



Governors Handbook

Creating outstanding schools which transform
learning, lives and communities



**Education
Partnership
Trust**

High Expectations • Commitment • Ambition

Welcome

Welcome to your governor handbook. This handbook forms part of your induction pack and outlines the roles and responsibilities of being a governor and how governing bodies carry out their duties within the Education Partnership Trust (EPT).

The Education Partnership Trust (EPT)

The EPT was established in 2012 as a not for profit Multi-Academy Trust and academy sponsor. The success of our schools has been recognised by Prime Ministers, the Schools Minister and the Regional Schools Commissioner, but more importantly the standards across our schools continue to rise.

Vision

Our vision is to create outstanding schools which transform learning, lives and communities.

Values

- High expectations
- Commitment
- Ambition

The Trust Board

The Trust Board has overall responsibility and ultimate decision-making authority for all the work of the Academy Trust. The Board of the EPT is determined to deliver the very best educational experience for our pupils with an ethos of collaboration and excellence.

Responsibilities of the board include:

- to set the overall vision and strategy of the Trust and its schools
- to ensure value for money and legal compliance across the Trust
- to ensure contractual, legal, financial and academic accountability across the Trust
- to take responsibility for the schemes of delegation and parameters for decision making for Local Governing Bodies
- to approve budgets and be the employer for all schools
- to monitor the performance of each school and hold Headteachers to account
- being the legal employer for all staff, responsibility for human resource policies and procedures and terms and conditions of service
- annual approval of the Trust budget including those of each school

The board greatly values and supports the work of Local Governing Bodies and recognises the significant contribution that effective local governance can make towards raising standards.

Academy Trust Governance Guide

The Academy Trust Governance Guide is guidance from the Department of Education. (A copy will be included in your induction pack). This is a reference document for those involved in Trust governance and it provides essential information from a range of sources on the Trust Board's roles and legal responsibilities.

Role of the Local Governing Body

The roles and responsibilities are delegated to Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) by the MAT Board. The board establishes a Local Governing Body for each school and delegates certain responsibilities to them, however the Local Governing Bodies are not legally responsible or accountable for statutory functions.

A school governing body has a key role in the performance of the school but does not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Headteacher.

Governance Scheme of Delegation

The EPT Governance Scheme of Delegation outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Local Governing Body and Headteacher. This will form part of your pack.

Governing bodies don't:

- inspect the school
- report on the quality of teaching after visiting the school
- authorise all expenditure
- share concerns about staff capability
- decide on how pupils are taught different subjects
- have the right to exclude a pupil
- write the school's policies on their own
- rubberstamp recommendations from the Headteacher
- automatically approve all apologies for absence for meetings sent by governors
- need to be aware of the performance objectives which had been set for individual teachers

The Chair of Governors is responsible for:

- giving a clear lead in organising the governing bodies work, delegate and ensure other governors are fully involved
- managing meetings effectively
- keeping other governors fully informed
- holding regular meetings with the Headteacher

“We work together to support and encourage the school, share our thoughts and make the right decisions for our young people.”

Ian Kendrick
Director, EPT



Being a School Governor

What makes an effective School Governor?

- you care about children's education
- you want to work as part of a team and can value and respect the contribution made by different people
- you are willing to listen, learn, support and challenge where appropriate
- you are enthusiastic
- you will regularly attend meetings and relevant training

What does the effective Governor need to be familiar with?

- the recent history of the school
- the type of school and the nature of the pupil intake
- the number of pupils on roll and projected future numbers
- how the school is staffed, organised and managed
- the school budgets
- the self-evaluation framework (SEF)
- the school improvement plan (SIP)
- the curriculum
- the range of extracurricular activities on offer
- the school policies
- how the school communicates with parents, other schools and the community
- the layout of the buildings, grounds, their suitability, and state of repair
- Ofsted reports

Governor commitment

There is certainly a time commitment involved, but our governors are volunteers. We use their time carefully and respectfully. From time to time, individual governors are asked to offer their support and challenge as part of a panel – for example, if the school is interviewing for a key leadership role or if it is hearing an appeal about a pupil exclusion.

A governor's term of office is usually for four years, but as a volunteer you can resign at any time. You can expect four to five governing body meetings per year – often, but not always these are in the evening. Governing body and committee meetings normally take place once a term, but may meet more frequently if required.

We actively encourage our Governors to visit school as part of their role in monitoring and evaluation to observe practice, meet with staff and to familiarise themselves with the school. Governors are usually welcome, by invitation, to attend school performances, events and some staff training.

Guidance for Governors

Be prepared for a meeting

- read the papers before the meeting
- make sure you have all the necessary documents to prepare your thoughts and questions before the meeting
- bring your diary and supporting documents in either hardcopy or electronic version

Attendance

In accordance with Article 80 of the EPT's Articles of Association, any governor who, without permission, is absent from meetings of the full governing body for a continuous period of six months will cease to be a governor. If you need to offer apologies for a meeting this should be done through the Chair or the clerk in advance of the meeting with the reason for your absence noted.

Confidentiality

Governing body meetings are not open to the public. Visitors may attend by invitation but may be asked to leave if a confidential item is discussed.

Governors observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the governing body in meetings and from their visits to school as governors. How an individual governor votes should always be regarded as confidential. The minutes of any part of the meeting that are confidential should be kept separate. In the main confidential items will be those where the privacy of an individual needs to be respected.

Governors and the law

The intention of the law is that governors should be accountable and business should be transparent with any confidential items being kept to a minimum. Any documents governors wish to dispose of should be shredded, given the sensitive nature of some of the information.

Frequency, notice & duration of meetings

You will be given an annual meeting schedule. You will receive your documents for each of the meetings seven days before.

Agenda

The agenda, which will be contained with your notification for the meeting, will list all the items that are to be discussed at the meeting. Consider the agenda carefully before the meeting and make notes where there are items of particular interest or importance to you or where you want to ask a question.

You have the right to request that an item be placed on the agenda by contacting the Chair or clerk a few weeks before the meeting. If "Any Other Business" features on your agenda and you wish to raise an issue under this item you must discuss this with the Chair prior to the start of the meeting so the Chair can evaluate whether the meeting is an appropriate forum for the issue and can allow sufficient time for discussion.

Quorum

If a meeting of the governing body cannot be held for a lack of a quorum (50% of current membership) or has to be terminated on that account before all agenda items have been completed, the clerk must convene a further meeting as soon as reasonably practicable. If the governing body decide to terminate the meeting before all agenda items have been completed, it must first agree the date and time for a further meeting at which the outstanding items will be considered and clerk will convene that meeting accordingly.

Register of Pecuniary Interests

Governors and school staff have a responsibility to avoid any conflict between their business and personal interests and affairs and the interests of the school. Each Governor is required to complete this register each year. A copy for you to sign is included in the supporting information and needs to be returned to the clerk to governors.

Minutes

The clerk takes minutes of the meetings which are a record of what happens at that meeting. Minute takers at committee meetings are agreed at the start of the meeting.



The Seven Principles of Public Life

This is an interpretation of Lord Nolan's seven principles, adapted for schools. It is expected that all governors accept the following principles:

Principle 1: Selflessness

The Governing Body take decisions solely in the interest of the school and its continued development and improvement.

Principle 2: Integrity

The Governing Body does not place itself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.

Principle 3: Objectivity

In making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending staff for rewards and benefits, the Governing Body makes choices on merit.

Principle 4: Accountability

The Governing Body is accountable for its decisions and actions.

Principle 5: Openness

Governors should act and make decisions in an open and transparent manner.

Principle 6: Honesty

Governors should be truthful.

Principle 7: Leadership

The Local Governing Body promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Useful Websites

National Governors' Association	www.nga.org.uk
OFSTED	www.ofsted.gov.uk
Department for Education	www.gov.uk
The Key for School Governors	www.schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com



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**Education
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The EPT is a not-for-profit Multi-Academy Trust
and approved academy sponsor

