

Code of Practice for Governors of a Local Academy Board within the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust

Rationale

The purpose of this code of practice is to enable each Local Academy Board (LAB) to

- fulfil its primary role as the strategic leaders for the trustees of the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust within their school to make sure every child receives the best possible education.
- build a productive and supportive relationship with the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust, the headteacher and staff in promoting BDMAT's vision and values and for our Church of England schools in promoting the Christian ethos of the school while holding them to account for school performance.

1. Legal Framework

- a. The governing body is Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust, which is the corporate body.
- b. Governors within a multi-academy trust, including the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust have no authority to act individually except where the trustees have delegated authority to do so.
- c. Local Academy Boards are committees of the main board of the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust
- d. All governors have equal status, and although governors are appointed and elected by different groups, the central concern must be the welfare of the pupils and staff.

2. Role and Responsibilities

The local academy board is responsible for:

Vision and values

- For our church schools, ensuring that they preserve, develop and promote the Christian distinctiveness of the school, working closely with Church of England representatives;
- Monitoring the implementation of BDMAT's vision of 'life in its fullness for all', 'success for all' and 'positive well-being for all' and the Church of England's vision of education that allows for the development of wisdom, knowledge and skills; promotes dignity and respect; values community and living well together; and pupils having hope and aspiration;
- Monitoring the implementation of the school's own vision and aims, ensuring they are in sympathy with those of the BDMAT and in our Church of England schools the Church of England;

- Undertaking learning walks on a regular basis to ensure that the school's Christian ethos is being promoted (where appropriate),

Safeguarding and health and safety

- Ensuring that all procedures are followed to safeguard pupils when appointing staff and that records are maintained;
- Monitoring the school's safeguarding mechanisms, ensuring that they are meeting national and local requirements;
- Ensuring all Governors receive annual update training from a designated safeguarding leader at the school, including knowledge of PREVENT;
- Ensuring that the safeguarding governor receives more detailed training on a regular basis from the local safeguarding board;
- At least termly, analyse the school's data regarding number of pupils at risk and referrals made to Social Care for patterns and potential concerns;
- LABs should receive, discuss and challenge leaders annually on their section 175 audit return to the safeguarding board and the BDMAT safeguarding audit;
- Termly, evaluating the school's single central record, cross referencing it to a staff list to ensure all staff have received the relevant checks;
- Ensuring that the school has in place an Educational Visits Co-ordinator who is adequately trained and approve any educational visits that involve residentials, medium to high risks and all visits in the proximity of water. Where required request additional guidance from outside agencies;
- Undertaking termly site visits to identify potential health and safety risks;
- Ensuring that leaders have in place effective risk assessments for the school and out of school activities;
- Ensuring that the standards of catering and cleaning within the school meet the highest possible expectations through reviewing or commissioning reviews;

Risk management

- Monitoring the school's specific risks and evaluating progress towards the school risk register at each main LAB meeting;

Financial probity

- Ensuring that governors and school leaders comply with the latest version of the Academies Financial Handbook issued by the Department for Education;
- Receiving regular finance reports from the Central Team and use this information to guide discussions regarding the allocation of resources, and inputting to the development of the annual budget;
- Monitoring the spending of Pupil Premium and Sports Premium to ensure that both restricted funds are having an impact, ensuring the school's website accurately reflects the position regarding these funds;

Staff appointments and staff management

- Appointing all staff (with the exception of the headteacher and deputy, which is in partnership with the CEO), and ensure their performance is measured by school leaders and that staff are rewarded accordingly. Governors should follow the correct BDMAT procedures for these;
- Monitoring the school's staff sickness and absence policy – meeting with staff as required by the local policy;

School improvement

- Ensuring that the school improvement plan, once approved by the Central Team is implemented and has impact;
- Ensuring that statutory requirements are being made regarding the support offered to SEND pupils, that they are having impact and that the school's SEN statement on its website is accurate;
- Receiving regular reports from the headteacher regarding the quality of teaching, monitoring improvements and report any concerns that you have to the Central Team if you feel that the quality of teaching is not improving;
- Monitoring the school's curriculum statement on its website. Ensuring that it clearly identifies what children will learn and the skills they will develop and that it is guided by an 'intent' that aligns with the school's and BDMAT's visions and values;
- Set targets for pupil attendance for the whole school and vulnerable groups (SEND, pupil premium and other specific school vulnerable groups e.g. EAL) and monitor progress toward these targets; monitor authorised and unauthorised pupil leave in term time;

Pupil admissions

- Acting as the admission body, on behalf of BDMAT;

Dispute management and resolution

- Dealing with complaints, disciplinary and grievance issues at the school in line with policies;
- Where necessary, issuing banning notices to parents or warning letters where their conduct on the premises is not acceptable;

Pupil behaviour

- Administering exclusion panels to hear all permanent exclusions and where required, fixed term exclusions (in line with regulations);
- Undertaking learning walks on a regular basis to ensure that the conduct of pupils is good and that the school provides a suitable learning environment;

Relationship with the Central Team

- Reporting any significant concerns to the Central Team;
- Challenging the Central Team if the services / support being provided by the Central Team are not meeting the school's requirements;

Headteacher support and challenge

- Providing effective pastoral support for the headteacher – seeking additional assistance when it is felt that the headteacher requires this;
- Supporting the CEO / Chief School Effectiveness Officer in monitoring and assessing the performance of the headteacher (this will involve the chair of governors, CEO and an additional governor);

Governor training

- Ensuring that an effective training programme is in place for governors and that an annual skills audit of all governors is undertaken to identify future training and gaps in the LAB's skills set;

Stakeholder and community engagement

- Regularly consulting with pupils, parents and staff regarding the school;
- Act as a link between the school, BDMAT and the local community – ensuring that the school is playing an active role with its local community, including other schools;
- Ensure that there is an effective and mutually productive relationship between the school, the church and, where appropriate, other local faith organisations.

Policies

- Review and monitor school specific policies that are not covered by generic BDMAT policies including safeguarding, health and safety, performance management and subject specific policies.

3. Commitment

Being a governor:

- Involves participating fully in the work of the LAB so that individuals accept a fair share of the responsibilities and duties, including service on committees, working parties or as 'named governors';
- Requires regular attendance at meetings of the full LAB and committees;
- Requires getting to know the school well and responding to opportunities to visit and get involved in school activities; and
- Requires considering seriously individual and collective training and development needs and using any designated funds to address them.

4. Confidentiality

Governors should:

- Observe confidentiality routinely as a matter of course, but particularly when explicitly asked to do so, for example regarding matters concerning staff, children or their parents / carers;
- Keep discussion about decisions confidential even when decisions themselves are made public through the minutes of meetings;
- Exercise prudence when invited to respond in discussions and informal talk outside LAB meetings, and instead of passing individual comment, encourage issues to be brought to the attention of the headteacher, LAB or board of trustees (depending on the nature of the issue) through the proper channels; and
- Ensure that the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) are adhered to in full, both individually as a governor, but also as a school as a whole

5. Relationships

The LAB will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- The headteacher, staff, children, parents, the Diocese, the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust the Local Authority, the local community and other local schools

In forming, building and sustaining good working relationships, governors will strive to:

- Remember that they are typically representative of the *category* of governor to which they are appointed or elected. They are not representatives OF those *groups*, e.g. a representative parent, not a representative of the parents;
- Work as members of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted, forming the LAB which functions with corporate responsibility and accountability and that all relationships are built on trust; and

- Develop an open and honest relationship with the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust, the headteacher and all school staff; acting as 'critical friend' to the school, ensuring a balance is struck between offering challenge and support.

6. Conduct

Governors have a general duty to act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school and will strive to behave professionally at all times.

- Governors will aim to discharge their duties in a manner that maintains and develops the positive ethos of the school and its reputation in the local community and wider educational community. Governors' actions at all times should reflect the responsibility to secure the positive ethos of the school. For our Church of England schools this ethos is founded on Christian scripture.
- Governors should reflect on how they are perceived by stakeholders in all they say and do, both as individual governors and as a corporate body.
- Governors should consider carefully how their decisions and actions might affect others, whether they are individuals employed by the school; children or adults who are part of the school community; other schools in the locality; or the wider community.
- Governors should express views openly at meetings but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the LAB or any individual governor delegated to do so.
- Governors should not speak out against majority decisions of the LAB or Trust in public or in private outside the LAB. The intention is to protect the reputation and authority of the LAB, the school and the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust in the public domain. If governors have a concern they should speak to the chair of governors or the CEO of the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust
- Governors will only speak or act on behalf of the LAB and the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust when they have been specifically authorised to do so.
- Governors will respond to criticism or complaints about the school and / or its staff by referring to the Trust's Complaints Procedure and will advise the complainant accordingly.
- Governors will record in the register of business interests any pecuniary interest they might have in connection with the governing body's business.
- Governors will be expected to declare when they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business and withdraw from the meeting while it is under discussion.
- Governors will always undertake visits in consultation with the headteacher or other senior leaders within the school.

7. Breach of this Code of Practice

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the Governing Board should seek to resolve any difficulties or disputes constructively.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.
- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the Governing Board, and, if agreed to be substantiated by most governors, shall be recorded in the minutes and can lead to consideration of suspension or in some circumstance's removal from the Governing Board.
- Governors will sign the Code at the first Governing Board meeting of each academic year.

8. Undertaking

- As a member of the Governing Board, I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school or academy at heart.
- I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school or academy, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos.
- I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school or academy, the Governing Board, the Head or staff.

Signed

Printed Name

School Name

Date