated by NGA's expert team of policy and information specialists. Modules are comprehensive and cover a range of governance- related topics, including strategy, team work, assessment, staffing, financial oversight, elements of effective governance, compliance and collaboration to name a few.

Should you have any other training requirements then please contact [Jo Saunders](#), Governance Manager, to discuss your requirements and options available.

## Safeguarding Training

It is a requirement for all governors in the Trust to undertake the following training in relation to their safeguarding responsibilities as a governor:

- Online Safeguarding Training - governors can complete the [NGA Learning Link](#) Training **Safeguarding: The governors' role** or any local identified governor training. This should be renewed biennially. Safeguarding Lead governors may be required to attend additional training on their responsibilities.

All governors are also expected to read and understand their responsibilities set out in the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education - All governors must read part 1 and 2. A record will be kept by the clerk.
- The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Within the policy (appendix B) it sets out the procedures for Chairs of Governors to follow if an allegation is made against the Headteacher.

## New Governors

Each school has a local induction pack for new governors. The pack includes useful information to support new governors. New governors should also expect the following support from the LGB:

- A tour of the school
- A meeting with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors
- A governor mentor. Having an experienced governor as a 'buddy' can be very helpful support to new governors. A buddy can help you understand your role and support you in applying the skills you have to a school governing context
- Meet with you after 6 months to review your progress and discuss support and responsibilities moving forward.

## Existing Governors New to the Trust

When a new school joins the Trust, a skills audit will be undertaken to review any training and development needs of the LGB. A copy of the Trust Handbook will also be made available to all governors new to the Trust.

## Existing Governors

[DfE Governance Handbook](#)

Existing governors are able to access training and development opportunities appropriate for their ongoing needs. As well as the online learning opportunities available on the NGA Learning Link, governors may choose to access training courses available from the Diocese and Local Authority (which may be subject to a charge). Details on the training opportunities available can be found on the following links:

- [Diocese of Chichester](#)
- [East Sussex County Council](#)
- [West Sussex County Council](#)

## Governor Appraisal

Biennially, the Trust will undertake governor appraisals. The objective of the appraisal is to enable the governors to evaluate their performance, to build upon strengths and address any areas for development. This will help to identify training needs, identify gaps in skills and experience on the LGB and to enable effective succession planning for governors. The appraisal will also be used to review the attendance of governors.

The governor appraisals will feed into the LGB self-evaluation.

The Chairs of Governors will meet annually with the CEO at the Academy Improvement Review (AIR) meeting where the performance of the school and LGB will be reviewed.

## Clerks to the Local Governing Body

High quality professional clerking is crucial to the effective functioning of the LGB. The clerk should be the LGB's 'governance professional'. Their role is not only about good and effective organisation and administration, but also, and more importantly, about helping the LGB understand its role, functions and legal duties and supporting the Chair to enable and facilitate strategic debate and decision making. This is crucial in helping the LGB exercise its functions expediently and confidently, so that it can stay focused on its core functions. -

Clerks' briefing sessions and training are available. Please contact [Jo Saunders](#), Governance Manager, to discuss dates and information.

## Chair of Governor Hub Meetings

These are set up to bring together our Chairs of Local Governing Bodies as a forum for discussion and development. The intention is that the Trust Governance Manager will bring the group together with a shared agenda at least three times a year. Trust Senior Leaders will be on hand for relevant items to help maintain strong communication between the work of the Academy and the Trust. Common agenda items may include:

- High quality governance (including skills audit and plans)
- Governor training
- Quality assurance
- Trust and Academy strategy alignment
- Training and development opportunities
- Christian vision and SIAMs
- Safeguarding and Health & Safety
- Trust Scheme of Delegation



## Appendix A - Local Governor applications – guidelines

### **LGB Skills Audit**

LGBs led by the Chairs of Governors should annually complete a LGB ‘skills audit’ and copy this to DCAT. Areas where skills are not fulfilled on the LGB should be considered when taking on a new Governor. It is for the community of the academy, governors, church and DCAT to promote and help with recruiting new governors, this includes parent governor elections should there be more than one parent applying.

### **Process for New Governor applications**

- When a new governor indicates their interest in joining the LGB, the Chair of Governors should arrange for an informal conversation. The questions on the application could provide areas for discussion to enable understanding of the skill set and experience the candidate could bring to the LGB.
- The candidate should then complete the application form and email it to the Chair of Governors. Information about experience, career and skills helps the Trustees in their decision and this should be included fully within the form or on continuation sheets.
- The Code of Conduct for LGB should be provided and signed by the candidate.
- The Chair of Governors **must** follow up on the two character references.
- The Chair of Governors should indicate on the top of the form which Governor ‘specification’ the candidate is applying for.
- Once the references have been received and the application is complete the Chair of Governors should forward this information via email to the DCAT Office with a covering letter/email recommendation, giving full and detailed reasons why they are recommending the candidate.

### **Board of Trustees/DCAT**

- When the application is received by DCAT it is circulated to all Trustees for consideration.
- DCAT will check Section 128 Barring listing.
- The application is then discussed and ratified at the next available Board of Trustees meeting or, where time sensitivity is an issue, by group email.
- Assuming successful ratification, DCAT will then write to the candidate welcoming them to the LGB, sending copies to the Chair of Governors and Clerk.
- DCAT will provide the new governor with information about Diocesan and DCAT Governor courses and access to the ‘Governors’ page on the DCAT website.
- The new governor will then be entered on the database listing held by DCAT.

### **Academy Business Manager**

- Confirmation that the Section 128 barring listing has been checked by DCAT will be forwarded to the Business Manager for recording on the academies SCR.
- The Academy should apply for DBS checks on the newly appointed governor and update the SCR to include, noting references obtained. The outcome of the DBS should be notified to DCAT for their records.

- The BM should create an academy email address for the governor and share with DCAT, Clerk, Chair, etc.
- All governor contact details need to be added to the Governor page of the website and the business manager should liaise with the clerk to achieve this.

### **Renewals**

A LGB governor tenure is generally for 4 years. The term dates will be indicated on the initial letter. When their first tenure is coming to an end, the clerk will remind the governor to reapply for a second tenure and Chair to recommend, should they wish to continue to serve, following the process described above. Consideration will be given to the attendance and training record of the governor.

### **Resignations**

If a Governor is unable to continue serving then they should offer their resignation in writing to the Chair of Governors who should inform and copy correspondence to DCAT, Headteacher, Clerk to LGB and Business Manager who will update the SCR.

## Appendix B: Code of Conduct for Local Governing Bodies

This code of conduct is based on the code produced by the National Governors Association and is adapted by the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from academy governors in order for the local governing body to properly carry out its work within the academy and the community. Unless otherwise stated it applies to all levels of academy governance.

### The purpose of the local governing body:

The local governing body is the accountable body for the academy. It is responsible for the conduct of the academy and for promoting high standards. The local governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful academy which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

### The local governing body has the following core strategic functions:

- Establishing the strategic direction, by:
  - Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the academy;
  - Upholding and developing the Christian ethos set in its Trust deed;
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets;
  - Meeting statutory duties.
- Ensuring accountability, by:
  - Monitoring progress towards targets;
  - Engaging with stakeholders;
  - Contributing to school self-evaluation;
  - Responding to Ofsted and SIAMS reports when necessary;
  - Holding the Headteacher/Principal to account for the performance of the academy;
  - Ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate;
  - Making relevant information available to the community;
  - Ensuring the SIAMS toolkit, or the equivalent, is kept up to date.
- Ensuring financial probity, by:
  - Setting the budget in liaison with DCAT.
  - Monitoring spending against the budget;
  - Ensuring value for money is obtained;
  - Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

## As an individual on the LGB I agree to the following:

### Role & Responsibilities

- I understand the purpose of the local governing body, the Trust's board and the role of the Headteacher/Principal.
- I accept that I have no legal authority to act individually, except when the LGB has given me delegated authority to do so, and therefore I will only speak on behalf of the local governing body when I have been specifically authorised to do so.
- I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the LGB or its delegated agents. This means that I will not speak against majority decisions outside the local governing body meeting.
- I have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as I have responsibility for staff, I will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- I will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- I will consider carefully how the local governing body's decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- I will always be mindful of my responsibility to maintain and develop the Christian ethos and reputation of our academy. My actions within the academy and the local community will reflect this.
- A foundation governor has the additional role of ensuring the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the academy is reflected in all aspects of the academy's life, according to the academy's trust deed.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints, I will follow the procedures established by the local governing body.
- I will actively support and challenge the Headteacher/Principal.
- I will accept and respect the difference in roles between the LGB and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- I will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
- I agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the local governing body as set out by the relevant governing documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in my governing role I will ensure my comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to my personal views;
- When communicating in my private capacity (including on social media) I will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

### Commitment

- I acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.

- I will involve myself actively in the work of the local governing body, and accept my fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- I will make full efforts to attend all meetings and, where I cannot attend, will explain in advance why I am unable to.
- I will get to know the academy well and respond to opportunities to involve myself in academy activities.
- I will visit the academy, with all visits arranged in advance with the Headteacher/Principal and undertaken within the framework established by the local governing body.
- When visiting the academy in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), I will maintain my underlying responsibility as a governor.
- I will consider seriously my individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- I accept that, in the interests of open government, my full name, date of appointment, term of office, roles on the governing body, attendance record, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing me, will be published on the academy's website.
- In the interests of transparency, I accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (GIAS) and within DCAT's internal database, which complies with Data Protection regulations [GDPR, May 2018].

## **Relationships**

- I will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- I will express my views openly, courteously and respectfully in all my communications with other governors, academy and Trust staff and the clerk to the LGB, both inside and outside of meetings.
- I will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- I will be prepared to answer queries from other LGB members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and I will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- I will seek to develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher/Principal, staff and parents, DCAT, the Diocese, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

## **Confidentiality**

- I will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside the academy.
- I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding academy/trust business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- I will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- I will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

## **Conflicts of interest**

- I will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people I am connected with) that I have in connection with the local governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting I will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- I accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the academy's website.
- I will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- I will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

### Ceasing to be a governor

I understand the requirement relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

### Breach of this code of conduct

- If I believe this code has been breached, I will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the Trust will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the Chair that I believe has breached this code, another local governing body member, such as the Vice Chair or a Chair from another DCAT academy, will investigate as agreed with the Trust.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Academy: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Governor Monitoring Visit Form

<b>Academy name</b>	
<b>Governor name</b>	
<b>Date of monitoring visit</b>	
<b>Name and role of member of staff</b>	
<b>Link to Academy Development Plan (ADP)</b>	
<b>Agreed focus</b>	
<b>Questions to ask:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	

<b>Observations and comments by the governor</b> - <i>consider the hard data you may need to gather (e.g.: what you saw, what you learned; what you would like clarified; how long the visit lasted).</i>
<b>Pupil voice</b> - <i>don't record pupil names</i>
<b>General Observations</b> - <i>e.g. Safeguarding, overall atmosphere</i>
<b>What successes did you observe?</b>
<b>Questions requiring clarification / follow up:</b>
<b>Headteacher comments:</b>
<b>Action following on from Local Governing Body Meeting</b>